Britain vs. America

1.1 Welcome

Notes:

Welcome to “Britain vs. America: What Led to the Declaration of Independence,” an online Civics tutorial for students in 7th grade.
1.2 Your Objectives

Notes:

In 1776, Great Britain's 13 American colonies made the dramatic decision to declare independence from their mother country.

By the end of this tutorial, you’ll understand the series of events that led Britain and its colonies to split apart in such explosive fashion. You’ll learn why Britain passed new laws and taxes on its American colonies in the 1760s and 1770s. You’ll understand why colonists responded to the changes with defiance and rebellion. And you’ll see why Britain’s harsh responses led to war—and the colonies’ Declaration of Independence.

Let’s begin!
1.3 Prior Knowledge

Notes:

Let’s start by reviewing the relationship between Great Britain and its colonies before things turned sour.

By 1763, there were thirteen British colonies in North America: Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire.

These colonies were controlled by Britain from across the Atlantic and were part of the British Empire, and many colonists had immigrated there from the mother country.

But colonists were not entirely “British” in the laws they followed and the taxes they paid.

Britain itself was governed by a king, George the Third, and a group of lawmakers called Parliament. But when communication and travel across the Atlantic took months, it wasn’t practical for Parliament and the king to manage their colonies directly from Britain.

Instead, the colonies were allowed to establish local governments for themselves, and mostly practiced self-rule. These local colonial governments provided the majority of the justice, law making, and tax collection in the colonies. This started to change after
1763, as we’ll see, but until then, generations of American colonists became used to a large degree of self-rule.

By the way, you might sometimes hear Britain referred to “England” in this context. These names basically refer to the same nation, but “Britain” is the more proper term for the time period we’ll be studying. That’s what we’ll call England in this tutorial.
Notes:

That was some complicated stuff, so let's review to see if you understood it. Is the following statement true?

“Before 1763, American colonists were used to Great Britain's Parliament and king controlling their laws, taxes, and justice system.”

Click thumbs up if this statement is correct, or thumbs down if it is not. Then click Submit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correct</th>
<th>Choice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Thumbs up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Thumbs down</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Feedback when correct:

Right! You understand the main point: Americans in the 13 colonies were not used to the British government running their everyday affairs. Instead, the colonies enjoyed strong local government before 1763.
Feedback when incorrect:

You should have picked Thumbs Down. Americans in the 13 colonies were not used to the British government running their everyday affairs. Instead, the colonies enjoyed strong local government before 1763.
1.5 War, Taxes, Changes

Notes:

We’ve mentioned 1763 a few times as a “turning point” year. Let’s find out why. From 1754 to 1763, peace in the colonies was interrupted by the French and Indian War. This was a conflict between Britain and France in North America, as well as the Native American allies of both sides.

With the aid of their American colonists, The British won the war, and all the lands you see here in pink, from the French. But victory was very costly for the British. As a result of the war, Britain changed its relationship with its 13 colonies and became more “hands on” in the way it governed them. Here are some examples:

Britain created **new rules** restricting the settlement of colonists. Specifically, it forbid Americans to settle the new western lands they had won from the French, to avoid future wars with the Natives who lived there. This disappointed colonists who wanted to move into this territory, and some broke the law and did it anyway.

Britain imposed **new taxes** to help pay for the war debt. For the first time, Americans were directly taxed for buying everyday items like tea, sugar, and printed documents. Parliament had rarely, if ever, taxed its colonists directly before this.

Britain also kept a **military presence** in America after the war. Not all those soldiers
who had defeated the French went home-some stayed in the colonies to enforce the new laws. Many Americans resented this and viewed the British “redcoats” like enemy troops.
### 1.6 Practice 2

Pick ALL the answers that describe changes in British policy toward the American colonies after 1763.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correct</th>
<th>Choice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Britain punished the colonies because they had lost the French and Indian War.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Britain forbid colonists to settle desirable western lands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Britain taxed the colonists directly on everyday items like tea and sugar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Britain passed fewer laws concerning what colonists could and could not do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Britain kept a military presence in the colonies to enforce the new laws.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Britain became more “hands on” in the way it governed its colonies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**

Practice time. **Pick all** the answers that describe changes in British policy toward the American colonies after 1763.

