

Taxation Without Representation

Theme: America in the World

Learning Objective 3.C: Explain how British colonial policies regarding North America led to the Revolutionary War.

Colonists Unite

KC-3.1.II.A: The imperial struggles of the mid-18th century, as well as new British efforts to collect taxes without direct colonial representation or consent and to assert imperial authority in the colonies, began to unite the colonists against perceived and real constraints on their economic activities and political rights.

- Representation
 - _____ vs. Direct
- Perceived constraints
 - Colonists paid lower taxes than people in England
- Real constraints
 - _____ limited migration
 - Sugar Act (1764), Quartering Act (1765), Stamp Act (1765)
- _____ (1766)
 - Reasserted power of Parliament after repeal of Stamp Act
- _____ (1767)
 - Taxes on paper, glass, and tea to pay for salaries of British officials in colonies
 - Eventually repealed by Lord North, more impact on trade than revenue collected
- _____ (1773) passed to help British East India Company, lowered price of tea for colonists
 - Leads to Boston Tea Party
- _____ (1774) as punishment for Boston
- _____ (1774) extends boundary of Quebec to Ohio River Valley, establishes Catholicism as official Religion
- _____ (1775) in Virginia threatened emancipation for enslaved people who were willing to join British Army

Basis for Colonial Resistance

KC-3.1.II.B: Colonial leaders based their calls for resistance to Britain on arguments about the rights of British subjects, the rights of the individual, local traditions of self-rule, and the ideas of the Enlightenment.

- Argument against direct/indirect taxation on colonies
 - _____ by John Dickinson arguing against taxation without representation
 - Massachusetts Circular Letter by _____ and _____ calls for colonies to petition for repeal of Townshend Acts - led to occupation of Boston

Contributors to Independence Movement

KC-3.1.II.C: The effort for American independence was energized by colonial leaders such as Benjamin Franklin, as well as by popular movements that included the political activism of laborers, artisans, and women.

- Resistance against the Stamp Act
 - Stamp Act Congress
 - _____
 - Boycotts of British Goods
 - Spinning Bees by colonial women
- Resistance to Townshend Acts
 - _____
 - Escalation of anger into _____
 - _____ first casualty of Independence Movement
- Unruly behavior from Sons of Liberty (tarring and feathering, Boston Tea Party)

Mobilization for Patriot Movement

KC-3.1.II.D: In the face of economic shortages and the British military occupation of some regions, men and women mobilized in large numbers to provide financial and material support to the Patriot movement.

- _____ disproportionately were affected by boycotts
 - Finished goods now had to be manufactured at home
- _____ had incentive to get imperial policies repealed
 - _____ in Boston

Recap

- Colonists begin to unite over British Imperial Policies
- Colonial resistance was based on ideas of the Enlightenment and self-government tradition
- Resistance to British policies came from diverse groups - rich, poor, women, men

Part II
Short Answer Questions

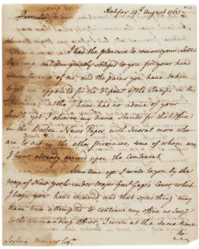
Answer each prompt using at least THREE sentences.

1. Explain how British colonial policies regarding North America led to the Revolutionary War.

A Report on Reaction to the Stamp Act, 1765

Retrieved from: <http://ap.gilderlehrman.org/resource/report-reaction-stamp-act-1765?period=3>

Excerpt



There is a violent spirit of opposition raised on the Continent against the execution of the Stamp Act, the mob in Boston have carried it very high against Mr. Oliver the Secry (a Town born child) for his acceptance of an office in consequence of that act. They have even proceeded to some violence, and burnt him in Effigy &c. They threaten to pull down & burn the Stamp Office now building, and that they will hold every man as Infamous that shall presume to carry the Stamp Act into Execution; so that it is thought Mr. Oliver will resign. I don't find any such turbulent spirit to prevail among us, if it should, the means are in our Hands to prevent any tumults or Insults; what the consequences may be in the Colonies who have no military force to keep the rabble in order, I cannot pretend to say.

1. Who was affected most by the passage of the Stamp Act? How could that affect the colonial response?
2. Provide an Attribution to this document.
3. What is the perspective of Hinshelwood in this letter, how does that affect what he writes?
4. Are the Enlightenment ideals that the Revolution was based on compatible with the violence described?

Secondary Source Document Analysis

Read the essay and fill in the chart below. Identify one claim for each subsection of the essay and provide a piece of evidence that corresponds to the claim.

