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# PEOPLE TO KNOW

## BIOGRAPHIES FOR CHAPTER THREE

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As you read, consider three things:

1. Who were these people: lawyers, adventurers, generals, priests, monarchs, business people, etc.
2. Why are these people important?
3. How did they affect others?

### George Washington

George Washington (1732-1799) through ambition, inheritance, and marriage made himself into one of the wealthiest men in the colonies. As an officer in the Virginia militia, Washington became a hero in the French and Indian War (1754-1763) where he showed his bravery and coolness during combat.

When the Revolution began, the Second Continental Congress appointed Washington as Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army on June 19, 1775. Washington seldom had the resources to defeat the British in battle; however, his leadership kept the Continental Army together.

Throughout the Revolutionary War, Washington remained loyal to the cause of liberty, obeyed orders from Congress; and he willingly gave up power and resigned from the army when the war was over.

### Thomas Paine

Thomas Paine (1737-1809) was born in England. His writing ability attracted the attention of Ben Franklin who urged Paine to move to America in 1774.

When hostilities began in 1775, Paine joined the Patriot cause. He published a pamphlet called *Common Sense* in January 1776. It became a national bestseller. He convinced many Americans that the British government was corrupt and only a break from the British Empire could guarantee the

liberty of the colonists. Six months after publishing *Common Sense*, all of the colonies voted for independence.

At the end of 1776, he published *The Crisis*, a series of essays that argued America could defeat Britain in the war.

### Thomas Jefferson

Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826) was born in Virginia and inherited a large fortune. He became a lawyer and eventually a politician.

During the Second Continental Congress, John Adams insisted that Jefferson write a declaration of independence to explain to the world why the colonies had a right to be independent. Jefferson used the popular ideas of the day to explain the purpose of government and the ideas of American democracy. Congress approved the document on July 4, 1776.

Three years later, Jefferson became governor of Virginia. Unfortunately, his good reputation suffered when he fled the capital at Richmond at the approach of a British army. Many people called him a coward.

### Benjamin Franklin

Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790) was born in Boston, Massachusetts, but moved to Philadelphia when a youth. He became well known through his printing business and experiments with electricity.

When war began with Britain in 1775, Franklin became the oldest revolutionary in the Second Continental Congress. In December of 1776, Congress sent him to France where he convinced the French to join the Americans after the British defeat at the Battle of Saratoga.

As the Revolutionary War was coming to an end, Benjamin Franklin proposed most of the peace conditions included in the Treaty of Paris of 1783 such as American independence and new borders expanding the United States westward to the Mississippi River.