The Colonists and England Cannot Agree

1. Here you see two men arguing. The one on the left represents Parliament, the government of England. The man on the right represents the American colonists including those who lived in Virginia.

Colonists

Parliament

2. The Problem:

The colonists and the English Parliament disagreed over how the colonies should be governed (ruled).

3. Parliament believed it had legal authority in the colonies, while the colonists believed their local assemblies had legal authority. Legal authority means the right to rule or make laws.

4. Parliament believed it had the right to make the colonists pay taxes to England, but the colonists believed they should not be taxed. After all, they had no representation in Parliament. No one from any of the thirteen colonies was a member of Parliament.

5. England was thousands of miles across the Atlantic Ocean. Travel was slow. It would not be possible for someone living in the Virginia Colony to be a lawmaker in Parliament. How could Parliament know what was right for the colonies? The colonists wanted to make their own laws and to pay taxes to their own government.

6. How could this problem be solved? The colonists told the king, "We want to be free," but the king said, "No!" So, the colonists decided to set themselves free and to become independent. Thomas Jefferson wrote the *Declaration of Independence*. What do you think happened next?

7. To show they were serious, the colonies created an army called the "Continental Army." The English army was powerful and well equipped, but they could not defeat the ragtag soldiers who wanted their freedom. The Revolutionary War ended at Yorktown, Virginia.

Declaration of Independence

The Declaration of Independence, written by Thomas Jefferson, states that authority to govern belongs to the people rather than to kings and that all people are created equal and have rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Roles Virginians Played in the Revolutionary War

Other Virginians remained loyal to England.

Some Virginians were neutral and did not take sides.

Virginia patriots served in the Continental Army and fought against the English, leading to the English surrender at Yorktown.

Roles Virginians Played in the Revolutionary War

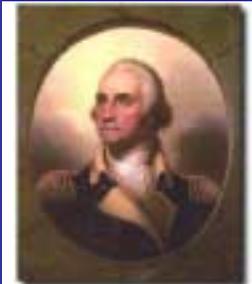|		
James Armistead Lafayette, a slave from Virginia, served in the Continental Army and was given his freedom after the war.	African Americans from Virginia were divided about the war. Some slaves fought for the English because they were promised freedom.	During the war, women took on more responsibility.

Contributions of Virginians during the Revolutionary War Era

Patrick Henry inspired patriots from other colonies when he spoke out against taxation without representation by saying, "…give me liberty or give me death."	Thomas Jefferson provided political leadership by expressing the reasons for colonial independence from England in the Declaration of Independence.	George Washington provided military leadership by serving as commander-in-chief of the Continental Army.