

The Long Fuse

How Twelve Years of Taxes, Tea & Talking Back Became a Revolution

Unit 3 3.3 Taxation Without Representation

“Suppose a military force sent into America, they will find nobody in arms ... They will not find a rebellion; they may indeed make one.”

Benjamin Franklin

The Examination of Doctor Benjamin Franklin, February 13, 1766

What the exam expects

Evaluate the extent to which the Seven Years' War marked a turning point in American relations with Great Britain.

The war marked a sharp turn because it nearly doubled Britain's debt. To pay for about 10,000 troops left in America, Britain ended **salutary neglect** and taxed colonists with the **Sugar Act** and the **Stamp Act**. Colonists still felt British, yet they now challenged Parliament's right to tax them.

Why did British colonists object to the Stamp Act, and what did "no taxation without representation" reject?

Colonists objected because Parliament taxed them without their consent, a violation of the **rights of Englishmen**. The **Stamp Act Congress** declared that only colonial assemblies could tax colonists, since no colonist sat in the House of Commons. The slogan "no taxation without representation" rejected **virtual representation**, Britain's claim that Parliament spoke for the whole empire.

Briefly explain one similarity or difference in how two groups in North America responded to a British policy from 1763 to 1783.

Artisans and laborers in the **Sons of Liberty** and women in the **Daughters of Liberty** both resisted Parliament's taxes by refusing British goods. The Sons used crowds to force stamp distributors out and to enforce **nonimportation agreements**, while the Daughters spun homespun so families could do without British cloth.

Identify one factor that increased tensions between Britain and its colonies from 1763 to 1776, and explain how it led to revolution.

The **Tea Act** turned a quiet dispute into a crisis, since anyone who bought its cheap tea also paid Parliament's tax. Bostonians dumped the tea, Parliament punished Massachusetts with the **Coercive Acts**, and the colonies answered together in the **First Continental Congress**. Within months, militia and British regulars were fighting at Lexington and Concord.

Don't mix these up

- × "By 1774 colonists all wanted independence from Britain." Into 1775 most Patriots demanded their rights as British subjects, and Congress sent the king the Olive Branch Petition that July.
- × "Colonists' slogan "no taxation without representation" attacked salutary neglect." The slogan rejected virtual representation, and colonists wanted a return to the salutary neglect of the years before 1763.
- × "The Declaratory Act declared the colonists' rights." Parliament passed the Declaratory Act in 1766 to claim full power over the colonies, while the Stamp Act Congress wrote the Declaration of Rights and Grievances.

Study list

	What it was	Why it matters
Salutary neglect 1720s–1763	Britain's long habit of loosely enforcing its trade laws and letting colonial assemblies run local affairs and tax their own voters.	When Britain ended it after 1763, colonists long used to self-rule resisted both the new taxes and the crackdown on smuggling.
Proclamation of 1763 Proclamation Line 1763	King George III's order barring colonial settlement and private land purchases west of the Appalachians and reserving that land for Native nations.	Settlers and land speculators such as George Washington ignored the line, and the closed West became one more grievance against Britain.
Sugar Act Revenue Act of 1764 1764	George Grenville's law that halved the duty on foreign molasses to 3 pence a gallon and tightened enforcement. Accused smugglers now faced vice-admiralty courts, which had no jury.	With this law Parliament taxed colonial trade to pay for the army in America, while earlier duties had mainly regulated it.
Rights of Englishmen 1764–1775	The liberties colonists claimed as British subjects, above all the right to pay only taxes their elected representatives approved, along with trial by jury and no peacetime army without their assemblies' consent.	Colonists turned Britain's own constitution against Parliament and claimed every right that Britons at home enjoyed.
Virtual representation 1760s	The British argument that Parliament represented the whole empire, colonists included, just as it represented big towns like Manchester that sent no members.	To colonists, only representatives they elected could tax them, and they elected no one to Parliament.
Stamp Act 1765	Parliament's first direct tax on the colonists, which required revenue stamps on newspapers, wills, licenses, and even playing cards and dice.	Because it fell on printers, lawyers, and merchants, the colonists best able to stir up protest, resistance spread from colony to colony.
Quartering Act 1765	A law that made the colonies house and supply British troops in barracks, inns, and empty buildings. Neither it nor the 1774 version put soldiers in occupied homes.	New York's assembly refused to supply the troops in full, and Parliament voted in 1767 to suspend it until it gave in.
Sons of Liberty 1765	Local resistance groups of artisans, laborers, and merchants whose crowds forced stamp distributors to quit and later enforced boycotts of British goods.	By the time the Stamp Act took effect, their protests had made it unenforceable almost everywhere.

