

### Comparing Strengths and Weaknesses

When the Revolutionary War began, many people in America and Europe thought that the colonists had little chance of defeating the British. A close look at the strengths and weaknesses of the two sides makes it easy to see why the odds were against the patriots.

For each of the areas of comparison below, decide whether the colonists or British are strong or weak in that particular category. For a strong rating, give the colonists or British 3 or 2 points. Give 1 or 0 points for a weak rating. For example, in the first area of comparison, Great Britain has a much larger population than the Thirteen Colonies. This means that the British are capable of putting a larger army on the battlefield. It would be reasonable to give 3 points to the British and just 1 to the colonists.

After you have awarded points to the colonists and British in all twelve areas of comparison, look again at the twelve areas and decide which three might have the greatest effect on the outcome of the war. For example, the "size of the navy" (number 3) would be much more important than "uniforms and awards" (number 8). For the three areas that you have decided are of greatest importance, change the scoring by multiplying the points for each side by 3. Thus, if you gave the British 3 points for "size of the navy" and the colonists 1 point, the numbers would be changed to 9 points for the British and 3 for the colonists ( $3 \times 3 = 9$ ;  $1 \times 3 = 3$ ).

After changing the points in the three most important categories, add up the points for both sides. Your totals should show which side had the advantage at the beginning of the Revolutionary War.

<u>Area of Comparison</u>	<u>Colonists</u>	<u>British</u>
(1) population	_____ 2,750,000	_____ 12,000,000
(2) support of the people	_____ 1/3 of the people were Loyalists; many others were against the war	_____ the war was unpopular in England; England had recently been involved in a war with France
(3) size of the navy	_____ no regular navy; many privateers	_____ best navy in the world
(4) familiarity with the land	_____ fighting on home ground	_____ fighting in unfamiliar territory
(5) organization of the army	_____ as a general rule, troops in one colony would not fight under officers from another colony; men from different sections did not mingle; the "militia," made up of local citizens, usually refused to leave their own colony	_____ highly-organized; soldiers fought wherever they were needed

(6) officers and soldiers	many arguments between officers from different areas; for the most part officers were poorly trained; soldiers often refused to obey orders and freely criticized their commanders	highly-disciplined army, soldiers respected their well-trained officers; orders were readily obeyed
(7) term of military duty	normal term of service was one year; Congress did not have the power to draft men; the small, regular army was more dependable than the militia where desertions were high	soldiers were drafted and could be counted on for a lengthy term of duty
(8) uniforms and awards	average soldier wore ordinary clothes instead of a uniform; no awards or decorations for outstanding soldiers	red uniforms were worn by all; awards and decorations given to outstanding soldiers
(9) weapons, supplies, and transportation	shortage of food, clothing, tents, blankets, medical supplies, arms, and ammunition; depended on land transportation because sea routes were threatened by British navy	had everything that colonists lacked; controlled travel along seacoast
(10) reason for fighting	fighting to protect homes and families, and for freedom to govern themselves	British soldiers had no particular interest in the war; England itself was not threatened
(11) amount of wealth	very little money; Congress did not have the power to tax; the wealthiest colonists were Loyalists	richest country in the world
(12) amount of manufacturing	very little manufacturing	produced more manufactured goods than any other country in the world
	Total Points	Total Points