



Sample answer

This feature is designed to help you prepare for your assessments by modelling possible responses to VCE-style exam questions (explored further in Chapters 5 and 9). The following is a sample response to a question that might appear in AOS 1, Section A of the VCE exam.

1 Using three or four points, explain the contribution of Patrick Henry to the American Revolution in the period up to 1776.

Patrick Henry was an outspoken and passionate speaker, a radical opponent to British policy in the early 1760s who fervently endorsed colonial rights and pro-individual liberties. Due to his radical nature, Henry promulgated the ideas of independence and royal tyranny as early as 1765, when such ideas were extremely unpopular. Henry was elected to the Virginia House of Burgesses and became a solicitor in 1769. He was creator of the 'Virginia Resolves' with his 'If this be treason, make the most of it' speech. The Resolves were a series of resolutions against the Stamp Act 1765, which denied the British Parliament's right to tax the colonies, resulting in the Stamp Act Congress. Thomas Gage (British General) credited the Resolves 'as the signal for a general outcry over the continent'. Intent on galvanising the American colonies against their British oppressors, Henry proposed a Continental Congress be called following the closure of Boston Port as part of the Coercive Acts in 1774. He made a second speech in the more radical year of 1775, which ended with 'give me liberty or give me death', helping to form support for the newly formed Continental Army and justify a revolutionary conflict. Henry's idea for a Continental Congress was essentially a revolutionary government and the body that would produce the Declaration of Independence and commission the Continental Army: the final call for war against Britain.
