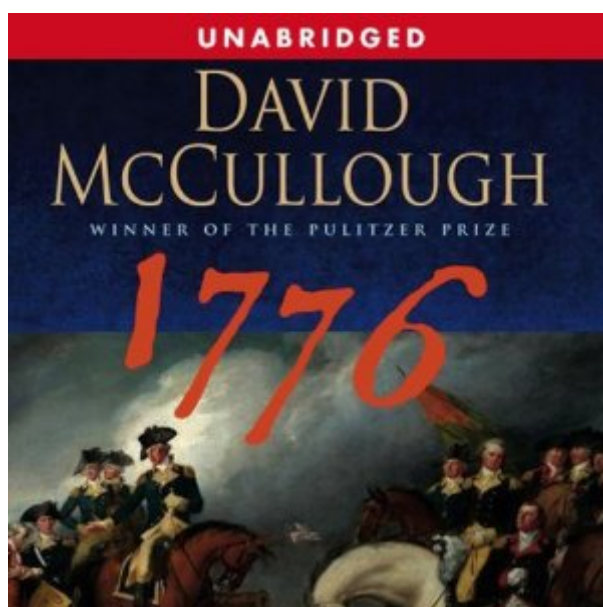


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# 1776



## Synopsis

In this stirring audiobook, David McCullough tells the intensely human story of those who marched with General George Washington in the year of the Declaration of Independence, when the whole American cause was riding on their success, without which all hope for independence would have been dashed and the noble ideals of the Declaration would have amounted to little more than words on paper. Based on extensive research in both American and British archives, 1776 is the story of Americans in the ranks, men of every shape, size, and color, farmers, schoolteachers, shoemakers, no-accounts, and mere boys turned soldiers. And it is the story of the British commander, William Howe, and his highly disciplined redcoats, who looked on their rebel foes with contempt and fought with a valor too little known. But it is the American commander-in-chief who stands foremost: Washington, who had never before led an army in battle. The darkest hours of that tumultuous year were as dark as any Americans have known. Especially in our own tumultuous time, 1776 is powerful testimony to how much is owed to a rare few in that brave founding epoch, and what a miracle it was that things turned out as they did. Written as a companion work to his celebrated biography of John Adams, David McCullough's 1776 is another landmark in the literature of American history.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Originally published in 2005, 1776 by David McCullough was an enjoyable read. This new illustrated version is sure to add new life to an already successful book. Since there are two issues here, the

original text and then the illustrated revision, I'm going to review the two issues separately. Let me begin by saying, quite simply, I enjoyed the book. This book serves as somewhat of an overview of what is perhaps the most critical year of the last millenium. Some may dissagree with that and may make legitimate cases for other years of historical significance, but that is for another discussion. McCullough recounts the major events of the year and gives good narrative of each event. However, just as the Revolutionary War was somewhat slow to get starting, so too is this book. The accounts are all meticulously accurate in the historical sense and McCullough has certainly succeeded in amassing the information critical to a basic knowledge of what events transpired in bringing forth American independence. The deeper the reader gets into the book, as with the war itself, the more complex it becomes and I found myself soon rivited to every detail and this one becomes, what many might refer to as a real "page turner". By the time the reader reaches the final pages, the year 1776 is drawing to a close, and sadly, so does the book. Perhaps in this way, McCullough has served to stimulate the interest of readers first learning of the events and will cause them to take their research of America's founding to the next level. I usually have a pretty good idea of what I want to say in reviewing a book, but this one has left me a bit perplexed. It is a good book, which I did enjoy reading, but perhaps it is due to what I have read of McCullough's work before that left me somewhat dissappointed. I expected more from this book, but I suppose asking a two time Pulitzer winner to replicate prior efforts may be asking too much. Now, for the illustrated portion of 1776. I first discovered this extraordinary new concept in a book I found for my grandkids called Piratology, where the book contained insert pages with folders which contained maps and other pirate related treasures. The book was a huge hit with the pirate infatuated boys. Here, the folders contain a variety of facsimiles such as documents, letters, maps, etc. This version also contains some beautiful photographs and is a gorgeous binding that looks extraordinary on the book shelf. I only gave McCullough's original 1776 four stars, but this illustrated version is a definite upgrade and pushes this volume to top honors.

David McCullough is known as a sterling storyteller of American history with two Pulitzer Prizes for Biography ("John Adams" 2001 and "Truman" 1992) and a National Book Award ("Mornings on Horseback" 1981). What many readers may not realize is that he is a researcher par excellence as evidence by the ten years he spent reading original documents, interviewing and travelling to relevant sites for "Truman." Now he utilizes some of his previous background research for "John Adams" to tell the tale of the crucial year of the American Revolution. "1776." Most Americans are familiar with the Christmas Eve crossing of the Delaware River to win the Battle of Trenton and to

close out 1776. Mr. McCullough describes the more unfamiliar stories of the American siege of Boston in driving out the British army and the British victory in driving the Revolutionary army from New York City. His real strength is as an editor, in choosing which historical stories to include and to exclude, for his 284 page narrative (with 100 additional pages of supporting documentation) could easily have been thrice its current length. In fact, David Hackett Fischer's "Washington Crossing" (2004) and William Dwyer's "The Day Is Ours" (1983) are both over 400+ pages in reciting only the Battles of Trenton and Princeton. The reader should be aware that "1776" is merely an introduction to that year, for the actions of the other Founding Fathers (and Mothers) are barely mentioned. "1776" is fun to read as the 229th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence approaches. Mr. McCullough makes clear how close the American Revolution came to failing that year. British overconfidence and Washington's determination (for his battlefield experience as a military commander was nil) were the difference. The reader is directed to "Patriots" (1988) by A.J. Langguth for the best overall view of the American Revolution (1761-1783).

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