Standard 8.25 - Lexington and Concord
8.25 Identify and explain the significance of the major battles, leaders, and events of the American Revolution, including: (C, E, H, P, TN)

- Battles of Lexington and Concord

First Continental Congress

What do you do if you fail as a storekeeper and farmer? Become a lawyer! That’s what Patrick Henry did. By the time he became a member of the First Continental Congress, Henry was known as a great orator. Americans were fed up. The "Intolerable" Acts were more than the colonies could stand. In the summer that followed Parliament’s attempt to punish Boston, sentiment for the patriot cause increased dramatically. The printing presses at the Committees of Correspondence were churning out volumes.

There was agreement that this new quandary warranted another intercolonial meeting. It was nearly ten years since the Stamp Act Congress had assembled.

It was time once again for intercolonial action. Thus, on September 1774, the First Continental Congress was convened in Philadelphia.
The Intolerable Acts

- Quartering Act (March 24, 1765): This bill required that Colonial Authorities to furnish barracks and supplies to British troops. In 1766, it was expanded to public houses and unoccupied buildings.
- Boston Port Bill (June 1, 1774): This bill closed the port of Boston to all colonists until the damages from the Boston Tea Party were paid for.
- Administration of Justice Act (May 20, 1774): This bill stated that British Officials could not be tried in provincial courts for capital crimes. They would be extradited back to Britain and tried there.
- Massachusetts Government Act (May 20, 1774): This bill annulled the Charter of the Colonies, giving the British Governor complete control of the town meetings.
- Quebec Act (May 20, 1774): This bill extended the Canadian borders to cut off the western colonies of Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Virginia.
This time participation was better. Only Georgia withheld a delegation. The representatives from each colony were often selected by almost arbitrary means, as the election of such representatives was illegal.

Still, the natural leaders of the colonies managed to be selected. Sam and John Adams from Massachusetts were present, as was John Dickinson from Pennsylvania. Virginia selected Richard Henry Lee, George Washington, and Patrick Henry. It took seven weeks for the country’s future heroes to agree on a course of action.

First and most obvious, complete non-importation was resumed. The Congress set up an organization called the Association to ensure compliance in the colonies.

( Pictured Above: Carpenters’ Hall — the meeting place of the First Continental Congress)

A declaration of colonial rights was drafted and sent to London. Much of the debate revolved around defining the colonies’ relationship with mother England. A plan, introduced by Joseph Galloway of Pennsylvania, proposed an imperial union with Britain. Under this program, all acts of Parliament would have to be approved by an American assembly to take effect. Such an arrangement, if accepted by London, might have postponed revolution. But the delegations voted against it — by one vote.

One decision by the Congress often overlooked in importance is its decision to reconvene in May 1775 if their grievances were not addressed. This is a major step in creating an ongoing intercolonial decision making body, unprecedented in colonial history.

When Parliament chose to ignore the Congress, they did indeed reconvene that next May, but by this time boycotts were no longer a major issue. Unfortunately, the Second Continental Congress would be grappling with choices caused by the spilling of blood at Lexington and Concord the previous month. It was at Carpenters’ Hall that America came together politically for the first time on a national level and where the seeds of participatory democracy were sown.
Lexington and Concord

(Pictured Above: Ready to fight at a moment’s notice, minutemen began fighting early in the American Revolution. Their efforts at Lexington and Concord inspired many patriots to take up arms against Britain.)

The Shot Heard Round the World from Schoolhouse Rock

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rZMmPWTwTHc

Britain's General Gage had a secret plan.

During the wee hours of April 19, 1775, he would send out regiments of British soldiers quartered in Boston. Their destinations were Lexington, where they would capture Colonial leaders Sam Adams and John Hancock, then Concord, where they would seize gunpowder. But spies and friends of the Americans leaked word of Gage’s plan.

Two lanterns hanging from Boston’s North Church informed the countryside that the British were going to attack by sea. A series of horseback riders — men such as Paul Revere, William Dawes and Dr. Samuel Prescott — galloped off to warn the countryside that the Regulars (British troops) were coming.
Regulars

It is a myth that Revere and other riders shouted, "The British are coming!" This warning would have confused a good many of the Americans living in the countryside who still considered themselves British. The Regulars were known to be British soldiers.

"We set off for Concord, and were overtaken by a young gentleman named Prescot, who belonged to Concord, and was going home. When we had got about half way from Lexington to Concord, the other two stopped at a house to awake the men, I kept along ....

In an instant I saw four of them, who rode up to me with their pistols in their bands, said "G—d d—n you, stop. If you go an inch further, you are a dead man." Immediately Mr. Prescot came up. We attempted to get through them, but they kept before us, and swore if we did not turn in to that pasture, they would blow our brains out, (they had placed themselves opposite to a pair of bars, and had taken the bars down). They forced us in. When we had got in, Mr. Prescot said "Put on!" He took to the left, I to the right ...

Just as I reached it, out started six officers, seized my bridle, put their pistols to my breast, ordered me to dismount, which I did."

– Paul Revere, "Account of Midnight Ride to Lexington" (1775)

Lexington and the Minutemen

( Pictured Above: The first battle of the war, Lexington marked the beginning of the American Revolution. Although Lexington and Concord were considered British military victories, they gave a moral boost to the American colonists.)

Word spread from town to town, and militias prepared to confront the British and help their neighbors in Lexington and Concord. These Colonial militias had originally been organized to defend settlers from civil unrest and attacks by French or Native Americans. Selected members of the militia were called minutemen because they could be ready to fight in a minute’s time.
Sure enough, when the advance guard of nearly 240 British soldiers arrived in Lexington, they found about 70 minutemen formed on the Lexington Green awaiting them. Both sides eyed each other warily, not knowing what to expect. Suddenly, a bullet buzzed through the morning air. It was "the shot heard round the world."

Concord

( Pictured Above: Thomas Gage was appointed commander in chief of all British forces in North America in 1763.)

( Pictured Above: This map detail Paul Revere’s famous midnight ride to warn the colonists of British troops’ arrival.)

The numerically superior British killed seven Americans on Lexington Green and marched off to Concord with new regiments who had joined them. But American militias arriving at Concord thwarted the British advance.

As the British retreated toward Boston, new waves of Colonial militia intercepted them. Shooting from behind fences and trees, the militias inflicted over 125 casualties, including several officers. The ferocity of the encounter surprised both sides.

Battle of Lexington and Concord

Battles of Lexington and Concord
http://www.history.com/topics/american-revolution/battles-of-lexington-and-concord
Benedict Arnold and Ethan Allen Join the Cause

Benedict Arnold
Shortly after the battle, an express rider carried the news to New Haven, Connecticut, where a local militia commander and wealthy shopkeeper named Benedict Arnold demanded the keys to a local powder house.

After arming himself and paying money from his own pocket to outfit a group of militia from Massachusetts, Arnold and his men set off for upstate New York. He was searching for artillery that was badly needed for the Colonial effort and reckoned that he could commandeer some cannon by capturing Fort Ticonderoga, a rotted relic from the French and Indian War.

Up in the Hampshire Grants, part of modern-day Vermont, Ethan Allen who led a group called the Green Mountain Boys, also had the idea to capture Fort Ticonderoga. The two reluctantly worked together and surprised the poorly manned British fort before dawn on May 10, 1775. The fort’s commander had been asleep and surrendered in his pajamas!
Battle of Lexington and Concord