**Feedback when correct:**

Well done! That was a lot of information, but you kept it straight. Britain won the French and Indian War—it didn’t lose it—and colonists faced more new laws, not fewer. These changes marked the beginning of the end of the self-rule that Americans had enjoyed.

Copyright © 2017 CPALMS.org
The correct answers are shown here. New rules, taxes, an increased military presence, and a “hands on” approach were all part of Britain's new policy after the French and Indian War. Britain won that war—it didn’t lose it—and colonists faced more new laws, not fewer. These changes marked the beginning of the end of the self-rule that Americans had enjoyed.
1.7 Practice 3

Notes:

Here’s a different kind of practice. Put these events in order from first to last by dragging them into the right sequence with your mouse. Some of these events you've learned about already, and some you haven’t-so think hard and use logic to figure it out.

Correct Order

| 1. 13 British colonies were established in America, only loosely governed by Britain. |
| 2. Britain fought and won a costly war with France over lands in America: the French and Indian War. |
| 3. Britain placed new rules and taxes on its American colonies. |
| 5. The Declaration of Independence announced the colonies' separation from Britain. |

Feedback when correct:

Great job! You can see how the events you’ve already learned about will lead to the events yet to come: increased conflicts and the writing of the Declaration of Independence.
Feedback when incorrect:

The correct sequence is shown here. The first 3 you’ve already learned about. The last 2 require a little logic: the new rules and taxes led to increased conflicts between British and Americans, which led to the Declaration of Independence. See?
1.8 Taxation Without Representation

The main conflict in the years following the French and Indian War stemmed from the new taxes passed by Britain’s Parliament. Britain felt it needed to tax the colonies after an expensive war fought in their backyard. They had never really used America as a source of income before—shouldn’t colonists now start paying for the privilege of being British?

Americans didn’t think so. They had always taxed themselves, locally, and felt the new change was illogical and unfair.

In 1764 and 1765, new taxes on the colonies included a Sugar Act and a Stamp Act. The Stamp Act was especially unpopular. It required a special stamp to be purchased for all paper items: books, newspapers, contracts, even playing cards! Colonists’ reaction to the Stamp Act was angry and even violent. Many Americans refused to pay, and some threatened the lives and property of the tax collectors. In the end, Parliament canceled the Stamp Act before it even had a chance to take effect, a major victory for colonists!

Why were Americans so hostile to these new taxes? Were they simply upset at having to pay more money? That might have been part of it, but colonists had a more philosophical reason, too: they didn’t believe that the British Parliament had a right to tax them.

Parliament, in London, passed laws for the entire British Empire. But the entire British
Empire was not represented in Parliament. No one in any of the 13 American colonies had a vote in Parliament to represent the colonial viewpoint. When colonists had only been taxed by their local governments, this hadn’t been an issue. But now that Parliament was claiming the right to tax Americans directly, colonists cried foul. “No Taxation Without Representation!” became the new slogan of this protest. If Americans couldn’t vote to be taxed, then Parliament had no right to tax them.
Notes:

Which statement best describes the meaning of the slogan “No Taxation Without Representation”?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correct</th>
<th>Choice</th>
<th>Feedback</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Colonists did not want to pay any taxes at all, ever.</td>
<td>That’s not it. Colonists recognized that some taxes were necessary. But who did they believe had the right to tax them? Try again.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Colonists believed that Parliament had no authority to tax anyone.</td>
<td>That’s not it. Parliament had the power to tax somebody, colonists felt—just not them. Try again.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Colonists believed that Parliament had no authority to tax them.</td>
<td>Good! Colonists believed that Britain’s Parliament lacked the power to tax them in America, because they had no representation—and no vote—in that Parliament.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correct</td>
<td>Choice</td>
<td>Feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Colonists believed their local governments had no right to tax them.</td>
<td>That’s not it. This slogan didn’t refer to colonists’ local governments—it referred to Parliament. Try again.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Things worsened in the late 1760s. A series of actions and reactions increased conflicts between British and Americans.

Colonial leaders sent a formal letter called a *petition* to King George and Parliament. It reminded them that taxation without representation was against British law.

The British government disagreed. They declared dominance over the colonies in all matters, including taxes.

Colonists responded with protests and boycotts of British goods. A boycott means refusing to buy something to make a political point.

