

STUDENT HANDOUT: The Boston Tea Party - Close Reading and Sequencing

On the night of December 16, 1773, around 150 patriots, most of whom were members of a group known as the Sons of Liberty, walked to Boston Harbor disguised as Indians. The men boarded three British ships – the *Beaver*, the *Eleanor*, and the *Dartmouth* – which were docked in the harbor and dumped 340 crates of valuable tea, owned by the East India Company. The “Indians” were quietly cheered on by a large group of colonists who watched the event. Though several armed British soldiers witnessed the scene, they made no attempt to arrest the patriots. No shots were fired, but the event became one of the most significant of the American Revolution.

What led to this event? In 1770, the British eliminated taxes on everything but tea. Parliament kept the tea tax to show the colonists that England had the right to tax them. Colonists began a boycott of English tea, and some colonists stopped drinking tea altogether. Consumption of tea in the colonies fell from 900,000 pounds of tea in 1769 to 237,000 pounds of tea in 1772. English tea stacked up in warehouses and the East India Tea Company faced financial disaster.

Parliament passed the Tea Act in 1773, which made the price of English tea lower than the price from other tea merchants. Colonists still refused to buy English tea because the tax tea still existed. The colonists saw the Tea Act as yet another law passed by King George III designed to increase control over the colonies. Colonists thought it was unfair that Parliament could tax them to raise money even though the colonists did not get to vote for their Governor, or have representation in Parliament.

The Boston Tea Party helped unite the colonists and inspired them to push for increased American independence. King George and Parliament were furious with the colonists and punished acts known as the Coercive Acts that gave Parliament even more control over them. The people of Boston did not give in to British pressure. Instead, the colonies grew more united in their hatred of the British policies that were imposed upon them. **NO TAXATION WITHOUT REPRESENTATION!** Became the motto of the colonists.

“Let every man do his duty, and be true to his country!”

Student Directions. **Read** the description. **Select** four main events related to the Boston Tea Party. **Write or draw** the events in the boxes in the order in which they occurred.

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