Focus

- Why did the Crown issue the Proclamation of 1763?
- Why did Parliament pass the Sugar Act and the Stamp Act?
- Why and how did the colonists protest British taxes?

Victory in the French and Indian War left Great Britain with a huge debt and more territory to govern and defend. British leaders expected the American colonists to help pay for administering this expanded empire. The colonists disagreed. With the French and Indian War over, the freedom many colonists sought to defend was their own. This attitude placed the colonies on a collision course with their protector.

GOVERNING THE NEW TERRITORIES

The Treaty of Paris of 1763 forced the French to give up their North American empire. With the stroke of a pen, the British gained control of Spanish Florida, Canada, and the land between the Appalachian Mountains and the Mississippi River. It was rich land. Indian agent and trader George Croghan, who traveled through the western territory in 1765, noted in his diary that a “good hunter, without much fatigue to himself, could here daily supply one hundred men with meat.” Croghan went on to describe the variety of the terrain:

"We set out very early in the morning and marched through a high country, extremely well timbered, for three hours. . . . The remainder of this day we traveled through fine rich bottoms, overgrown with reeds, which make the best pasture in the world."

Such glowing reports drew pioneer farmers and speculators to the region. Ignoring Native American claims to the land, they demanded that the territory be opened for settlement. But British officials, fearing conflicts between pioneers and Native Americans, opposed this request.

Native American resistance. There was reason for concern. Following the war, the British had limited the amount of ammunition and rum available for trade with Native Americans. They had also abandoned the French practice of presenting annual gifts to the Indians. These changes angered many Native Americans who considered the trade goods
and the presents fair payment for allowing colonists onto their lands. George Croghan warned that the Indians who “had great expectations of being very generally supplied by us” might wage war.

Native Americans’ resentment grew as settlers poured into the western lands. Many Indian groups had already had their traditional ways of life disrupted by European trade. Now they were in danger of losing their lands as well. Alarmed, Neolin, known as the Delaware Prophet, traveled among western tribes, appealing for a return to ancient practices. He denounced the use of European goods and customs, urging his audiences to drive the settlers out. “They are my enemies,” he said of the British. “They are your brothers’ enemies.”

Pontiac, an Ottawa chief, was inspired by Neolin’s message. He called on the Delawares, Senecas, Shawnees, Wyandots, Ojibways, and other Indians to unite and “exterminate from our lands this nation which seeks only to destroy us.” For most of 1763 war raged all along the frontier. Pontiac’s forces killed some 2,000 settlers and destroyed many British forts.

Pontiac’s Rebellion, however, ended when the Indians were unable to take Fort Detroit and Fort Pitt. For months they had besieged the forts. With winter approaching and ammunition in short supply, Pontiac’s men began to doubt that victory was possible. Faced with disheartened warriors and no hope of French aid, Pontiac called off the siege.

The Proclamation of 1763. Pontiac’s Rebellion and other Indian uprisings convinced British authorities that they could not effectively protect British settlers on the frontier. As a result, Great Britain issued the Proclamation of 1763, barring settlement west of the Appalachian Mountains. The law also required every fur trader to obtain royal permission before entering the territory.

The British hoped that separating settlers and Native Americans would end fighting on the frontier. But the proclamation was difficult to enforce. Land-hungry colonists resented the measure, and colonial governors, often land speculators themselves, did little to enforce it. Thus settlers continued to stream into the territory.

In the wake of Pontiac’s Rebellion, the Crown issued the Proclamation of 1763 in hopes of bringing peace to the frontier.
The British government passed the Sugar Act and the Stamp Act in an effort to raise revenue in the colonies.

**Colonial Protests**

British officials had expected the colonists to object to the Stamp Act, but they were not prepared for the level of outcry. In the past the colonists had accepted taxes levied by the colonial assemblies. In the colonists’ eyes, however, this tax was different—it had been passed by Parliament, where the colonists had no direct representation.

Colonial assemblies met in protest. In May 1765 the Virginia House of Burgesses passed a series of resolutions condemning the act. The resolutions declared that

"the taxation of the people by themselves, or by persons chosen by themselves to represent them, ... is the only security against a burdensome taxation, and the distinguishing characteristick of British freedom."

British officials countered by claiming that the colonists had "virtual representation," since Parliament represented all British subjects. Many colonists rejected this argument and decided it was time to act.

The question of how to raise this needed revenue always came back to one solution—taxes. Thus as a first step to increase revenue, Parliament passed the Sugar Act of 1764, which set a duty, or import tax, on foreign sugar, molasses, and several other goods.

