**Beginning in 1689, Great Britain and France fought one another in a series of wars for control of European and colonial trade. The French and Indian War (1754-1763) was the last of a series of wars fought between the countries and their respective allies. The war began in North America as a result of ongoing British-American expansion into the Ohio River Valley, which was also claimed by France. Most American Indians in the region were allies of the French. The American Indians liked the French because they traded but did not settle on the land. The French persuaded their Indian allies to join them in preventing further settlement in the disputed region west of the Appalachian Mountains.**

**Great Britain eventually won the war. The 1763 Treaty of Paris was the negotiated settlement that ended the French and Indian War. Its provisions forced France to turn over control of Canada to Great Britain. France also surrendered its claim to all land east of the Mississippi River, with the exception of the city of New Orleans. The end of the French and Indian War brought Great Britain great benefits. The British were now in control of the largest empire in the world and were in a dominant position in Europe. However, over 70 years of fighting various wars had nearly bankrupted the British government.**

**American Indians were very concerned about how the outcome of the French and Indian War would impact the land they occupied in the Ohio River Valley, which had been transferred from French to British control under the provisions of the 1763 Treaty of Paris. That same year, the American Indian Chief Pontiac of the Ottawa Nation led a coalition of Native Americans in an attempt to drive the British and American colonial families out of the region. Thousands of British Americans were killed as well as hundreds of British troops. Pontiac’s War was concluded with the help of the Iroquois Confederacy and skillful diplomacy. To prevent further American Indian attacks, Parliament passed the Proclamation of 1763 (aka Proclamation Line of 1763) in an attempt to prevent any more American colonists from settling beyond the Appalachian Mountains. The Proclamation established an imaginary line along the Appalachian Mountains that colonists were not settle past. The new law angered colonists and wealthy colonial land agents as they believed they were entitled to the land they had helped to secure through fighting with the British in the French and Indian War. Unable to enforce the law due to the vast amount of land in the region and a shortage of troops to patrol there, the Proclamation of 1763 never really stopped migration into the area. The Americans ignored the law and settled in the Ohio River Valley anyway**.

**The French and Indian War had more than doubled the British national debt.** **Shortly after the 1763 Treaty of Paris was negotiated, the British government announced that colonies would be taxed to cover the cost of their protection. These taxes included the Sugar Act of 1764. The Sugar Act imposed a tax on the importation of molasses, the key ingredient for making rum. The new law also created Vice-Admiralty courts, which tried suspected smugglers before a military court instead of a civilian court. These new measures angered American colonial importers who chose to ignore the new laws. The inability of the British government to collect the new tax led to the passage of a more widespread tax, the Stamp Act of 1765. The tax was collected on every document or newspaper printed or used in the colonies. Previous taxes had only impacted certain groups, such as molasses importers, but the Stamp Act affected everyone in colonial America. The taxes ranged from one shilling a newspaper to ten pounds for a lawyer’s license. The law required that a stamp be affixed to the taxable property to show that the tax had been paid. In addition, the tax was to be paid with hard currency (not colonial paper money) and would be enforced through the Vice-Admiralty courts.**

**Given that the American colonists successfully fought alongside the British regular soldiers in the French and Indian War, it seems as though the relationship between them would have been strengthened by the coordinated effort. However, the outcome of the war strained the colonial and British relationship and fueled the calls for independence by the colonists. The colonists felt empowered by their military contributions to the war and also felt disrespected by the restrictions and tax burden placed on them after the 1763 Treaty of Paris was signed. The spoils of victory were not enjoyed by the colonists, who believed their militia groups had contributed greatly to the British military success. As a result, the tension created by the French and Indian War and the 1763 Treaty of Paris laid the groundwork for the American Revolution.**