	What it was	Why it matters
Stamp Act Congress 1765	A meeting of delegates from nine colonies in New York. Their Declaration of Rights and Grievances said that only colonial assemblies could tax colonists.	Colonies acted together against Parliament for the first time, yet the delegates still declared their loyalty to the king.
Nonimportation agreements 1765–1775	Pledges by colonial merchants to stop importing British goods, which crowds enforced and households backed by refusing to buy. The main waves followed the Stamp, Townshend, and Coercive Acts.	Lost sales turned British merchants into lobbyists for repeal of the Stamp Act and later the Townshend duties.
Declaratory Act 1766	The law Parliament passed the same day it repealed the Stamp Act, declaring its full power to bind the colonies “in all cases whatsoever.”	Britain gave up the tax but kept the principle, and in 1767 Parliament used that claimed power to tax again.
Townshend Acts Townshend duties 1767	Charles Townshend’s duties on imported glass, lead, paint, paper, and tea, whose revenue paid royal governors and judges and freed them from colonial assemblies that had controlled their salaries.	Resistance to the duties revived the boycotts and brought British troops to Boston in 1768.
Daughters of Liberty 1768–1770	Patriot women who spun homespun at public spinning bees and gave up British tea and cloth, especially during the boycott of the Townshend duties.	Women decided much of what households bought and wore, and boycotts could not work without them.
Boston Massacre 1770	The shooting in Boston where British soldiers fired into a crowd pelting them with snowballs, ice, and sticks. Five men died, among them Crispus Attucks, a sailor of African and Native descent.	Paul Revere’s engraving, which showed soldiers firing on command into a peaceful crowd, spread the Patriot version across the colonies.
Committees of Correspondence 1772	Letter networks that shared news of British actions and planned resistance. Samuel Adams started Boston’s committee, and in 1773 Virginia’s assembly began linking the colonies.	Protest had faded between crises, but a standing network kept towns and colonies planning together.
Tea Act 1773	Parliament’s law to rescue the East India Company by letting it sell tea through its own colonial agents. The Company’s tea now undersold smuggled Dutch tea but still carried the Townshend duty.	Colonists resisted a law that lowered prices, because buying the cheaper tea meant accepting Parliament’s right to tax.

	What it was	Why it matters
Boston Tea Party 1773	A protest in which Bostonians, mostly artisans and laborers in Mohawk disguises, dumped 342 chests of tea into the harbor after Governor Hutchinson refused to let the ships leave without unloading it.	Even some colonists condemned the destruction of private property, and Lord North's government set out to make an example of Boston.
Coercive Acts Intolerable Acts 1774	Four laws that punished Massachusetts for the Tea Party by closing Boston Harbor, cutting self-government, letting accused royal officials stand trial elsewhere, and widening the quartering of troops.	Other colonies shipped Boston food and money, and twelve colonies sent delegates to the First Continental Congress.
Quebec Act 1774	A law to govern conquered French Canada that protected Catholic worship, kept French civil law, set up no elected assembly, and stretched Quebec's border south to the Ohio River.	Colonists counted it among the Intolerable Acts, since it threatened their western land claims, their self-government, and their Protestant faith.
First Continental Congress 1774	The assembly of delegates from twelve colonies, all but Georgia, that met in Philadelphia to answer the Coercive Acts. It declared colonists' rights and created the Continental Association to boycott British goods.	Many delegates still wanted compromise, and Congress shelved Galloway's plan for a union under the Crown by six colonies to five.

Also in the film

Writs of assistance 1761	General search warrants for smuggled goods, which James Otis attacked and the Townshend Acts renewed in 1767.
Virginia Resolves 1765	Patrick Henry's resolutions against the Stamp Act, the first any assembly passed, though Virginia's House struck the boldest one.
<i>Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania</i> 1767–1768	John Dickinson's essays arguing that Parliament could regulate colonial trade but had no right to tax the colonies for revenue.
Massachusetts Circular Letter 1768	Samuel Adams's letter from the Massachusetts House urging the other assemblies to resist the Townshend duties together.
Minutemen 1774	Companies of picked men from Massachusetts militias who drilled to turn out at a minute's notice and fought at Concord.

Short-answer practice

“That it is inseparably essential to the freedom of a people, and the undoubted right of Englishmen, that no taxes be imposed on them, but with their own consent, given personally, or by their representatives.”

Stamp Act Congress, Declaration of Rights and Grievances, October 19, 1765

(a) Briefly describe ONE right of British subjects that the excerpt claims.

(b) Briefly explain ONE development from 1754 to 1765 that led Parliament to tax the colonies without that consent.

(c) Briefly explain how ONE colonial protest against the Stamp Act in 1765 increased tensions between Great Britain and its North American colonies.

