



Written Assessment 1

Argumentative essay option: The American Revolution is traditionally regarded as a new kind of conflict that ushered in an age of anti-colonial revolutions around the Atlantic World. For Indigenous people, was the American Revolution just another European war like those that had come before?

Remember to answer the question by taking a defined stance on the question and incorporating evidence to support your perspective.

Instructor Note: Students may draw details from class discussions, activities, or lectures. More advanced students should be directed to incorporate primary source analysis into their answers.

Suggested sources (from “Native Nations in an Age of Empire and Revolution”):
Transcriptions available with the Collection Essay.

- Document: [Letter from William Browning to Sir William Johnson, April 30, 1764](#)
- Document: [Talk from William H. Drayton to the Cherokee Nation, September 25, 1775](#)
- Document: [Micmac Oath, 1778](#)

Exam option: “For and Against” Question¹

Instructions:

- Answer this question in two short paragraphs, one labeled “For” and the other labeled “Against.”
- In the “For” paragraph, summarize the best evidence in support of the statement. In the “Against” paragraph, summarize the best evidence that contradicts the statement. Each paragraph should contain 3-4 distinct points.
- Be as balanced as possible between the two sides. Include accurate evidence without exaggerating the facts.

¹ The idea of “For and Against” exam questions is drawn from David J. Voelker, “Assessing Student Understanding in Introductory Courses: A Sample Strategy,” *The History Teacher* 41:4, 2008. Like traditional identification questions, this format requires students to recall the details of important historical events and figures. However, the “For and Against” format provides a more defined structure for students to articulate the significance of historical events and use them in support of an argument.



Statement: For Indigenous North Americans, the American Revolution was just another European War like the several that had come before.

Scoring Guidance (for both options):

A strong answer for the question would highlight the continuation of a long-standing pattern in which Europeans bought tribes' alliances and expected their aid in wartime. A student might highlight consistencies in diplomacy (e.g., use of familial metaphors, gift-giving). Indigenous warriors fought alongside British and colonial forces, particularly in the so-called "backcountry" where they utilized surprise raids and non-conventional strategies as in previous wars. Like in other European imperial wars, Native people had much to lose and little to gain by devoting their lives and fortunes to someone else's conflict. However, participating in settlers' wars was one of the key ways Indigenous people could shape the changing world around them, and they had significant impacts on the conflict, particularly in places where European power was weak in the Middle Ground. Although the American Revolution began as a civil war, France's entry into the war in 1778 and Spain's entry in 1779 would reignite older imperial patterns.

A strong answer against the question would emphasize the development of new patterns of diplomacy. With France's lands in North America entirely lost, Native nations had lost some space for negotiation because they could no longer play European enemies against one another. Unlike other European wars, this was a civil war, which many Native people interpreted as a conflict "between brothers." Many tribes attempted to stay neutral to avoid entering a family conflict, but those who made alliances would be forced to side with one "brother" over the other. British officials often sought to compromise with Indigenous communities and preserve peace in the face of colonial Americans' expansion and violence on the frontiers. Increasingly the British officials with whom Indigenous communities negotiated and the American neighbors they lived alongside appeared to be two separate groups. A student might also argue that Pontiac's War had demonstrated the fragility of European sovereignty over the region.



Written Assessment 2

Expository Essay Option: Pontiac's War was the first major pan-Indian movement, and it struck at the British Empire just months after its glorious victory in the Seven Years' War. Describe the causes and effects of Pontiac's War. Be sure to discuss economic, diplomatic, military, and cultural factors.

Suggested sources (from "Native Nations in an Age of Empire and Revolution"):
Transcriptions available with the Collection Essay.

- Map: [Donald D. Bouma, Carte : partie occidentale de la Nouvelle France...](#)
- Image and map: [William Smith, "The Indians giving a Talk to Colonel Bouquet... in Oct 1764"](#)
- Fort map: [Robert Stobo, Fort Du Quesne \(1754\)](#)
- Document: ["Minutes of Conferences... Held at Easton," 1757](#)
- Document: ["Minutes of Conferences, held at Lancaster," 1763](#)
- Document: [William Browning to William Johnson letter, 1764](#)

Exam or Quiz Option:

Pontiac's Rebellion was one of several key events that occurred in 1763. List its causes and effects, remembering to include economic, diplomatic, military, and cultural factors.

Causes	→	Effects



Scoring Guidance (for both options):

Pontiac's War had many deeply rooted causes. In North America, the arrival of diseases from the Columbian Exchange predated Native-European contact. These diseases upended Indigenous societies and produced conflict even before Europeans complicated diplomatic relations. Contact had produced profound cultural changes in Native religious beliefs, alliances, technology, and modes of subsistence. Pontiac's War was rooted in the prophetic messages of Neolin, whose beliefs represented a syncretic and millennial combination of Delaware and Christian ideas. Those beliefs criticized Native people for becoming too dependent on European technologies and goods, like firearms and alcohol, and too divorced from their cultural roots and practices. European Crowns had also dramatically dispossessed some Native peoples from their ancestral lands. Other Native communities farther inland faced disruptions as refugees produced by conflicts with settlers fled westward, as did some colonial governments and other European settlers. Changes to European empires in North America also provoked the conflict. Some of France's Native allies viewed the war as a betrayal, while others hoped that the French could be brought back. Another change came in British policy through Jeffrey Amherst. To save money, the British dramatically reduced gift-giving, a practice important in Indigenous cultures as a way of continually renewing alliances and affirming peaceful intentions.

Pontiac's War had major consequences for British sovereignty in North America. Indigenous groups destroyed British fortifications, killed British soldiers, and disrupted British supply and trade routes. It took two years for the British to achieve a perfunctory peace with Pontiac. The conflict showed the British that despite their recent victory over their French rival, British communications networks, fortification systems, and military power in North America were in fact fragile. These failures during Pontiac's War encouraged the decision to station a standing army in North America, which colonial taxes were expected to help fund (much to the distress of colonial Americans who began to protest those taxes). Students with a broader familiarity with American history might point out that Pontiac's Rebellion showed Native nations the power of pan-Indian movements, which set the precedent for Tecumseh's resistance movement. Ultimately, however, Indigenous people were unsuccessful in halting additional westward settlement. Colonial settlers would continue to move into Indian Country, despite British attempts to redirect them toward colonies on the north and south fringes of the British Empire (the Floridas, Georgia, Maritime Canada, and Quebec). A strong answer might also point out that violence continued, and colonial Americans retaliated against Native communities in instances such as the massacre committed by the Paxton Boys and the kinds of murders described in the Browning letter.