

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## The Boston Tea Party and Public Opinion

### Open-Ended Response Answer Key

1. Answer: Many American colonists opposed the Tea Act of 1773 because they saw it as another example of British taxation without representation. They believed that the British government was imposing taxes on the colonies without giving them a voice in the British Parliament. This was a violation of their rights as British subjects. The Tea Act, which granted a monopoly to the British East India Company and allowed it to bypass colonial wholesalers and retailers, threatened the economic interests of colonial merchants and smugglers. The colonists viewed the Tea Act as a way for the British government to maintain control over the colonies and protect British economic interests at the expense of the colonists.
2. Answer: The Boston Tea Party took place on the night of December 16, 1773, in Boston Harbor. The key ships involved were the Dartmouth, the Eleanor, and the Beaver, which were carrying British East India Company tea. Colonists, many of them members of the Sons of Liberty, disguised themselves as Mohawk Indians to conceal their identities. They boarded these ships and proceeded to dump 342 chests of British East India Company tea into Boston Harbor as a protest against the Tea Act and British oppression. Their motivations behind this protest were to express their strong opposition to the Tea Act, which they saw as a violation of their rights and a symbol of British tyranny. The act of destroying the tea was a powerful statement of resistance.
3. Answer: Several factors influenced whether colonists supported or opposed the Boston Tea Party. Economic interests were a significant factor, as those whose livelihoods were directly impacted by the Tea Act, such as colonial merchants and smugglers, were more likely to support the protest. They saw the Tea Act as a threat to their businesses and economic interests. Geography also played a role, as colonists in Boston and nearby areas were more likely to actively support the Boston Tea Party, whereas those in more distant colonies might have had a more cautious stance due to the potential for British retaliation. Additionally, political beliefs and revolutionary sentiments influenced support, as colonists with strong anti-British sentiments were more likely to support acts of defiance like the Boston Tea Party. Overall, a combination of economic interests, geography, and political beliefs shaped colonists' stances toward the protest.
4. Answer: The Boston Tea Party did not receive universal support from American colonists. While it served as a powerful symbol of resistance against British tyranny and oppression, the level of support varied widely among different colonies and individuals. Some colonies and individuals expressed strong support and solidarity with the protesters in Boston, viewing the act as a bold step in resisting British oppression. However, others had concerns about potential British retaliation and were more cautious in their support. The varying levels of enthusiasm and concern were influenced by factors such as economic interests, geography, and political beliefs. Those whose economic interests were directly affected by the Tea Act were more likely to support the protest, while those in distant colonies were more cautious. Ultimately, the support for the Boston Tea Party was not universal, reflecting the complexity of colonial attitudes and circumstances at the time.