Not only did Britain *not* back down, but Parliament passed new taxes on items including paint, glass, and tea.

Secret groups of colonists called “Sons of Liberty” now formed in America. They used vandalism and violence to terrorize British businessmen, officials, soldiers, and the colonists who supported them. In response, Britain increased the number of soldiers in America and gave them permission to enter colonists’ homes and seize their property to enforce the laws. Colonists sometimes even had to “quarter” British soldiers, letting them sleep in their homes and eat their food if they had nowhere else to stay!
1.11 Practice 5

Notes:

In this practice, drag the answer choices into the correct boxes. Was this an action of American colonists or the British government? Every answer should have a match.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drag Item</th>
<th>Drop Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protests, boycotts</td>
<td>Colonial Actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrote a petition</td>
<td>Colonial Actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sons of Liberty</td>
<td>Colonial Actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Taxes</td>
<td>British Actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Declared dominance</td>
<td>British Actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased military presence</td>
<td>British Actions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Feedback when correct:

Nice work! Both sides in the conflict took actions that raised the level of tension.
Feedback when incorrect:

The correct matches are shown here. Colonists wrote a petition, protested, boycotted British goods, and formed groups called Sons of Liberty. The British passed new taxes, increased their military presence, and declared dominance over the colonies. Both sides in the conflict took actions that raised the level of tension.
1.12 Boston: Powder Keg

If there was a center of rebellion in the American colonies, it was surely Boston, Massachusetts. Two incidents that took place there in the early 1770s paved the way to war. In 1770, British soldiers opened fire and killed several Boston citizens who were harassing them on a snowy night.

The soldiers claimed they acted in self-defense, but to angry colonists, it was all the proof they needed that the “redcoats” had been sent from Britain to kill Americans. The incident became known as the “Boston Massacre.” The soldiers were found not guilty of murder, but the citizens of Boston did not forgive or forget.

In 1773, probably the most famous act of vandalism in American history occurred: the Boston Tea Party. To protest a tax on tea, Boston citizens, many of them Sons of Liberty, dressed up as Native Americans and dumped tons of British tea into Boston Harbor, ruining it. In today’s money, the tea destroyed would be worth a million dollars or more! Britain’s response was swift and harsh: the port of Boston was closed to all trade until the tea was paid for, which never happened. This punishment was intended to ruin the city.

In addition, the colonial government of Massachusetts was basically suspended, ending local government there. The other colonies supported Massachusetts and protested its harsh treatment. They called these new laws the “Intolerable Acts” because they would not be tolerated. The Boston Tea Party probably represented a “tipping point” that led all 13 colonies toward revolution and war.

Notes:

If there was a center of rebellion in the American colonies, it was surely Boston, Massachusetts. Two incidents that took place there in the early 1770s paved the way to war. In 1770, British soldiers opened fire and killed several Boston citizens who were harassing them on a snowy night.

The soldiers claimed they acted in self-defense, but to angry colonists, it was all the proof they needed that the “redcoats” had been sent from Britain to kill Americans. The incident became known as the “Boston Massacre.” The soldiers were found not guilty of murder, but the citizens of Boston did not forgive or forget.

In 1773, probably the most famous act of vandalism in American history occurred: the Boston Tea Party. To protest a tax on tea, Boston citizens, many of them Sons of Liberty, dressed up as Native Americans and dumped tons of British tea into Boston Harbor, ruining it. In today’s money, the tea destroyed would be worth a million dollars or more! Britain’s response was swift and harsh: the port of Boston was closed to all trade until the tea was paid for, which never happened. This punishment was intended to ruin the city.

In addition, the colonial government of Massachusetts was basically suspended, ending local government there. The other colonies supported Massachusetts and protested its harsh treatment. They called these new laws the “Intolerable Acts” because they would not be tolerated. The Boston Tea Party probably represented a “tipping point” that led all 13 colonies toward revolution and war.
**1.13 Practice 6**

Choose the statement that best describes both the Boston Massacre and the Boston Tea Party.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correct</th>
<th>Choice</th>
<th>Feedback</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Both were acts of vandalism (property destruction).</td>
<td>That’s not it. Only the Boston Tea Party can be described as an act of vandalism. Try again.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Both turned the people of Boston against the British government.</td>
<td>Correct! The Boston Tea Party and the Boston Massacre were different in several ways, but both incidents turned the people of Boston, Massachusetts against the British government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Both involved the killing of Boston’s citizens.</td>
<td>That’s not it. Only the Boston Massacre involved the loss of life. Try again.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:

