

## Compare and Contrast – The First and Second Continental Congresses

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**The meetings of the First and Second Continental Congresses were important events in America's revolutionary era. Both congresses featured similarities and major differences. Descriptions of each congress is provided below.**

### First Continental Congress:

In response to the Intolerable Acts, America's first Continental Congress met on September 5, 1774. 56 delegates from 12 colonies met at Carpenter's Hall in Philadelphia to discuss a unified position and Parliament's assertion that it could control the colonies. Georgia was the only colony that refused to send a delegate.

As part of the convention, John Adams drafted the Declaration of Rights which countered that America need not respect decisions by Parliament that involved domestic affairs within America. Furthermore, the delegates agreed to resume the boycott on British goods until the Intolerable Acts were repealed. During the two-month long convention, delegates also agreed that if the new royal governor of Massachusetts attempted to rule by force, the residents had a right to defend themselves, and that colonists from throughout America would come to their aid. The congress agreed to meet again in May of 1775.

### Second Continental Congress:

On May 10, 1775, the Continental Congress met for the second time in Philadelphia. Unlike the circumstances during which the first Congress was held, the American Revolution had begun and American soldiers, known as "minutemen" had been killed. The delegates to the Second Continental Congress chose John Hancock, a wealthy Massachusetts merchant and chief financial contributor to the Sons of Liberty, as president. While Georgia refused to send a delegate to the First Continental Congress, they eventually agreed to send one this time.

The Second Continental Congress made decisions like an actual government. It authorized the production of paper money and named Benjamin Franklin Postmaster General (in charge of the Post Office). Most importantly, it authorized the creation of the Continental Army and George Washington as Commander-in-Chief. It would become the legislative branch of the war effort that would sign treaties, make declarations, and appoint ambassadors.

Some delegates of the Second Continental Congress still wished to avoid war, most notably John Dickinson from Pennsylvania. They sent a petition known as the Olive Branch Petition to Parliament to express their wish for peace and to appeal to the king to respect their rights. At the same time, the British had intercepted a letter from John Adams stating his belief that war was inevitable and that the United States should have already built up its military. Subsequently, the Olive Branch Petition was rejected by England, and King George hired 30,000 German troops to fight alongside the British in War against America.

On July 2, 1776, the Second Continental Congress approved the measure to declare independence from England. Two days later, the actual Declaration of Independence was approved.

Based on your reading of both congresses, construct a chart below that details three similarities and three differences between them. The first set has been done for you.

Similarities between the First and Second Continental Congress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Both congresses met in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania</li></ul>

Differences between the First and Second Continental Congress	
First Continental Congress	Second Continental Congress

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Was held in 1774, before there American and British soldiers were killed</li></ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Was held in 1775, when a major battle at Lexington and Concord had already taken place.</li></ul>