GUIDED READING  Winning the War

Section 4

A. As you read this section, take notes about people and events that helped to win American independence.

1. Friedrich von Steuben
2. Marquis de Lafayette
3. The Battle of Yorktown
4. The signing of the Treaty of Paris

B. On the back of this paper, identify or define each of the following:

   - Charles Cornwallis
   - egalitarianism
SKILLBUILDER PRACTICE Analyzing Causes and Effects

Without help from France, the course of the Revolutionary War may have gone quite differently for American forces. To learn more about the causes and effects of French involvement, read the passage below. Then, as you complete the cause-and-effect diagram at the bottom of the page, notice how effects can turn into causes. (See Skillbuilder Handbook, p. R7.)

French and British Conflicts in North America  Long before the American Revolutionary War, France and Britain had been enemies. Disputes over ownership of North American territories and the rights to fur trading and fishing there led to the French and Indian War. Although the French were successful at first, the British eventually defeated them. As a result, France lost most of its North American territory to Britain.

After suffering these losses, France was anxious to challenge Britain again and regain her colonies. For this reason King Louis XVI of France considered joining the American side against the British in the Revolutionary War in North America.

Before he would commit French soldiers and ships to the war, however, Louis XVI wanted proof that American troops could win a major battle on their own. The American victory he had been looking for came in October, 1777, when British troops surrendered to American forces after the Battle of Saratoga.

The French and American Alliance  Four months after the Battle of Saratoga, France formally recognized the United States as an independent country. In June 1778, France declared war with Britain. French soldiers began arriving in the summer of 1780 to fight alongside Patriot forces, and within a year, they were contributing to U.S. victories. In September 1781, French ships forced a British naval fleet to leave Chesapeake Bay, setting the stage for the defeat of the British by the combined U.S. and French forces at Yorktown, the last significant battle of the war.

1. CAUSE: France loses North American colonies to Britain during the French and Indian War.

2. EFFECT/CAUSE: France recognizes the United States and declares war against Britain.

3. CAUSE: In a major American victory during the Revolutionary War, Americans defeat the British at the Battle of Saratoga in 1777.

4. EFFECT/CAUSE: French ships force the British out of Chesapeake Bay.

5. EFFECT/CAUSE: French and American soldiers are victorious against British troops.

6. EFFECT: French and American forces at Yorktown, the last significant battle of the war.
Finding Main Ideas

The following questions deal with the final years of the Revolutionary War. Answer them in the space provided.

1. What were some examples of help provided by Europeans to the colonial war effort?

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2. What military strategy did Great Britain take after its loss at Saratoga?

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3. Which group aided the British during their early victories in the South? Why?

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4. What was significant about the battle at Yorktown?

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5. What were the terms of the Treaty of Paris?

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6. How was the egalitarianism that arose after the Revolutionary War limited?

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GEOGRAPHY APPLICATION: PLACE  

The Siege of Yorktown

Directions: Read the paragraphs below and study the maps carefully. Then answer the questions that follow.

In the late spring of 1781, the British general Cornwallis marched his troops northward out of North Carolina and in July set up camp at Yorktown, Virginia. Yorktown is on a peninsula at the point where the York River meets Chesapeake Bay. While fighting to take all of Virginia, Cornwallis wanted to be connected with other British troops in New York by sea and with the British naval forces in the Atlantic.

However, a French fleet of 24 ships in Chesapeake Bay was able to seal off the waters to the east. Meanwhile, Generals Washington and Rochambeau led American and French troops southward toward Yorktown and joined up with Lafayette. They surrounded Yorktown and began hitting the town with cannon fire. This final battle of the Revolutionary War was fought just a few miles from Jamestown, the site of the first English settlement on the continent.

The map below shows the positions of the British and of the Americans and their French allies at Yorktown. On October 17 American and French cannon fire increased on Yorktown, which was then low on ammunition. On the 19th, the British troops surrendered.
Interpreting Text and Visuals

1. Why was Yorktown seemingly a good place for Cornwallis to establish fortifications?

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2. Why was Cornwallis unable to be reinforced by British ships entering Chesapeake Bay?

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Why could he not be reinforced by British ships coming down the York River from the west?

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3. Who controlled the roads leading from Yorktown to the south? ________________

Who controlled the roads leading from Yorktown to the west? ________________

4. On October 16 a violent storm prevented Cornwallis’s troops from crossing the York River at night to a peninsula of British land to the north. Most boats were blown back a mile or more below Yorktown. Based on the map, how might the weather have influenced Cornwallis’s decision to finally surrender within days?

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5. Summarize how the geography of Yorktown led to the defeat of the British.

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6. What is ironic about the English presence in North America coming to an end at Yorktown?

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