



Reading more deeply

This section provides an extra reading list for students and teachers who want to explore topics in greater depth. A specific chapter has been briefly summarised so that you can decide how helpful the text might be. Ratings are based on the level of difficulty of the language and ideas used by the author. These readings also cover a variety of historians so that you can directly analyse different historical interpretations of the Revolution. Annotations are available on Cambridge GO for all sources.

Easy

Franklin, F. *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*. Ed. Peter Conn. Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005.

Franklin wrote his engaging autobiography between 1771-90, and covers his English ancestry and early years growing up in the colony of Boston, but ends his tale in the late 1750s when he worked in London on behalf of the colonies. He therefore avoids discussing the events of the American Revolution. However, reading Franklin's autobiography gives good practice acquainting oneself with the language of the 18th century, and his wide-eyed account of his arrival in the Colony of Philadelphia from Boston as a young man gives a good insight into how each colony had its own character was before the Revolution.

Moderate

Brogan, H., 'The Waking of the Revolution 1759-66' (pp. 110-34), 'The Road to Ruin 1766-1775' (pp. 135-66) and 'The Peace and the Constitution 1783-1789' (pp. 186-215), in *The Penguin History of the USA*, London, Penguin, 1985.

Beautifully written book by former Cambridge University History Professor. A very positive right wing interpretation of the American Revolution and the Founding Fathers. These three chapters deal with tension building in America, the eventual war that would unfold later in the 1775-83 and the post war American problems and their solutions with the founding of the new Constitution.

Challenging

Zinn, H., 'Tyranny is Tyranny' (pp. 58-75) and 'A Kind of Revolution' (pp. 77-102), in *A People's History of the United States*, New York, Harper Collins, 1980.

This best-selling leftist historian's interpretation of the social history of America is a very alternative and critical left-wing view of the sacred cows of America, the Founding Fathers and their motivations, and the outcomes of the Revolution. Zinn focuses on slaves, women, the poor and First Nations perspectives; that is, all the 'people' the Revolution did not directly or indirectly benefit.