This was not the first time the British had imposed a duty on foreign molasses and sugar. In fact, the new law actually lowered the existing duty on molasses. It was, however, the first time officials seriously enforced such a law. Royal inspectors searched ships, warehouses, and homes for smuggled goods. The Crown’s judges presided over courts without juries to hear smuggling cases.

For colonial merchants, shipowners, and rum distillers who profited from foreign trade and smuggling, the Sugar Act meant decreased business. They angrily protested the law.

Amid these protests, Parliament passed another revenue law, the Stamp Act of 1765. Far more sweeping than the Sugar Act, the Stamp Act levied a tax on printed matter of all kinds: newspapers, advertisements, playing cards, and legal documents. These materials had to be printed on stamped paper or have special stamps affixed to show the tax had been paid.
A call to action. Colonial merchants signed nonimportation agreements, promising not to buy or import British goods. Workers and artisans who opposed the Stamp Act took to the streets in demonstrations. Though most of these protests were peaceful, some did turn violent. One of the most violent demonstrations occurred in Boston on a hot August night in 1765. A mob led by shoemaker Ebenezer MacIntosh wrecked a building belonging to stamp agent Andrew Oliver and then beheaded an effigy—a crude likeness—of Oliver. Within two weeks the mob struck again, destroying court records and wrecking the house of the chief customs officer. They then turned their anger on the elegant mansion of Oliver’s brother-in-law Thomas Hutchinson—the lieutenant governor of the colony. Throughout the colonies terrified stamp agents resigned their posts—rendering the Stamp Act almost impossible to enforce.

British officials singled out MacIntosh as the mob’s leader. But they also suspected that members of the Boston Sons of Liberty were involved. The Sons of Liberty were secret committees made up of politicians, lawyers, merchants, and artisans, formed to protest the Stamp Act. The Sons of Liberty generally relied on petitions, public meetings, and pamphlets to rally support, but they were not above employing violence.

Samuel Adams was one of the leaders of the Boston Sons of Liberty. Born in 1722, Adams graduated from Harvard College but failed in the family brewing business. He fared better at politics. After being elected to the Massachusetts House of Representatives in 1765, Adams made a career of politics. The Stamp Act crisis turned him into a key political activist.

A contemporary of Adams described him as a man who “eats little, drinks little, sleeps little, thinks much, and is most decisive and indefatigable [tireless] in the pursuit of his objects.” A master of propaganda, Adams often worked behind the scenes, staging demonstrations and working to control the public’s perception of events. He started a club to influence local politics and wrote often for the Boston Gazette. Adams was particularly popular among Boston’s less-prosperous artisans and shopkeepers. They responded enthusiastically to his charges that the British were stealing money from the colonists’ pockets:

“"We are told to be quiet when we see that very money which is torn from us by lawless force made use of still further to oppose us, to feed and pamper a set of infamous wretches [British officials and soldiers] who swarm like the locusts of Egypt.”"
affection and duty to His Majesty’s Person and Government” and pledged “all due subordination” to Parliament. Yet they also sought repeal of the Stamp Act and denied Parliament’s right to tax the colonies. The congress marked an important step toward more unified resistance.

British merchants who profited from colonial trade joined in the protest. The nonimportation agreements had hurt their businesses. Fearing financial ruin, and wanting to keep the colonies “firmly attached to their mother country,” they pressured Parliament to repeal the Stamp Act. Thus people on both sides of the Atlantic rejoiced when Parliament repealed the act in March 1766.

Colonists protested “taxation without representation” through petitions, nonimportation agreements, and demonstrations.

Busy celebrating the Stamp Act’s demise, most colonists ignored the passage of the Declaratory Act of 1766. This bold declaration asserted the “full power and authority” of Parliament “to make laws ... to bind the colonies and people of America.” The issue of whether Parliament had the right to tax the colonists remained unresolved.

### SECTION 1 REVIEW

**IDENTIFY** and explain the significance of the following: Pontiac’s Rebellion, Proclamation of 1763, Sugar Act, duty, Stamp Act, nonimportation agreements, Sons of Liberty, Samuel Adams, Stamp Act Congress, Declaratory Act.

