

## French and Indian War: The First World War

The simple phrase “French and Indian War” has led to a great deal of confusion for many young people. When students see this phrase they immediately think the French fought the Indians. This would seem to be correct. When students hear of two sports teams competing, they usually hear phrases such as “the Bears and the Packers,” or “the Yankees and Red Sox.” However, the French and Indian War was a conflict in which the French and their Indian allies fought the British and their Indian allies. To complicate the situation, in Europe the conflict was called the Seven Years War; and in Canada, it was the War of the Conquest. World War I might be a better name for this conflict because the fighting took place on at least three continents and resulted in the deaths of more than one million people worldwide.

From the beginning of North American colonization, the French and the British competed fiercely for territory. The French and British already had fought three wars over territorial claims in the New World. When the French and Indian War started in the colonies, King George II, who already had a colonial war named after him, was still the ruling monarch in Britain. Because of this, the colonists named the conflict after their opponents, the French and Indians.

The French and Indian War began in the Ohio Valley after years of conflict between French and British colonists over control of beaver pelts and the fur trade. In 1754 Virginia colonial forces under George Washington’s command sought to drive the French out. Before his forces reached the French position at Fort

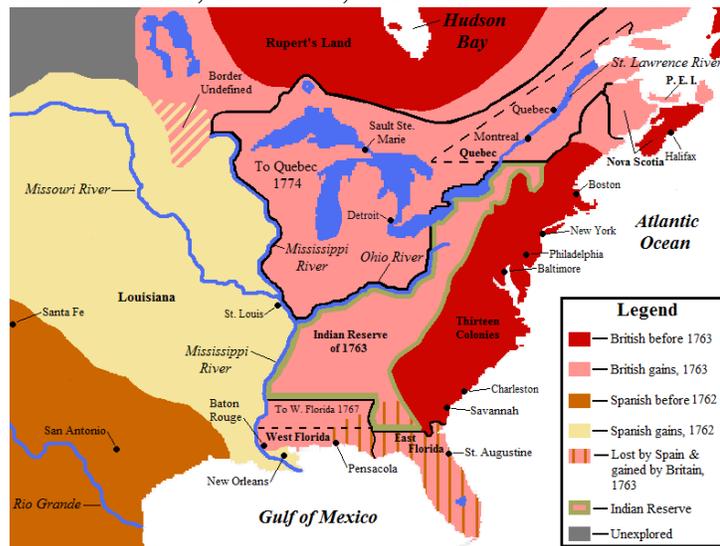


Duquesne, Washington’s men and Indian allies encountered a small group of French soldiers; and the battle of Jumonville Glen erupted. The French quickly surrendered to Washington and his men. After the surrender, one of Washington’s Indian allies, Half King, murdered the popular French commander, Coloun de Jumonville. When the French learned of the attack on their men and the death of Jumonville, they sent a much larger force that quickly surrounded Washington’s men and forced them to surrender at the hastily constructed Fort Necessity. A humiliated Washington was forced to sign a paper written in French that stated he had assassinated Jumonville.

In 1755 a larger British and colonial force marched on the French at Fort Duquesne near present-day Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. General James Braddock led the British force; his second in command was Colonel George Washington. They encountered a combined French and Indian force at Monongahela. Shortly before the battle, General Braddock fell from his horse and was mortally wounded. Young Colonel Washington was able to get most of his men back to the safety of the colonies; however, Monongahela was seen as a horrible defeat for the British and dashed any hopes that Washington would realize his dream of a commission in the British army.

As the conflict raged in the colonies, fighting soon spread to Europe and Asia, where France, Britain, and their allies fought for control of the seas and the very profitable colonial trade centers. After suffering a major defeat at the hands of Britain's Prussian allies, France was forced to sign the Treaty of Paris in 1763. This treaty transferred Canada to the British and gave them control of the land from the Appalachian Mountains to the Mississippi River. France's ally, Spain, was forced to relinquish its colony in Florida to the British. In return the French transferred their territory west of the Mississippi River to the Spanish. Most French colonists in Canada were permitted to stay on their land; however, some French settlers from Acadia refused to take an oath of allegiance to the British and were forced out. Many of these Acadians made their way south along the Mississippi River and eventually settled in the bayous of Louisiana. Here they eventually would be known as Cajuns.

After more than eight years of war in North America, Europe, and Asia, the British treasury was depleted; and the British were weary of battle. To assure peace among colonists and Indians, King George signed the Proclamation of 1763 to protect the Indians. This proclamation forbade British colonists from crossing the Appalachian Mountains. This angered many colonists who believed that after fighting and winning this long war, they had a right to the land. In addition, the British taxed American colonists to recover some of the war expenditures. Resentment of these taxes, combined with the new confidence and unified feeling among the colonies, would eventually lead to the American Revolution.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## The French and Indian War

### Discussion Questions:

1. What are two other names for the French and Indian War?
2. What were French and British colonists competing for in the Ohio Valley?
3. What young Virginia colonial officer was forced to sign a statement that he had assassinated a French officer?
4. What present-day city is located near where Fort Duquesne once stood?
5. What was the name of the peace treaty that ended the French and Indian War?  
In what year was it signed?
6. What did the Proclamation of 1763 forbid British colonists from doing?