



Sample answer I

Using three or four points, explain George Washington's contribution to the American Revolution in the period 1754 to 1776.

As commander in chief of the Continental Army, George Washington was at the forefront of revolutionary affairs. Born in Virginia, 1732, Washington played several key roles in pre-revolutionary America as a gentleman farmer, one of the colonial elite and a member of the Virginian House of Burgesses. He fought as a soldier in the French and Indian War (1754–1763) and applied for commission into the British army; however, he was denied. The rejection encouraged him to lead the war against the people who had refused him entry years earlier. With the end of the French and Indian War, and the French removed, Washington saw westward expansion as a great opportunity, but the Proclamation Act 1763 prevented this, leaving him angered. Washington presided over a meeting in rural Virginia where they formed the Fairfax Resolves (1774), which called for a strict boycott on British imported goods. His involvement in the rebellion highlighted the clear opposition he had towards British authority. Washington vehemently protested against the introduction of the Stamp Act in 1765, arguing that 'Britain has no right to stick their hands into our pockets'. He was made general of the Continental Army and had the ability to transform a rag-tag mob of untrained and undisciplined men into a skilled military combat unit. Even more commendable was that he achieved this despite obstacles such as interstate rivalry, high desertion numbers and limited funding from Congress. During the Revolutionary War at Valley Forge, when morale was low in the Continental Army, Washington ordered that all soldiers be read a copy of Paine's 'American Crisis', a pamphlet that inspired the soldiers and gave them that needed optimism. In 1789 Washington became the first President of the United States and was forever seen as a revered man who's 'genius was in keeping the cause alive'.
