



THE SECOND CONTINENTAL CONGRESS

MAY 10 1775

AMERICA  ALABAMA

RESOURCE INFORMATION

STANDARDS:

- 2010 Alabama Social Studies Course of Study
 - 5.8
 - 10.3
 - 12.2
- 2025 Alabama Social Studies Course of Study
 - 4.5b
 - 6.7b
 - 10.1
 - 12.2

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High School Activities Coming Soon

THE SECOND CONTINENTAL CONGRESS

On May 10, 1775, the Second Continental Congress met in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The colonies were at the beginning of a war with England for their independence. Many delegates were traveling to Philadelphia when the first shots were fired at Lexington and Concord on April 19, 1775.

The Second Continental Congress had big issues to tackle during this meeting. The first orders of business were to establish the Continental Army and to elect George Washington as the Commander in Chief of the Continental Army. Once that was done, the delegates began tackling the issues of whether or not they wanted to actually separate from England. Even though the delegates were angry, many did not want to split from Mother England, so they drafted the Olive Branch Petition. This document laid out ways for England and America to reconcile if America was given a vote in Parliament. Taxation without representation was not a war cry about the taxes themselves, but about the fact that the colonists had no say in the British Parliament. The Olive Branch Petition was the last shot at a peaceful end to the rising tensions between America and England. King George III refused to hear the petition and the delegates knew that it was time to move forward.

Richard Henry Lee, a delegate from Virginia, presented the Lee Resolution in June of 1776. His thoughts can be summarized in one quote, "Resolved, that these united colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent states..." The delegates were still not quite ready to take the large step into independence, but they were ready to get serious about the idea. The Committee of Five was formed to draft a declaration of independence. Thomas Jefferson, Virginia; John Adams, Massachusetts; Benjamin Franklin, Pennsylvania; Roger Sherman, Connecticut; and Robert Livingston, New York were on the committee, but Jefferson did most of the work on the draft. The final draft was presented and edited on July 2, 1776. The final vote on July 4th led to the passing of the Declaration of Independence without the signatures. Fifty of the delegates signed the document on August 2, 1776 with the other 5 signing it throughout 1777.

The Second Continental Congress continued to be the default government for the colonies as the war raged on and into the early years of our democratic republic. They made war decisions, sent delegates to discuss peace and alliances, and secured loans for the struggling country during the war. This Congress stayed in power until February of 1781. On March 1, 1781, the Confederation Congress would take over and begin to build the country we now know.

Name: _____

THE SECOND CONTINENTAL CONGRESS

1. When did the Second Continental Congress first meet?

- A. April 19, 1775
- B. May 10, 1775
- C. July 4, 1776
- D. March 1, 1781

2. What major event had just happened before the Congress met?

- A. The signing of the Declaration of Independence
- B. The battles of Lexington and Concord
- C. The Boston Tea Party
- D. The end of the Revolutionary War

3. What was one of the first things the Second Continental Congress did?

- A. Write the Constitution
- B. Form the Continental Army
- C. End the war
- D. Vote for independence

4. Who was chosen as Commander in Chief of the Continental Army?

- A. Benjamin Franklin
- B. George Washington
- C. Thomas Jefferson
- D. John Adams

5. What was the Olive Branch Petition?

- A. A letter asking King George to give up the colonies
- B. A final attempt at peace with England
- C. A list of battle strategies
- D. A plan to move the capital

Name: _____

THE SECOND CONTINENTAL CONGRESS

6. Why were the colonists upset about "taxation without representation"?

- A. They didn't want to pay any taxes
- B. They were taxed more than people in England
- C. They had no say in British Parliament
- D. The taxes were too confusing

7. What was the purpose of the Lee Resolution?

- A. To end the war
- B. To send troops to England
- C. To declare the colonies as free and independent
- D. To return to English rule

8. Who did most of the writing for the Declaration of Independence?

- A. John Adams
- B. Benjamin Franklin
- C. Thomas Jefferson
- D. Robert Livingston

9. When was the Declaration of Independence officially passed?

- A. May 10, 1775
- B. July 2, 1776
- C. July 4, 1776
- D. August 2, 1776

10. What happened after the Second Continental Congress ended?

- A. The Revolutionary War ended
- B. The Confederation Congress took over
- C. The colonies rejoined England
- D. George Washington became king

Name: _____

THE OLIVE BRANCH PETITION ACTIVITY

Directions: You are a delegate at the Second Continental Congress in 1775. Write a respectful letter to King George III asking for peace and fair treatment for the colonies. Here's an example to get you started.

TEMPLATE:

Date: _____

Dear King George III,

My name is _____, and I am a delegate from the colony of _____. I am writing to you because

_____ (Explain why you and the other colonists are upset.) We love our country, but we feel that

_____ (Talk about your feelings toward England and what is unfair.) One big issue is

_____. (Explain a major complaint, like taxes or no vote in Parliament.) We would like to stay part of England if

_____ (Say what you hope the King will change.) This letter is a peaceful request. We hope you will listen and give the colonies a voice.

Sincerely,
(Your Name)

THE OLIVE BRANCH PETITION ACTIVITY

Sincerely,

Name: _____

THE SECOND CONTINENTAL CONGRESS COMIC

Directions:

- Read the passage carefully.
- Choose 6 key scenes to include in your comic.
- In each panel, draw the scene, add dialogue or narration, and label important people or places.
- Use the Comic Planning Sheet to brainstorm before drawing the final comic.

Box #	Characters	Event	Dialogue

Name: _____

THE SECOND CONTINENTAL CONGRESS COMIC
