

Name _____

Date _____

The French & Indian War

Learn more about this topic! Each section gives more detail on one of the lyrics from the song. Read each section, and then respond by answering the question or taking notes on key ideas.

1. Native Americans lived in North America for thousands of years before the arrival of Europeans. They lived in independent nations with their own territories and languages. They had their own forms of government. They had feuds and alliances with other Native American nations.

Notes

By the middle of the 1700s, both France and Great Britain had busy colonies in North America. Britain had the thirteen colonies along the East Coast. They settled towns and villages and cleared land for farming. The French claimed the land north and west of the British colonies. The French were mostly trappers and traders. Because they did not claim land for farming and were generally respectful, the French had comparatively good relationships with many Native American nations.

2. In the 1750s, Native American nations, the French and British got into a conflict over the Ohio River Valley. The land was valuable to all three groups. Native American nations such as the Anishinaabe, Ottawa, Delaware and some of the Iroquois had lived on the land for hundreds of years.

Notes

The British colonists were running out of space on the East Coast and needed to expand. Some Virginia planters even got a charter from the king to start selling land along the Ohio River.

The French liked the region because it had a lot of valuable game for trapping and was accessible by many waterways. The deputy governor of Virginia sent a young major named George Washington to ask the French to leave the area in 1753. The French refused. They chased Washington and his men away.

3. In 1754, Washington returned to the Ohio River Valley to build a fort. When he and his men arrived, they discovered that the French were building their own fort. The two groups had a brief struggle, and a French captain was killed. The French retaliated and captured the British fort. Tension between the two countries grew. Both France and Britain sent more troops to North America. Britain officially declared war on France in 1756.

Notes

At first, the French had the advantage. They built alliances with Native American nations like the Huron. The Native Americans shared their fighting strategies with the French. They used camouflage to hide themselves and their weapons from the British. This confused the British, who fought in straight lines on open fields. For the first two years of the war, Britain suffered major losses.

4. Though in America we call the war the French and Indian War, the war was between the British and the French. The Native Americans fought on both sides. The war was actually just a piece of a larger war being fought all over the world. The British and French were colonizing territories across the globe. They were not just fighting for access to the Ohio River Valley. They were fighting each other to determine who would be the most important colonial power in the world. Whoever got the most territory would win. This is why they fought so hard for land in North America. During this period, French and British troops were also fighting over colonies in South America, India and West Africa. In Britain, the whole war is called the Seven Years' War.

Notes

5. In 1758 Britain found a new strategy. Secretary of State William Pitt became commander-in-chief of the army. He sent more money and more troops to North America. The British formed an alliance with the Iroquois, a very strong Native American nation. The Iroquois had a long feud with the Huron, who were helping the French.

Notes

Pitt decided to focus on the big French forts, like Niagara, Quebec and Montreal. As they captured each fort, the British cut off support for French troops. The British captured Montreal in 1760. This ended much of the fighting of the war. France and Britain signed the Treaty of Paris in 1763. In the treaty, all the French lands in present-day Canada and from the Appalachian Mountains to the Mississippi River were given to the British.

6. The British won the war and were given a huge area of land. After 1763, they claimed all the land from the Atlantic Ocean to the Mississippi River, as well as all of Canada. But Britain had just spent seven years fighting an exhausting war in several different countries. Paying for all that fighting cost an enormous amount of money, and they were deeply in debt. The British government could not afford to govern all the new land they'd acquired. To solve the debt problem, Parliament decided to tax the American colonists. To solve the governing problem, they issued the Proclamation of 1763, which kept colonists from settling land west of the Appalachian Mountains.

Because of the war, the colonists had gained military experience. They knew they were stronger together than they were apart. They didn't like being taxed because they had no representation in British Parliament. They were being kept out of the western territory, which they felt was rightfully theirs. The stage was set for a revolution.