Who Could Supply?

Compare the resources behind Revolutionary War armies.

8.C.2.3.A "Compare military strength and available resources, including financial support from private individuals and allied nations, as well as French support negotiated by Benjamin Franklin."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two British military or financial strengths, circle two American resource limits, and put a star beside examples of help from private individuals or France to show how support changed the balance.

The Resources Behind the Armies

1 Imagine trying to supply an army across an ocean. In the American Revolution, Britain began with a powerful navy and a trained, professional army. British leaders could draw on taxes, government loans, and an empire's supply networks to pay soldiers and ship equipment. The Continental Army, led by George Washington, was smaller and often short of uniforms, food, gunpowder, and reliable pay. Many American soldiers served for limited terms, making it hard to keep experienced units together. Yet British supplies had to cross the Atlantic, a costly and slow trip.

2 The Continental Congress could not levy national taxes, so it asked states to send money and supplies. States sometimes sent less than the army needed. Private individuals helped fill gaps, though they could not match Britain's treasury. Merchant Robert Morris used his own credit to help buy supplies and secure loans for the American cause. The Marquis de Lafayette, a young French nobleman, traveled to America at his own expense and served without pay. Such help kept soldiers equipped and showed that the struggle drew supporters beyond Congress.

3 France had quietly sent supplies to the Americans before becoming their official ally. In Paris, Benjamin Franklin worked with other American diplomats to win French support. After the American victory at Saratoga in 1777, France signed treaties with the United States in 1778. France then supplied loans, soldiers, and warships, giving the Americans resources they could not easily provide alone. French naval power helped block British escape and resupply at Yorktown in 1781. Britain still had a formidable army, but its forces now faced an enemy backed by another major power.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Britain's ways of paying for its army compare with the Continental Congress's?

2. How did Robert Morris and Lafayette each help make up for resources the Americans lacked?

3. How did French support change after the 1778 treaties, and why did that matter for American strength?

4. Britain began the war with a powerful navy. How did French naval support at Yorktown reduce that advantage?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you are advising a member of Congress in 1778. Write four sentences recommending where the Americans should seek resources. Compare one British advantage with one American shortage, then explain how both private support and the new French alliance could help, using at least two specific details from the passage.

ANSWER KEY

Who Could Supply?

GRADE 8 · 8.C.2.3.A

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two British military or financial strengths, circle two American resource limits, and put a star beside examples of help from private individuals or France to show how support changed the balance. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Britain's ways of paying for its army compare with the Continental Congress's?	**Britain could use taxes and government loans. Congress could not levy national taxes and had to ask states for money and supplies.**
2	How did Robert Morris and Lafayette each help make up for resources the Americans lacked?	**Morris used his credit to help buy supplies and secure loans. Lafayette paid for his own travel and served without pay, reducing costs for the American cause.**
3	How did French support change after the 1778 treaties, and why did that matter for American strength?	**Before the treaties, France quietly sent supplies. Afterward, it provided loans, soldiers, and warships that the Americans could not easily provide themselves.**
4	Britain began the war with a powerful navy. How did French naval support at Yorktown reduce that advantage?	**French naval power helped block British escape and resupply at Yorktown, limiting what Britain's naval strength could do for its trapped forces.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Britain's taxes and government loans give it steadier funding than Congress, which cannot levy national taxes. Congress should seek more help from private supporters like Robert Morris, whose credit can help buy supplies. It should also work with France, whose loans and warships could strengthen American forces. French ships could challenge British control of sea routes, while private credit could ease shortages at home.

Accept other passage-based comparisons of British advantages and American limits. For the open task, look for four sentences that recommend resources and explain distinct contributions from private supporters and France.