Two Sides, One War

Compare strengths and challenges in the Revolutionary War

5.C.4.2 "Compare the advantages and disadvantages of the British and the American colonies during the Revolutionary War, including military leadership and strength, population, resources, and foreign alliances."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two British advantages, circle two American advantages, and write B and A beside one problem each side faced so you can compare their strengths and limits.

What Each Side Brought to the War

1. In 1777, British and American armies fought for control of the colonies. Britain had a larger population than the colonies and a trained army with experienced officers. Its powerful navy could move soldiers along the coast. The Americans had fewer trained soldiers, but General George Washington kept his army together through difficult years. American soldiers also fought on familiar ground, while British commanders had to direct forces far from home.

2. A soldier needed more than a plan. Britain could pay for weapons and supplies with its greater wealth, but those supplies often crossed the Atlantic Ocean. Storms and long trips could slow delivery. The colonies had farms that could feed troops nearby, yet the Continental Army often lacked shoes, food, and gunpowder. Britain also had to protect many places, so it could not send every soldier to one battle.

3. At first, the Americans had no powerful foreign ally fighting beside them. After the American victory at Saratoga in 1777, France formed an alliance with the United States in 1778. France sent money, weapons, troops, and warships. British forces now faced another powerful enemy at sea and on land. In 1781, French ships helped block British escape at Yorktown while American and French troops surrounded the British army.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Compare one strength of Britain's military with one strength Washington gave the American army.

2. Britain had a larger population. What advantage did American soldiers have that Britain's larger population could not give its soldiers?

3. Compare how Britain and the colonies got supplies. What problem did each side face?

4. How did the Americans' foreign alliances change by 1778, and what new problem did this create for Britain?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you are advising Washington in 1778. In four sentences, propose a plan that uses two American advantages and deals with one British advantage, then explain why your plan might work using details from the passage.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 5 · 5.C.4.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two British advantages, circle two American advantages, and write B and A beside one problem each side faced so you can compare their strengths and limits. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Compare one strength of Britain's military with one strength Washington gave the American army.	**Britain had a trained army with experienced officers. Washington kept the American army together through difficult years.**
2	Britain had a larger population. What advantage did American soldiers have that Britain's larger population could not give its soldiers?	**American soldiers fought on familiar ground, while British forces were far from home.**
3	Compare how Britain and the colonies got supplies. What problem did each side face?	**Britain could pay for supplies, but shipments from across the Atlantic could be slow. The colonies had nearby farms, but the Continental Army still often lacked food and other supplies.**
4	How did the Americans' foreign alliances change by 1778, and what new problem did this create for Britain?	**The Americans gained France as an ally in 1778. Britain then faced another powerful enemy at sea and on land.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would have American troops use their knowledge of local land to choose where to fight. I would ask French warships to challenge British ships near the coast. Britain has a powerful navy, so keeping its ships busy could make it harder to move soldiers. Fighting on familiar ground while France helps at sea could give our smaller army a better chance.

Accept other passage-supported comparisons. For the open task, look for two American advantages, one British advantage, and a clear reason the proposed plan might work.