

Reading Comprehension: The Boston Tea Party of 1773



Read the passage. Then answer the questions below.

In 1763 the British Government needed money. King George III told the British Parliament to raise money by taxing the colonies in America. Parliament passed the Stamp Act, which required the colonist to buy tax stamps for business papers, such as newspapers and wills.

The colonists were very angry about the new law. They did not think the taxes were fair because they did not vote for the new law. In 1766, Parliament repealed the Stamp Act.

Next the British Parliament passed a law taxing paper, glass, lead, paint, and tea. The colonists also protested these new taxes. They refused to buy these products. Parliament eventually removed all the taxes except the tea tax.

Many colonists still thought the taxes were unfair, because they had no say in making the laws. They refused to buy tea. Many merchants refused to sell tea, even to people who would buy it. Tea was left to rot in storerooms. In New York and Philadelphia the colonists wouldn't allow ships loaded with tea into their harbors.

In December of 1773, British ships loaded with tea were anchored in Boston Harbor. The colonists would not unload the cargo of tea. The British governor would not let the ships return to England with the tea.

On the night of December sixteenth, fifty men disguised as Indians went aboard the British ships. They broke open the cargo chests filled with tea and dumped them into Boston Harbor. Several thousand dollars worth of tea was lost. Included in this group was a small band of patriots known as "The Sons of Liberty". This group included: Patrick Henry, Paul Revere, Samuel Adams, and John Hancock.

This protest against unfair taxation was one of the final incidents that led to the start of the Revolutionary War. The Boston Tea Party told the British how the colonists felt about the tax on tea and about any laws they weren't allowed to vote on.

1. The items taxed by the British included:

- a) tea
- b) paint
- c) glass
- d) all of the above

2. Why did the colonists believe that the taxes were unfair?

- a) They wanted to Indians to pay tax instead.
- b) They did not get the opportunity to vote on the taxes.
- c) They did not think the taxes were unfair.
- d) They thought tea should be free.

3. What did the colonists do to show their anger about the British taxes?

- a) They refused to buy taxed goods.
- b) They let tea rot in storerooms.
- c) They dumped chests full of tea into Boston Harbor.
- d) All of the above

4. When did the Boston Tea Party take place?

- a) April of 1776
- b) December of 1773
- c) July of 1776
- d) None of the above

5. Which of the following patriots was present during the Boston Tea Party?

- a) George Washington
- b) Paul Revere
- c) John F. Kennedy
- d) Abraham Lincoln