

The Origins of the American Revolution

Lesson 1: “Resistance is Brewing”

U.S. History Grade 9-12 (Advanced Placement)

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Overview of Lesson 1: “Resistance is Brewing”

Brief Overview: Students will explore the origins of the American Revolution by examining the rights of Englishmen”, and how these were violated by Acts of taxation by Parliament and King George III.

Prior Knowledge: Students should understand the concept of “salutary neglect” which allowed the British North American colonies a degree of self-governance in the years prior to the French and Indian War. They should also be familiar with the economic consequences of the French and Indian War, and how the British government expected the North American colonies to shoulder some of the debt incurred during the war.

Estimated Time: 45 minutes (1 class period)

Content Area/ Course: U.S. History I

Unit: The American Revolution

Lesson: Introduction to the causes of the American Revolution

Overview: Students will be able to describe the causes of the American Revolution by examining the social, political, and economic roots of the conflict in North America.

By the end of this lesson, students will know and be able to:

Elaborate on the rights and responsibilities of English subjects in eighteenth century colonial America.

Describe the causal factors of the American Revolution.

Essential Question addressed in this lesson:

Why did the North American colonies rebel against the British government?

Common Core Standards Addressed in Lesson 1: “Resistance is Brewing”

Standard(s) and Unit Goal(s) to be addressed in this lesson:

MA History and Social Studies Curriculum Framework Standards

USI.1: Explain the political and economic consequences that contributed to the American Revolution. (H,C)

- A. The impact on the colonies of the French and Indian War, including how the war led to an overhaul of British imperial policy from 1763 to 1775.
- B. How freedom from European feudalism and aristocracy and the widespread ownership of property fostered individualism and contributed to the American Revolution.

USI.4: Analyze how Americans resisted British policies before 1775 and analyze the reasons for American victory and the British defeat during the Revolutionary war. (H)

USI.5: Explain the role of Massachusetts in the Revolution, including important events that took place in Massachusetts and important leaders from Massachusetts. (H)

- A. The Boston Massacre
- B. The Boston Tea Party
- C. The Battles of Lexington and Concord and Bunker Hill
- D. Samuel Adams, John Adams, and John Hancock.

MA English Language Arts Curriculum Framework Standards

ELA 9-10.RH.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/ social studies.

ELA 6-8.RH.2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

ELA 9-10.SL.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions.

ELA9-10.SL.2: Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source.

ELA9-10.SL.3: Evaluate a speaker’s point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, identifying any fallacious reasoning or exaggerated or distorted evidence.

ELA9-10.SL.4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

“Resistance is Brewing”



✻ *Background*

Following the closure of the French and Indian War in 1763, the British government was saddled with debt. The war was costly, and they needed to capitalize on new forms of revenue collection to ensure the continuing prosperity of the empire. In 1763, Parliament was a corrupt and mismanaged legislative institution in England. Many boroughs in England were still unrepresented in Parliament, but still English subjects paid taxes to their government. In 1764, Members of Parliament were pointing to the British North American colonies as an untapped resource for revenue. They had enjoyed a period of “salutary neglect”, and were able to govern and tax themselves. While the English government attempted to control trade through the Navigation Acts of 1692, many colonists continued to smuggle goods into the colonies illegally, and enjoyed economic prosperity because of it.

In 1764, Parliament introduced the Sugar Act which created some controversy, but was still seen by colonists as an Act of taxation that could be effectively avoided through their pastime of smuggling. But in 1765, Parliament passed an Act which would pervade the lives of all colonists in British North America. The Stamp Act taxed paper goods including marriage licenses, death certificates, playing cards, legal documents, and newspapers. Many businesses in the colonies depended on the production of these goods for their livelihood, and now they would be forced to pay an exorbitant tax for them. This was not just a tax on goods, but a tax on life events that could not be avoided.

The colonists responded in many ways. Their first reaction to news of the impending Stamp Act was visceral, and violent. On August 14, 1765, colonists in Boston targeted local government officials who they believed to be the benefactors of the Stamp tax. On that day, Andrew Oliver, the appointed Stamp Master was hung in effigy from the Liberty Tree. Later that day, the mob tore down a warehouse of Oliver’s where they believed the stamps were being stored for distribution. On August 26, another mob in Boston tore apart the house of Lieutenant Governor and Chief Justice Thomas Hutchinson. While historians debate the causes of the Stamp Act Riots, most agree that the violence was directed at these government officials because Bostonians were convinced they would reap a financial reward for the implementation of the Stamp Act.

