

During the French and Indian War American newspapers began covering the war and printing stories from people on the soldiers, including George Washington. In this activity students will design the front cover of a newspaper from the time during the French and Indian War. Their newspaper should report an event that happened during the French and Indian War.

The French and Indian War was known in Europe as the Seven Years War. It was a war mainly between France and England, but since the two were global powers, the war was truly the first real world war. There were fronts fought around the world, but the main front was in the United States. Because of King George's War (1740-1748) the French were concerned about a looming confrontation with England so they built many forts along the western frontier in North America to be ready in case England attacked. About that time a company named the Ohio Company was started with the goal of exploring the Ohio Valley and increasing English fur trade. The English were perturbed by the continual French presence in the Ohio Valley and so George Washington was sent in 1753 to protest France's presence in the Ohio Valley.

Along the way to the Ohio Valley, Washington noticed a strategic location near present day Pittsburgh. He reported this location to the English, who set out to build a fort at this strategic position. While building the fort, the French attacked the English group and built their own fort, Fort Duquesne, in its place. This began the French and Indian War in America, but war was not officially declared between England and France until 1756. This can be seen in a short timeline listed below describing events during and leading up to the French and Indian War.

The French and Indian War was one of the first times in America that media played a role in a war. During the war, Benjamin Franklin's newspaper, the Pennsylvania Gazette, published the picture shown above. This picture was printed in newspapers throughout the colonies emphasizing the importance of all the colonies joining together to fight the French and Indians. In the 18th century the newspapers did not have reporters to report what was going on, so they relied upon information through diaries or letters from soldiers for news.

| Date | Event |
|----------------|---|
| 1753 | George Washington sent by Robert Dinwiddie (lieutenant governor of Virginia) to protest the French's continued presence in the Ohio Valley |
| 1753 | British forces attempt to build a fort near present day Pittsburgh, but are defeated by the French who build the fort and name it Fort Duquesne |
| July 3, 1754 | Battle of Great Meadows, Washington loses near Fort Duquesne |
| July 9, 1755 | General Edward Braddock is defeated and killed at Fort Duquesne |
| Summer 1755 | William Shirley was defeated at Fort Niagara |
| June 1755 | Shirley successfully took Fort Beausejour |
| September 1755 | General William Johnson stops the French advance on Lake George |
| May 1756 | France and England officially declare war on each other |

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| August 14-15, 1756 | French take Fort Oswego |
| August 9, 1757 | Louis Joseph takes Fort William Henry |
| July 27, 1758 | Jeffrey Amherst takes Louisbourg for England |
| August 27, 1758 | James Bradstreet takes Fort Frontenac |
| November 25, 1758 | Fort Duquesne falls to John Forbes and George Washington |
| June 26, 1759 | Sir William Johnson takes Fort Niagara |
| September 13, 1759 | Fall of Quebec |
| September 8, 1760 | Fall of Montreal |

- When reporting news in the 18th century, newspapers often just published letters or diaries they received from soldiers or other people who had experienced the event firsthand. Students should choose a perspective to write from, such as a soldier, soldier's wife, or a government official (French or British).
- First research the following questions, which will later be discussed in their newspaper article:
 - When did your event take place?
 - What happened? Who won? Who lost? And what was won?
 - What effect did that event have on the war?
 - Where were any major people involved in the event (ie: George Washington)?
- As an extension, students should also consider designing ads, drawing political cartoons, or writing other stories they think would appear at that time period, making the newspaper an authentic 18th century publication.