

Flipped assignment #2

American Colonists:

What Should We Do about the British Tea Act?

It is December 1773. We are American colonists. We are beginning to get very upset with the British Parliament and the king. They are changing the laws, and we don't like it. For more than 100 years, the laws they passed to control trade were fair. A mother country has the right to control trade. First there were the Navigation Acts, which told us whom we could trade with. Then there was the Woolens Act. After that came the Molasses Act and, in 1750, the Iron Act. These duties and acts were fair.

But then they began to tax us for a different reason. They needed money to pay for their expenses, so they tried to tax us! First was the Sugar Act. It didn't control trade. It just took our money. Then they passed the Stamp Act eight years ago. We had to pay a tax on all printed papers, licenses, certificates, permits, newspapers, books—even cards and dice. Taxes, taxes, taxes! The British government does not have the right to tax us to pay their expenses. When will they stop?

We protested, we boycotted British goods, we refused to pay the tax, and they finally repealed the Stamp Act. Everything was back to normal. But a year later, they also said we had to provide housing for British soldiers. Would they pay? Of course not. We would! Free housing for thousands of soldiers! Wasn't that just another kind of tax? And we hadn't even voted for it! Finally, we protested, and they repealed that law.

Then in 1767, they tried to get our money again. They passed the Townshend Acts—more taxes on glass, lead, paints, paper, and tea. They even gave tax collectors the right to enter our warehouses, shops, and homes to see if we had paid taxes on these goods. Well, we just stopped importing these things. When the British merchants lost their profits, Parliament repealed most of those taxes, too.

Now, once again, they have passed another law—the Tea Act. This one raises money for them by taxing tea. They will send us tea we don't want and tax us for it.

They have no right to tax us this way. We have no representatives in Parliament to speak for us. They refuse to allow us to send representatives. They can do anything they want, and we cannot say anything about it. We do not want the British government to control us like this.

At this moment, tons of British tea is on British ships in our harbors in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Charleston. The British merchants are waiting for us to buy their tea.

Comprehension

1. Who are you in this story? _____
2. List several items that the British have taxed. _____

3. Why were the Navigation Acts fair?

4. Why do some colonists think they should not have to pay taxes to the British?

