

Name _____

The Tea Act and the Boston Tea Party: A Brewing Storm

Open-Ended Response Answer Key

1. Answer: The Tea Act of 1773 granted the British East India Company a monopoly on tea sales in the American colonies, allowing them to sell their surplus tea directly to the colonists at a reduced tax rate. This made British East India Company tea cheaper than smuggled Dutch tea. However, the colonists opposed the Tea Act because they saw it as another form of British taxation without their consent. They believed it was designed to maintain British control over the colonies and protect the interests of a British company at the expense of colonial businesses. It negatively affected the British East India Company's tea sales by forcing the colonists to purchase their tea, whether they wanted it or not, from a government-sanctioned monopoly.
2. Answer: The Boston Tea Party took place on the night of December 16, 1773, in Boston Harbor. Three British ships were involved: the Dartmouth, the Eleanor, and the Beaver. Colonists, dressed as Mohawk Indians to conceal their identities, boarded these ships and proceeded to dump 342 chests of British East India Company tea into the harbor. Their motivations behind this protest were to express their strong opposition to the Tea Act and British taxation without representation. They believed that by destroying the tea, they could send a powerful message of resistance against British oppression and unfair taxation.
3. Answer: In response to the Boston Tea Party, the British government implemented a series of harsh measures known as the Coercive Acts, also referred to as the Intolerable Acts. These acts included the closure of the Boston Harbor, the suspension of self-government in Massachusetts, and the quartering of British troops in private homes. These measures further escalated tensions between the American colonies and Britain because they were seen as punitive actions designed to punish Massachusetts for the Tea Party and suppress colonial resistance. The Coercive Acts were viewed as an attack on colonial self-government and fueled resentment among colonists, pushing them closer to rebellion and eventually contributing to the outbreak of the American Revolution.
4. Answer: The Boston Tea Party holds great significance in the context of the American Revolution as a symbol of colonial resistance and unity. It demonstrated the colonists' unwavering determination to resist British oppression and unfair taxation. The act of destroying British tea represented a clear act of defiance and protest against British authority. Additionally, the British government's harsh response with the Coercive Acts, including the closure of the Boston Harbor and the suspension of self-government, pushed the colonists closer to rebellion. The Boston Tea Party galvanized support for the American cause both within the colonies and abroad, creating a groundswell of sympathy for the colonial struggle against British tyranny. Overall, the Boston Tea Party played a crucial role in strengthening the colonists' resolve to seek independence from British rule and ultimately contributed to the outbreak of the American Revolution.