1. **MAIN IDEA** How did the Crown attempt to bring peace to the frontier following Pontiac’s Rebellion?
2. **MAIN IDEA** What was the purpose of the Sugar Act and the Stamp Act? How did the colonists react to these measures?
3. **GAINING A MULTICULTURAL PERSPECTIVE** Imagine that you are a Native American living west of the Appalachian Mountains in the 1760s. Explain why you favor or oppose Neolin’s message.
4. **WRITING TO EXPRESS A VIEWPOINT** You have just returned from the Stamp Act Congress. Write a letter to your colonial governor outlining the views of the congress’s delegates.
5. **ANALYZING** Why did Parliament repeal the Stamp Act? Why did the repeal not solve the issue of taxation without representation?
MOUNTING TENSIONS

FOCUS
- What events led to the Boston Massacre?
- Why did the colonists stage the Boston Tea Party?
- Why did the British pass the Intolerable Acts?

Although colonial protests helped repeal the Stamp Act, they did not end Parliament's efforts to raise revenue in the colonies. When Parliament tried a new approach that did not involve direct taxes, the arguments used against the Stamp Act were also applied to these new measures. These protests were unsuccessful, setting in motion events that pushed the colonies to the brink of war.

THE TOWNSHEND ACTS

The colonists had objected to the Stamp Act because Parliament had imposed it. It was, they argued, just one more example of Great Britain's meddling in colonial affairs. But Charles Townshend, Great Britain's finance minister, like many other government officials, never grasped this point. Townshend believed that the colonists had opposed the stamp tax because it was collected within the colonies. They would, he reasoned, be willing to accept a tax that would be collected at colonial ports. Parliament agreed, passing the Townshend Acts in 1767. The Townshend Acts placed import duties on such common items as tea, lead, glass, and dyes for paint. British customs officials revived the use of special search warrants called writs of assistance to enforce the law. Unlike today's search warrants, which must state the exact articles sought and the specific places to be searched, writs of assistance were general warrants. Armed with a writ, a customs officer could search any vessel, warehouse, or home on the mere suspicion that it contained smuggled goods.

The writs of assistance aroused powerful opposition, and many colonial courts refused to issue them. Although the colonists accepted Great Britain's right to regulate colonial trade, they strongly objected to duties intended strictly to raise money. The Crown, troubled by renewed protests, stationed additional soldiers in the colonies. The New York assembly responded by refusing to vote money to quarter, or house and supply, these troops as the Quartering Act of 1765 required. The British government promptly suspended the assembly.

But the real center of protest was Boston. In February 1768 the Massachusetts legislature drafted a letter attacking taxation without representation and sent it to the other colonial assemblies for endorsement. The British government responded by dissolving the Massachusetts assembly. This only served to fuel protests and a new round of nonimportation
agreements. A Massachusetts woman wrote that her friends would not touch “a Drop of Tea.” Other women, rather than buy British cloth, held spinning parties to make their own. Angry demonstrators boarded and smashed British ships, attacked customs officials, and tarred and feathered anyone who informed on smugglers.

**The Boston Massacre**

In 1768 General Thomas Gage dispatched British troops to Boston to quell the protests and enforce the writs of assistance. But tensions exploded into one violent confrontation after another. On the evening of March 5, 1770, an angry crowd gathered outside a customs house. Some 50 or 60 colonists faced a small group of British soldiers. The crowd yelled insults and began throwing snowballs, rocks, oyster shells, and pieces of coal at the soldiers. Then, according to John Adams, “the motley mot of saucy boys, negroes, mulattoes, ... and outlandish jacktars [sailors]” pressed so hard against the soldiers that there was no room to move. One soldier either slipped or was knocked down. His gun discharged, and the others opened fire on the crowd. Three colonists, including Crispus Attucks—a sailor and an escaped slave of African and Native American ancestry—lay dead. Two others died later.

News of the clash stunned the colonists. Lieutenant Governor Thomas Hutchinson claimed that “the people of Boston are run mad.” Sam Adams and the Sons of Liberty promptly dubbed the incident the **Boston Massacre** and denounced British aggression. The victims received elaborate funerals and inspired poems and songs of patriotic resistance.

Months later the British soldiers were tried for murder. Josiah Quincy and John Adams—Sam’s cousin—agreed to defend them. Neither man sympathized with the British, but both insisted on the soldiers’ right to a fair trial. As John Adams later wrote:

> Counsel ought to be the very last thing that an accused person should want [lack] in a free country; ... and ... persons whose lives were at stake ought to have the counsel they prefer. [“]

In the end, two soldiers were convicted of a lesser charge. They were branded on their thumbs and released.

**Mounting tensions between the colonists and the British soldiers stationed in Boston to enforce the Townshend Acts sparked the Boston Massacre.**

![Crispus Attucks](image)

**Crispus Attucks, a sailor and runaway slave, was one of three men killed by British troops during the Boston Massacre.**
CONTINUING UNREST

When Frederick, Lord North became Great Britain’s prime minister in 1770, he hoped to pacify the rebellious colonies by a partial repeal of the Townshend Acts. Parliament consented and also allowed the Quartering Act to expire. But the British retained a small duty on tea. As the king explained, there must “always be one tax to keep up the right.”

