

Excerpt from “The Fight Begins”

Read the following excerpt aloud to a family member. Then complete the activity that follows.

Complaints and Grievances

The 56 members of the First Continental Congress drafted a list of complaints and **grievances** against the king and his government. They agreed that all 13 colonies would stop **importing** goods from Great Britain—not just tea and other items that were taxed, but all British goods. They also agreed that, unless Parliament repealed the Intolerable Acts, the colonies would stop **exporting** colonial goods to Great Britain.

Some colonists began to think a war was unavoidable. They thought it was time to start **stockpiling** muskets and gunpowder. Others believed that it was not too late to patch up relations with the king and his government.

Representatives from Virginia debated this issue in March 1775. Several representatives argued that Virginia should do whatever it could to keep the peace and restore good relations with the king. But others felt that it was too late for that. A country lawyer named Patrick Henry proposed that it was time to stop talking about peace and to start fighting for liberty:

“Gentlemen may cry, Peace, Peace—but there is no peace. The war is actually begun! . . . Our brethren are already in the field! Why stand we here idle? What is it that gentlemen wish? . . . Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!”

—Patrick Henry

Many people in Massachusetts agreed with Patrick Henry. They were organizing militias, stockpiling guns, and preparing to fight. Some of the Massachusetts militiamen were known as minutemen. These special troops were created to be ready to fight at a moment’s notice!

The British government knew that these preparations were underway. In response, they sent a large army to Boston. British generals were told to confiscate any weapons they could find. They were also told to find and arrest the biggest troublemakers among the Sons of Liberty—Samuel Adams and John Hancock.

In April 1775, the British tried to capture some weapons that members of the patriot movement had hidden in Concord, west of Boston. Approximately 700 British soldiers marched out of Boston on the night of April 18, hoping to surprise the militia in Concord. But the patriots were watching every move the British soldiers made.



Patrick Henry addressing Virginia representatives

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

4.2
CONTINUED

TAKE-HOME

Choose the word or phrase that best completes each sentence. You may refer to the excerpt if needed.

1. Another word for *grievance* is: _____
 - A. compliment
 - B. complaint
 - C. challenge

2. The members of the Continental Congress agreed that the colonies would stop _____ goods from Great Britain.
 - A. importing
 - B. boycotting
 - C. stockpiling

3. Some colonists believed war with Great Britain was _____.
 - A. unavoidable
 - B. avoidable
 - C. intolerable

4. Patrick Henry was in favor of: _____
 - A. colonial independence from Britain
 - B. continued British rule of colonies
 - C. additional debates on the subject of independence

5. Minutemen were special troops that could be _____ and ready to fight at a moment's notice!
 - A. stockpiled
 - B. boycotted
 - C. gathered