Title:	
Author:	
Historical Period and Topic:	
Thesis:	
Claims	Evidence
Identify an alternative viewpoint to the author's thesis.	
Does the author address this viewpoint by refuting or conceding to it?	

Unruly Americans in the Revolution

Retrieved from: <http://ap.gilderlehrman.org/essay/unruly-americans-revolution?period=3>

Nearly all of the blockbuster biographies of the Founding Fathers—whether the subject is George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, or John Adams—portray the vast majority of ordinary Americans as mere bystanders. Although the authors of these bestsellers sometimes pause to honor the common soldiers in the Continental Army, most pay little attention to white men who did not enlist—and none at all to African Americans, American Indians, and women of all ranks.

Meanwhile a host of other historians have been quietly documenting the many ways in which women, slaves, natives, and small farmers—the 95 percent of Americans who were not members of the founding-era gentry—shaped the independence movement and Revolutionary War and were in turn influenced by both. If ordinary colonists really had been as passive as they appear in the most popular histories of the founding era, the American Revolution would have been a very different thing, and it might not have occurred at all.

Taxes—But Also Territory

While everyone knows that Parliamentary “taxation without representation” was one of the principal grievances leading to the American Revolution, we sometimes forget that the British government also mounted other assaults against free colonists’ economic well being. Nearly all of the best-known Founding Fathers—from Thomas Jefferson and George Washington in Virginia to Benjamin Franklin and Robert Morris in Pennsylvania and Henry Knox and Abigail (not John!) Adams in Massachusetts—dreamed of vastly enhancing their wealth by speculating in western land. That meant obtaining large grants directly from the government, essentially for free, and then dividing them into smaller tracts to be sold to actual settlers. But in October 1763, the Privy Council in London took out a map of North America and drew a line along the crest of the Alleghany Mountains. Beyond that line, the ministers declared, no colonist would be permitted to settle.

At first George Washington was confident that the Proclamation Line was only a “temporary expedient” that would soon be repealed. But the British government stood by the 1763 decree for the same reason that it had been promulgated in the first place: in order (as Washington put it) “to quiet the minds of the Indians.” It was not sympathy for the American Indians’ plight that had motivated the Privy Council to turn the area west of the Alleghanies into a giant reservation. Nor was it fear, since of course British officials were in no danger. The issue was financial. Earlier in 1763, more than a dozen Native American nations had joined together in a coalition dedicated to preserving their land. The ensuing revolt is popularly known as Pontiac’s Rebellion, though that label understates the range of the insurgency and exaggerates the role of a single Ottawa headman in a movement where leadership was actually quite dispersed.

If the Indians of present-day Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Michigan had not decided to rebel in 1763, the Privy Council might never have drawn the Proclamation Line, and land speculators like Washington and Jefferson would have had one less reason to rebel against Great Britain. The Declaration of Independence mentions the well-known issue of taxation once—and Indians and their land three times.

In 1769, the Virginia House of Burgesses (whose members included Thomas Jefferson and George Washington) unanimously adopted a resolution asking the Privy Council to repeal the Proclamation of 1763. British officials never acted on the request, and one reason was their abiding concern that taking the Indians’ land would provoke renewed hostilities. Lord Hillsborough, George III’s secretary for his American dominions, was determined to keep Britain out of a “general Indian War, the expense whereof will fall on this kingdom.” The imperial government’s ensuing decision to thwart the land-hungry provincials had the ironic effect of paving the way for an even more expensive war against a coalition of colonists.

Indispensable Allies

Once the imperial government had announced its intention to clamp down on its North American colonists in the crucial areas of taxation, territory, and trade, the Americans responded with a wide variety of protests. While it was the Franklins, Jeffersons, and Adamses who made the

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speeches and published the pamphlets, the real work of erecting liberty poles, intimidating colonial officials, tarring and feathering the recalcitrant, taunting British soldiers, and eventually dumping East India Company tea into Boston Harbor fell to ordinary working people. Historians have shown that many of the most famous incidents of the Revolutionary era grew out of deep-seated conflicts that had begun long before the American Revolution formally began.

The best-known incident that grew out of this longstanding animosity was the so-called Boston Massacre. The shootings in King Street on the night of March 5, 1770, were a direct outgrowth of a host of petty conflicts, for instance a shouting match between workers at a ropewalk (where ships' rigging was made) and off-duty—and underpaid—British soldiers competing with them for work.