Choose the statement that best describes both the Boston Massacre and the Boston Tea Party.
| No | Both resulted in passage of the “Intolerable Acts.” | That’s not it. The “Intolerable Acts” were passed in response to the Boston Tea Party only. Try again. |
1.14 1775: Tensions Lead to War

Notes:

War began in 1775, about one year after Britain passed the Intolerable Acts. During that year, all 13 colonies became more united in their common cause. They sent representatives to a Continental Congress in Philadelphia that would make decisions for all of them.

Colonists everywhere began forming militias, informal volunteer armies made of citizens ready to protect themselves and their rights from the British military if necessary. When blood was finally shed, it might not surprise you that it happened in Massachusetts, just outside Boston. British troops tried to seize a militia’s weapons and arrest colonial leaders there, and Americans were ready to fight.

The first battles in what would become the Revolutionary War took place in the towns of Lexington and Concord, Massachusetts. Dozens were killed on both sides. Within a year, war would officially lead to the Declaration of Independence.
1.15 July 4, 1776: Independence is Declared

Notes:

On July 4, 1776, leaders of all 13 colonies signed a declaration bringing a new nation into existence: the United States of America. After more than a decade of conflict with their mother country, Americans decided that the split could not be repaired. Independence was the only answer.

They no longer believed the government of Great Britain had a right to govern them, considering its past actions. After what you’ve learned, maybe you can understand why they felt this way.

Another tutorial covers the text and the ideas of the Declaration of Independence in detail.
1.16 Practice 7

Notes:

Let’s check your understanding of everything you’ve learned in this tutorial. Four correct statements are split up into two parts. Drag and drop the phrases on the right so that they match the correct phrases on the left to form 4 complete statements. They should fit together like puzzle pieces.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drag Item</th>
<th>Drop Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>... Britain passed “Intolerable Acts” closing the city’s port and suspending its colony’s government.</td>
<td>Colonists in Boston destroyed British tea, so ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... colonists called this “taxation without representation: and responded with protests and boycotts.</td>
<td>After Britain’s Parliament passed laws directly taxing their American colonies ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... The Declaration of Independence was written by colonial leaders.</td>
<td>After colonial militias fought the British at Lexington and Concord ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... it passed new rules and taxes on its colonies and established a military presence in America.</td>
<td>After Britain defeated France in an expensive war ...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Feedback when correct:

Impressive! You've put these statements together to demonstrate your understanding of the events which led to the Declaration of Independence.

Feedback when incorrect:

The correct matches are shown here. Please review this important information before moving on.
# 1.17 Final Practice

Here’s your final practice. Drag these events into the right chronological order from first to last. Two events are already provided for you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correct Order</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The British government passes new rules and taxes, limiting colonial self-rule.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colonists petition the British king that “taxation without representation” is illegal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sons of Liberty stage the Boston Tea Party, vandalizing British goods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 colonies unite in response to the hated Intolerable Acts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Battles occur at Lexington and Concord, Massachusetts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Feedback when correct:**

Excellent work! You understand the sequence of events that led to the Declaration of Independence. Click Continue to finish this tutorial in style!

**Feedback when incorrect:**

The correct sequence is shown here. Please review this important information before clicking Continue to finish this tutorial.

Copyright © 2017 CPALMS.org
1.18 Lesson Review

Notes:

It’s been a pleasure learning with you today! Let’s review.

In this tutorial, you learned how actions and reactions on both the British and colonial sides led to the writing of the Declaration of Independence.

You’ve seen how from 1763 to 1776, Britain pursued a policy of increased authority, taxation, and military control in its American colonies. It reduced the colonies’ tradition of self-government and harshly punished colonies like Massachusetts that became rebellious.

You’ve also seen how American colonists responded: with petitions, protests, boycotts, and eventually, vandalism and harassment. Americans took up arms and formed militias as a clash with Britain drew near.

The final outcome of this conflict was the writing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776.
1.19 Thank You

Notes:
Thank you for using this original tutorial. Be sure to check out our other original tutorials too.

Credits (Slide Layer)