The repeal quieted the general unrest, but the calm was short-lived. In 1772 the Crown announced that it—not the colonial legislature—would pay the salaries of Massachusetts’ governor and judges. The Crown reasoned that if these officials did not depend on the legislature for their pay, they might more readily ignore colonial demands.

Bostonians, led by Sam Adams, challenged this latest threat. They created a 21-member Committee of Correspondence charged with keeping the rest of the colony—and “the World”—informed about events. From 1772 to 1776, similar committees in Massachusetts and other colonies helped shape colonial opinion.

The Tea Act of 1773. Even the business of selling tea provoked a crisis. By 1773 the powerful British East India Company was almost bankrupt. To save the ailing company, Parliament passed the Tea Act of 1773. The law excused the company from paying certain duties and permitted it to bypass the wholesalers and sell tea directly to American agents. As a result the price of tea in the colonies was lower than ever before.

Most of the colonists, however, opposed the Tea Act and refused to buy the tea. What concerned many of them was the possible monopoly of the tea trade by the East India Company. American wholesalers and merchants feared that other British companies would secure similar privileges from Parliament and force them out of business.

The Sons of Liberty in Philadelphia and New York threatened anyone who imported tea. But the most famous protest against the Tea Act occurred in Massachusetts. On December 16, 1773, after the governor refused demands to send three shipsloads of tea back to England, colonists held a mass meeting at Boston’s Old South Church. Later that night, a well-organized group of colonists “dressed in an Indian manner” boarded the tea ships anchored in Boston Harbor and dumped 90,000 pounds of tea into the water. As one of the participants later remembered:

“... In about three hours from the time we went on board, we had thus broken and thrown overboard every tea chest to be found... We were surrounded by British armed ships, but no attempt was made to resist us.”

News of the Boston Tea Party drew widespread attention at home and abroad. Many colonists cheered the tea’s destruction; others were shocked by such disregard for property rights.

Bostonians staged the Boston Tea Party to protest the Tea Act.

The Intolerable Acts of 1774. British officials were furious. Parliament responded by passing the Coercive Acts, four laws designed to punish Boston and the rest of Massachusetts and to strengthen British control over all of the colonies. The colonists called the laws the Intolerable Acts.
meetings. The third act allowed royal officials charged with crimes related to their duties to be tried in England. Many colonists assumed the soldiers would be lightly punished or escape punishment entirely. The fourth law, a new Quartering Act, ordered local officials to provide food and housing, in private homes if necessary, for British soldiers stationed in the colonies.

- **The British passed the Intolerable Acts to punish Massachusetts for the Boston Tea Party and to regain control over the colonies.**

The Intolerable Acts deepened colonial hostility toward the Crown. Colonists everywhere responded with sympathy toward Massachusetts, while denouncing George III, the Parliament, and the threats to colonial liberty.

The Quebec Act, also passed in 1774, was not technically one of the Intolerable Acts, but it further inflamed colonial resentment. The law extended Quebec’s boundaries south to the Ohio River, thus overriding the claims of Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Virginia to the western lands. It also granted full religious rights to French Roman Catholics, upsetting many Protestant colonists.

The movement toward colonial unity quickened after 1774. The colonists directed their anger no longer at specific British policies but at what they saw as a growing pattern of oppression. Among those who questioned loyalty to the Crown and Parliament, a new identity—not yet fully American, but no longer British—was emerging.

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**SECTION 2 REVIEW**

**IDENTIFY** and explain the significance of the following: Townshend Acts, writs of assistance, Quartering Act, Crispus Attucks, Committee of Correspondence, Tea Act, Intolerable Acts, Quebec Act.

1. **MAIN IDEA** Why were British troops stationed in Boston? How did their presence provoke the Boston Massacre?

2. **MAIN IDEA** How did the colonists react to the Tea Act of 1773?

3. **IDENTIFYING CAUSE AND EFFECT** Create a time line showing the events leading up to the passage of the Intolerable Acts.

4. **WRITING TO DESCRIBE** Imagine that you are a member of the Sons of Liberty. In a letter to the colonists outside Massachusetts, write an account of the Boston Massacre or the Boston Tea Party that will rally them to oppose Britain.

5. **ASSESSING CONSEQUENCES** How did the Intolerable Acts and the Quebec Act help unify the colonies?