

Name: _____ Date: _____

Stamps Required



It was common in England to raise money by requiring people to buy government stamps for all official documents. On March 22, 1765, a similar law went into effect in the colonies. The Stamp Act required colonists to pay for a government stamp on all newspapers, pamphlets, playing cards, dice, documents, and legal papers, including marriage licenses.

This tax was imposed to raise money to pay part of the cost for wages and expenses of the 10,000 British soldiers stationed to defend the frontiers against Native American attacks.



Again, colonists protested that Parliament didn't have the right to tax them because they had no members in Parliament to represent them, a right guaranteed by the British Constitution. Patrick Henry gave a fiery speech. The Virginia House of Burgesses declared the Stamp Act illegal and passed resolutions saying England had no right to tax people in Virginia.

In October 1765, delegates from nine colonies met in New York. The group, known as the Stamp Act Congress, pledged to resist paying any taxes not approved by their colonial legislatures. Many merchants also promised to stop importing British goods. Colonists organized groups like the Sons of Liberty whose members had strong feelings against unjust taxes.

Angry crowds met the Stamp Masters when they arrived from England to enforce the law. People rioted, destroyed offices, burned the stamps, and forced many Stamp Masters to resign or leave town.

The Stamp Act caused so much dissension that it was repealed a year later. However, Parliament passed a Declaratory Act, which gave them the right to pass laws in the colonies.

- 1. Do you think it was unreasonable to expect the colonists to pay part of the cost for the British troops? Why or why not?

- 2. Many colonists felt they were justified in using violence. Do you agree or disagree? Why?

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The Intolerable Acts

In retaliation for the Boston Tea Party, Parliament passed what the colonists called the Intolerable Acts.

The Intolerable Acts closed the port of Boston to all shipping. This was to remain in effect until the colonists paid for the dumped tea.

The Intolerable Acts also decreased the powers of the local authority, the Massachusetts Assembly, and increased the power of royal officials. Only one town meeting would be allowed per year.

To enforce the Intolerable Acts, the British sent General Thomas Gage and regiments of soldiers to Boston. A new Quartering Act allowed the British commander to house his troops wherever he wished, even in private homes against the will of the owners.

Although these laws mostly affected those living in Boston, people throughout the colonies protested the Intolerable Acts.

The assemblies (local ruling governments) from various colonies sent protests to England, in the hope that Parliament would repeal the laws. Again England reacted harshly. More than half the colonial assemblies were suspended.



General Thomas Gage

~~1. Use a dictionary to define *retaliation*.~~ _____

~~2. Use a dictionary to define *intolerable*.~~ _____

3. Do you think passing the Intolerable Acts was a reasonable response to the Boston Tea Party? Why or why not?

4. What do you think British leaders hoped to accomplish by allowing people in Massachusetts only one town meeting per year?

5. How would you have felt if you had been a colonist and were told that from now on five British soldiers would be living in your home?

6. Why do you think people who didn't live in Boston objected to these laws?

