

Saratoga

National Historical Park



The Battles of Saratoga –ACTIVITY KEY

Goals, Themes, Objectives

Goals:

For students to gain an understanding of factors in the Battles of Saratoga that contributed to the American victory, and of the results of that victory.

Themes:

The Battles of Saratoga, although taking place on only two days in the autumn of 1777, were crucial to the outcome of the War for American Independence.

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to list basic details on the Battles of Saratoga.
2. Students will be able to analyze a written description on the Battles of Saratoga and provide / describe reasons behind the American victory and British defeat.
3. Students will become aware of the international impact of these two battles in New York.

Supplies

- photocopies
- pencils

Summary / Introduction

This activity gives a summary account of the Battles of Saratoga. Using this summary, students will then answer several questions. Some of the questions require only knowledge-level responses. Others require a degree of analytical reading to answer the questions.

While the events that occurred at the Battles of Saratoga changed the course of the American Revolution, and in fact became something of a world war, many people living in the vicinity of the battlefield are scarcely even aware of the critical American victory that was won nearly in their back yard. The significance of this American victory cannot be understated.

Read the following passage about the Battles of Saratoga. Use the information in the reading to answer the questions below.

The first day of fighting, September 19th, 1777, was technically a British victory. They held the ground (stayed), and the Americans had retreated behind their own lines.

Two and a half weeks of relative quiet followed. During that time, the British forces grew weaker. Starting out with about 7500 men On September 19th, their numbers would fall to about 6700 by October 6th. They ran short on food, and the days were getting cooler. The soldiers had to do all their own heavy work in camp, including building protective walls and earthworks (long piles of dirt).

The American forces grew stronger, from about 8500 on September 19th to about 13,000 on October 6th. Militia soldiers entering camp helped by doing much of the heavy work, leaving the continental (regular) soldiers less tired. The Americans also had more supplies, but not without work. Citizens of the city of Albany melted the lead from their windows (used to hold the glass in place) so the troops could make musket balls. Farmers' animals and crops were taken by the American army –sometimes paid for, but not always.

Their many advantages resulted in the Americans winning the second day of fighting, on October 7th, 1777, and to the British surrender, ten days later, on October 17th, 1777. That American victory brought France in the war on the side of the United States and gave the Americans needed supplies, more soldiers, and foreign support. That support helped guarantee United States independence.

1. List three reasons why the delay between the two days of fighting bad for the British?
fewer soldiers, fewer supplies, weather getting colder, soldiers had to do lots of heavy work
2. How did the delay help the Americans? Give three reasons. got more soldiers, had more food, militia soldiers did much of the hard work, had more supplies
3. Who won the first day of fighting? On what date? British September 19, 1777
4. Who won the second day? On what date? Americans October 7, 1777
5. What was the result of the American victory at the Battles of Saratoga? What nation joined the war on the side of the United States and helped guarantee American Independence? France