Less dramatic but more important to the eventual success of the American Revolution was a series of boycotts of trade with Britain. The best-known item on the banned list was tea, a beverage much more popular among women than men. Male patriots understood that the boycotts could not succeed without the help of their mothers, daughters, and wives, and the result was an unprecedented and highly successful effort to involve women in politics, initiated as much by the women themselves as by men.

The most valuable product that the colonists normally imported from the mother country was cloth, and when the patriots extended their boycott to textiles, they created another opportunity for American women. It was up to them to spin the thread (and in some cases weave the yarn) that would replace the fabric once imported from Britain.

“Domestic Insurrections”

By the fall of 1774, most free colonists in British North America were angry at the imperial government, but very few of them wanted to wrench their colonies out of the British Empire. Most just wanted to turn back the clock—back to 1763, before Parliament and the Privy Council launched their irksome initiatives in the areas of taxation, territory, and trade. In 1775 and early 1776, a host of well-known factors—notably the British use of German (“Hessian”) mercenaries, the loss of life at Lexington, Concord, and Bunker Hill, and the publication of Thomas Paine’s *Common Sense*—conspired to convert free Americans to the cause of independence.

South of the line that Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon had surveyed in the mid-1760s, many colonists turned against the British for a less well-known reason. They were furious at King George III and his American representatives for forming an alliance with African Americans.

At the time of the American Revolution, about one-fifth of the people in the rebelling colonies—approximately half a million souls—were enslaved. Early in the imperial conflict, black Americans began to perceive that the widening gap between white loyalists and patriots created a space of opportunity for themselves. During protests against the Stamp Act in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1765, white patriots were alarmed to hear their cries of “Liberty” echoed back to them by a group of their slaves. “In one of our Counties lately,” the young Virginian James Madison reported in November 1774, “a few of those unhappy wretches met together & chose a leader who was to conduct them when the English Troops should arrive.”

African Americans kept on conferring all through the winter and spring of 1775. During the third week of April 1775, officials in Williamsburg, the capital of Virginia, received a half dozen reports of slave insurrection conspiracies—more than during any previous week in the colony’s history. At the end of that same week, late in the evening of April 20, 1775, Lord Dunmore, Virginia’s royal governor, ordered the removal of the gunpowder from the powder magazine in the center of Williamsburg. White Virginians believed the governor’s timing was no coincidence—that he had deliberately removed the gunpowder amid the swirl of insurrection rumors in order to leave them vulnerable to the fury of their slaves. When independent military companies began marching toward Williamsburg in order to force the governor to return the gunpowder, Dunmore seemed to confirm his white subjects’ worst fears, declaring that if any top British official was harmed, he “would declare freedom to the slaves & reduce the city of Wmsburg to ashes.”

When a group of slaves offered to fight alongside the governor in return for their freedom, he turned them away and even threatened to have them beaten if they returned. But the slaves kept coming—rallying to the British standard not only in Virginia but in other British colonies as

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well. On November 14, 1775, Governor Dunmore's "Ethiopian Regiment" (as he termed his African American troops) fought a battle against militiamen from Princess Anne County (now Virginia Beach) at Kemp's Landing near Norfolk, and the black soldiers won.

The very next day, November 15, 1775, Dunmore issued an emancipation proclamation that was not too different from the one Abraham Lincoln would publish four score and seven years later. Like Lincoln's, Dunmore's proclamation did not free a single slave. He extended his offer only to black Virginians "appertaining to rebels" (Dunmore was himself a large-scale slaveholder) who were "able and willing" to bear arms for their king. Hundreds of slaves joined Dunmore. Within a year, the majority of them would die, primarily from smallpox. But a remnant survived and earned their freedom by serving on the British side throughout the war.

In the capstone grievance in the Declaration of Independence, the Continental Congress alleges that George III has "excited domestic insurrection amongst us." Actually, given Governor Dunmore's reluctance to act on his initially empty threat to "declare freedom to the slaves," it is less accurate to say the British initiated their alliance with the slaves than that the slaves incited the British. Here was another case in which seemingly powerless Americans—the black men and women who are routinely excluded from the mammoth biographies that dominate most modern readers' understanding of the American Revolution—played a crucial role in the conflict.

Woody Holton is an associate professor at the University of Richmond. His book *Unruly Americans and the Origins of the Constitution* (2008), which has been published in Arabic as well as English, was a finalist for the George Washington Book Prize and the National Book Award. His most recent book, *Abigail Adams* (2009), received the Bancroft Prize.