**British Strengths and American Weaknesses**

The British seemed unbeatable. During the previous 100 years, the British had enjoyed triumph after triumph over nations as powerful as France and Spain. At first glance, the odds were clearly against the Americans. A closer look provides insight into how the underdogs emerged victorious.

Britain's military was the best in the world. Their soldiers were well equipped, well disciplined, well paid, and well fed. The British navy dominated the seas. Funds were much more easily raised by the Empire than by the Continental Congress.

Some of those funds were used to hire Hessian mercenaries to fight the Americans.

The Americans had tremendous difficulty raising enough funds to purchase basic supplies for their troops, including shoes and blankets. The British had a winning tradition. Around one in five Americans openly favored the Crown, with about half of the population hoping to avoid the conflict altogether. Most Indian tribes sided with Britain, who promised protection of tribal lands.

**American Strengths and British Weaknesses**

On the other hand, the Americans had many intangible advantages.

The British fought a war far from home. Military orders, troops, and supplies sometimes took months to reach their destinations. The British had an extremely difficult objective. They had to persuade the Americans to give up their claims of independence. As long as the war continued, the colonists' claim continued to gain validity. The geographic vastness of the colonies proved a hindrance to the British effort. Despite occupying every major city, the British remained as at a disadvantage.

Americans had a grand cause: fighting for their rights, their independence and their liberty. This cause is much more just than waging a war to deny independence. American military and political leaders were inexperienced, but proved surprisingly competent.

The war was expensive and the British population debated its necessity. In Parliament, there were many American sympathizers. Finally, the alliance with the French gave Americans courage and a tangible threat that tipped the scales in America's favor.