The Stamp Act Riots

Using the Common Core chart of **I see/ it means** (see below) have your students analyze this engraving of the Stamp Act Riots. Pay close attention to the labels the artist used, and the symbolic nature of the characters chosen for the engraving.



I See	It Means*
<p>Record as many details as possible that provide clues to the illustration, cartoon, photo or artifact</p> <p>The details must be <i>observable</i> and can include text</p>	<p>For each detail</p> <p>Describe the action taking place</p> <p>Generate <i>inferences or predictions</i></p> <p>Consider the following:</p> <p>What roles does this detail play?</p> <p>Why is it important?</p> <p>What is its purpose?</p> <p>What does this detail mean or represent?</p> <p>What is it a symbol of?</p> <p>Explain how the words in the cartoon clarify the symbols</p>
<p>Summary/Analysis</p> <p>Write a brief response to the questions: What do all the details add up to? What is the meaning of this illustration, photo, or cartoon? Explain the message of the cartoon using key terms and key people.</p> <p>Background knowledge can be brought in here</p> <p>Use key terms/key people whenever possible</p> <p>Analysis</p> <p>What is the POV of the artist, cartoonist, etc.</p> <p>What special interest groups would agree/disagree with the cartoon's message? Why?</p>	

Primary Source Material from the Stamp Act (1765)

Document 1: Primary Account of the Stamp Act Riots

The Stamp Act Riots resulted in the destruction of government property which concerned the British government. The following is a letter dating from August 15, 1765—the day after the first night of rioting in Boston. In this account, the author gives a vivid description of the violence that ensued in Boston. While nobody was injured, the house of the Stamp Master Andrew Oliver was leveled to the ground, while Sheriff Greenleaf and Lieutenant Governor Thomas Hutchinson were chased from the scene. Have your class read the following primary account, and answer the questions that follow.

Boston
August 15, 1765

Brother,

When you were here last time, I promised that I would pay you a visit this Saturday coming. Believe I shall not be able to. Yesterday morning we had something so rare as to draw the attention of almost the whole town. It was no less than the effigy of the Honorable Stamp Master [Andrew Oliver] hanging on one of the great trees [the Liberty Tree] at the South End [of Boston]. Directly over the main street behind him was a boot hung up with the Devil crawling out, with the pitchfork in his hand. On the effigy's right arm was written the initials A.O. On his left arm was written these words: "It's a glorious sight to see, a Stamp man hanging on the tree!" On his chest was a large paper framed, and what follows is what I saw written on the frame:

"Fair freedoms cause I've meanly quitted,
For the sake of a little pelf [money gained in a dishonorable way],
The Devil has me outwitted,
And now I have hanged myself."

Below was written: "He that takes this down is an enemy to his country (America)."

The effigy of Andrew Oliver hung in this manner all day. The Sheriff went to take it down, but to no purpose. As the day went on, the crowd beneath the tree continued to grow. By noon, they took the effigy down. It was then taken by the mob through Main Street to the Townhouse, carried to the Stamp Office near Andrew Oliver's wharf, and in less than half an hour it was laid at the top of Fort Hill and lit on fire with the wood taken from Oliver's office.

The mob next went to Andrew Oliver's house where every timber was first stamped, and lit on fire. If any piece of the fence was not stamped, it was taken out of the fire for the stamp ceremony, [and] then thrown back in.

While this happened, the Sherriff [arrived at Oliver's house with Thomas Hutchinson] and read a proclamation for the mob to disperse. This incensed them more. They fell upon Oliver's house, broke his glass windows, furniture, and a large mirror. The mob finally returned home about 11 o'clock that night, every man with a smile on his face. It is reported that Mr. Oliver, the said Stamp Master, wrote to the Governor and Counsel that it was not worthwhile for him or anybody else to accept the office of a Stamp Master in Boston. On August 16, 1765, another large mob gathered beneath the Liberty Tree, but did no damage this time. It is hoped by all that Andrew Oliver's sufferings will be a sufficient warning to others no to take offices [jobs] that encroach upon American liberty. Thus I have endeavored to tell you a little about the transactions of the last two days.