Salutary neglect

1720s–1763

The Long Fuse

Proclamation of 1763

Proclamation Line

1763

The Long Fuse

Sugar Act

Revenue Act of 1764

1764

The Long Fuse

Rights of Englishmen

1764–1775

The Long Fuse

Virtual representation

1760s

The Long Fuse

Stamp Act

1765

The Long Fuse

Quartering Act

1765

The Long Fuse

Sons of Liberty

1765

The Long Fuse

Stamp Act Congress

1765

The Long Fuse

Nonimportation agreements

1765–1775

The Long Fuse

The king's ban on colonial settlement west of the Appalachian Mountains.

To colonists who had fought to open the West, it felt like betrayal.

The liberties colonists claimed as British subjects, above all no taxes without their own representatives' consent.

Through 1775 most protesters still saw themselves as loyal Britons.

Parliament's tax on printed paper, its first direct tax on the colonists.

Protests and boycotts led Parliament to repeal it in 1766.

Groups of artisans, laborers, and merchants whose crowds forced stamp distributors to quit.

Ordinary working men carried resistance into the streets.

Merchants' pledges to stop importing British goods until Parliament repealed the laws they opposed.

Boycotts let colonists pressure Britain through its own merchants.

Britain's habit of loosely enforcing trade laws and leaving colonial assemblies to run local affairs.

Ending it after 1763 started the quarrel over taxes.

Grenville's law that halved the molasses duty but enforced it to raise revenue.

It ended salutary neglect and drew the first protests against Britain's new taxes.

Britain's claim that Parliament spoke for all subjects, even colonists who elected no members.

Colonists rejected it with "no taxation without representation."

The law requiring colonies to house and supply the British troops posted among them.

A peacetime army looked to colonists like a threat to liberty.

The meeting of nine colonies that declared only colonial assemblies could tax colonists.

In 1774 the First Continental Congress followed its lead.

Declaratory Act 1766 The Long Fuse	Townshend Acts Townshend duties 1767 The Long Fuse
Daughters of Liberty 1768–1770 The Long Fuse	Boston Massacre 1770 The Long Fuse
Committees of Correspondence 1772 The Long Fuse	Tea Act 1773 The Long Fuse
Boston Tea Party 1773 The Long Fuse	Coercive Acts Intolerable Acts 1774 The Long Fuse
Quebec Act 1774 The Long Fuse	First Continental Congress 1774 The Long Fuse

Duties on glass, lead, paint, paper, and tea whose revenue paid royal governors and judges.

Parliament repealed all but the tea duty in 1770.

British soldiers fired into a taunting Boston crowd and killed five men.

Patriots used it to turn colonists against the troops.

The law that made East India Company tea cheaper while keeping the tax on it.

Boston answered it with the Tea Party.

Four laws that punished Massachusetts for the Tea Party and closed Boston's port.

Parliament meant to isolate Boston but united the colonies instead.

Delegates from twelve colonies who met in Philadelphia and answered the Coercive Acts with a boycott.

Its local boycott committees became working Patriot governments.

Parliament's law claiming power to bind the colonies "in all cases whatsoever."

The fight over Parliament's power went on after the repeal.

Patriot women who spun homespun and boycotted British goods to resist the Townshend duties.

Women took political action even though they could not vote.

Letter networks that began with Samuel Adams's Boston committee and linked the colonies in resistance.

They organized the colonies' answer to the Tea Act and Coercive Acts.

Bostonians disguised as Mohawks dumped 342 chests of East India Company tea into the harbor.

Parliament struck back with the Coercive Acts.

A law for French Canada that protected Catholic worship and stretched Quebec south to the Ohio River.

It angered both land-hungry Virginians and Protestant New Englanders.

Model answers

- (a) Briefly describe ONE right of British subjects that the excerpt claims.

The excerpt claims the right of Englishmen to pay only the taxes they consent to, in person or through representatives they elect. With no colonist sitting in Parliament, the Congress argued that only colonial assemblies could tax them.

- (b) Briefly explain ONE development from 1754 to 1765 that led Parliament to tax the colonies without that consent.

Britain ended the Seven Years' War deep in debt and kept about 10,000 troops in America to hold its new lands. Prime Minister George Grenville tried to make colonists share the cost with the Sugar Act in 1764 and the Stamp Act in 1765.

- (c) Briefly explain how ONE colonial protest against the Stamp Act in 1765 increased tensions between Great Britain and its North American colonies.

In August 1765 the future Sons of Liberty hanged stamp distributor Andrew Oliver in effigy, a crowd wrecked his office, and he quit the next day. Parliament repealed the tax in 1766 but answered such defiance by claiming power over the colonies "in all cases whatsoever."