It is now time to conclude this long epistle which I do by subscribing myself.

Your ever loving brother,
Cyrus Baldwin

Review Questions

1. What point of view do you think Cyrus Baldwin was looking at the Stamp Act Riots from?
2. Aside from Andrew Oliver's effigy, who else was hung from the Liberty Tree?

Critical Questions

1. What was the purpose of hanging an effigy of the Stamp Master Andrew Oliver from the Liberty Tree? How would you classify this form of political protest?
2. Do you think the Sons of Liberty achieved their goals by tearing down the house of Andrew Oliver? Or do you believe they could have protested in a different, yet more effective manner? If possible, draw contemporary comparisons.

Document 2: The Stamp Act Congress

Providence Gazette Extraordinary

The following is said to be a copy of the resolutions of the [Stamp Act] Congress held at New York.

Saturday, October, 19, 1765

- I. RESOLVED, That his Majesty's subjects in these colonies owe the same allegiance to the Crown of Great Britain, that is owing from his subjects born within the realm, and all due subordination.
- II. THAT his Majesty's liege subjects in these colonies are entitled to all inherent rights and liberties of his natural born subjects, within the kingdom of Great Britain.
- III. THAT it is inseparably essential to the freedom of a people, and the undoubted right of Englishmen. That no tax be imposed on them, u with their own consent, given personally, or by their representatives.
- IV. THAT the people of these colonies are not, and from their local circumstances, cannot be represented in the House of Commons in Great Britain.
- V. THAT the only representatives of the people of these colonies, are persons chosen therein by themselves, and that no taxes ever have been or can be constitutionally imposed on them, but b their respective legislatures.
- VI. THAT all supplies to the Crown, being free gifts of the people, it is unreasonable, and inconsistent with the principles and spirit of the British constitution, for the people of Great Britain to grant his majesty the property of the colonies.

- VII. THAT trials by jury are the inherent and invaluable right of every British subject in these colonies.
- VIII. THAT the late act of Parliament, entitled, "An Act for granting certain Stamp Duties, and other duties, in the British colonies and plantations in America" by imposing taxes on the inhabitants of these colonies, and the said act, and several other acts, by extending the jurisdiction of the courts of admiralty beyond its ancient limits, have a tendency to subvert the rights and liberties of the colonists.
- IX. THAT the duties imposed by several late acts of Parliament, from peculiar circumstances of these colonies, will be extremely burdensome and grievous, and from the scarcity of [money], the payment of them absolutely impractical.
- X. THAT as the profits of the trade of these colonies, ultimately center in Great Britain, to pay for the manufactures which they are obliged to take from thence, they eventually contribute very largely to all supplies granted to the Crown.
- XI. THAT the restrictions imposed by several late acts of Parliament [Navigation Acts], on the trade of these colonies, will render them unable to purchase the manufactures of Great Britain.
- XII. THAT the increase, prosperity, and happiness of these colonies depend on the full and free enjoyment of their rights and liberties, and an [agreement] with Great Britain, mutually affectionate and advantageous.
- XIII. THAT it is the right of the British subjects in these colonies to petition the King, or either house of Parliament.
- XIV. LASTLY. That it is the indispensable duty of these colonies to the best of sovereigns, to the mother country and themselves, to endeavor by a loyal and dutiful address to his Majesty, and humble applications to both houses of Parliament, to procure the repeal of the acts for granting certain stamp duties, of all clauses of any other act of Parliament, whereby the jurisdiction of the admiralty is extended, as aforesaid, and of other acts for the resolution of American commerce.

Review Questions

1. Which articles deal directly with the colonists' right to representation in Parliament?
2. Where do the colonists derive their rights from? Which article(s) in particular deal with their supposed rights as English citizens?

Critical Questions

1. How were the resolutions drafted by the Stamp Act congress different from the Stamp Act Riots? Which form of protest do you believe was more effective in articulating the arguments of the colonists?
2. How do the articles drafted by the Stamp Act congress address the negative economic impact of the Stamp Act on the American colonies? Use specific articles as examples.