

Name: _____

Period: _____

Date: _____

Unit One Assessment Revolution DBQ



By the mid-eighteenth century the thirteen American colonies, which were later to become the United States, contained well over one million inhabitants. The vast number of colonial Americans made their livings as farmers. Defending the Colonies against attack by the French and others cost the British a great deal of money. As a result, the British had very high taxes in their country. They decided to shift some of their financial burden to the colonists. The Stamp Act of 1765, which taxed all legal documents, newspapers and other documents, was met with a great uproar in the Colonies. In 1766, this tax was repealed, but it was just the beginning of the problems between the colonists and the British. The Boston Tea Party in 1773 was an act of revolt against the British and their tax on tea in the Colonies. Tensions such as these eventually led to the writing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776. A year earlier, the American Revolution, began. When the British finally surrendered on October 19, 1781, Americans were officially independent of Britain and set about establishing their own government.

Taken from America's Story from America's Library, Library of Congress

Directions to the

The task is designed to assess your ability to combine your knowledge of the Revolutionary era, analyze historical documents and present your thinking, in response to a prompt, in a well-organized essay. The task is based on attached documents 1–10. A rubric follows.

Complete the graphic organizer as you gather your ideas for the essay. You may use the organizer provided or choose one you prefer such as a web, outline, or list.

After completing an organizer, answer the question presented below in a well-developed, thoughtful essay. Your essay should include an introduction clearly stating a position on the prompt, well-developed paragraphs with strong details and evidence from a minimum of four documents to support your position and a conclusion.

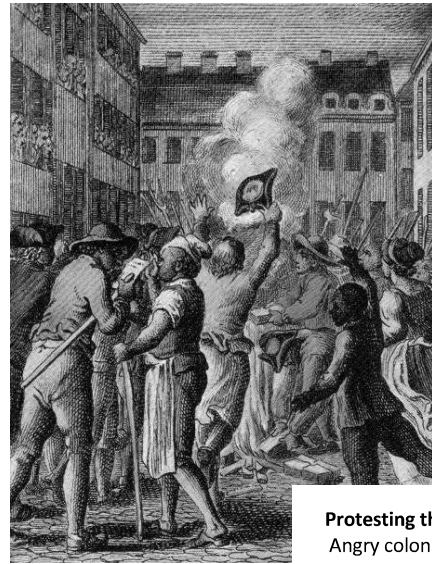
DBQ PROMPT:

Were American colonists justified in fighting a war to break away from Britain?

Document 1

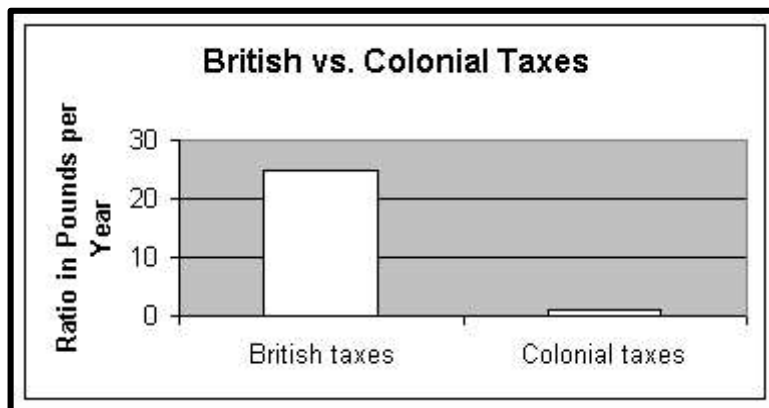
This excerpt is from "Considerations..." a pamphlet written by Thomas Whatley. Whatley was the author of the Stamp Act. In his pamphlet, Whatley explained why the British were justified in taxing American colonists.

"We are not yet recovered from a War [French and Indian War] [fought] for their [the American colonists'] protection . . . a War undertaken for their defense only . . . they should contribute to the Preservation of the Advantages they have received . . ."



Protesting the Stamp Act, 1765
Angry colonists burn the hated stamps in a bonfire.

Document 2



Document 3

My Dear Countrymen,

AWAKE! Awake, my Countrymen and defeat those who want to enslave us. Do not be cowards. You were born in Britain, the Land of Light, and you were raised in America, the Land of Liberty. It is your duty to fight this tax. Future generations will bless your efforts and honor the memory of the saviors of their country.

I urge you to tell your representatives that you do not support this terrible and burdensome law. Let them know what you think. They should act as guardians of the liberty of their country. I look forward to congratulating you on delivering us from the enemies of truth and liberty.

Source: This letter appeared in the Boston-Gazette newspaper on October 7, 1765 (modified)

Document 4



Paul Revere, "The Bloody Massacre in King-Street, March 5, 1770." Boston, 1770. (Gilder Lehrman Collection)

Document 5

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.--That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, --That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness...

...The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States...

...In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms; Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the rule of a free people.

Source: *Declaration of Independence*, 1776

Document 6

“It is my opinion, that this kingdom has no right to lay a tax upon the colonies. . . the Commons of America [the colonial assemblies] have ever been in possession of . . . their constitutional rights, of giving and granting their own money . . . At the same time, this kingdom . . . has always bound the colonies by her laws, her regulations . . . in every thing except that of taking their money out of their pockets without their consent. Here I would draw the line.”

Source: William Pitt, speech to the House of Commons (in England)
January 14, 1766

Document 7



Source: Dawe, Philip (ca. 1750-1785) *The Bostonian's Paying the Excise-man, or Tarring & Feathering*

Document 8

George Hewes was a member of the band of "Indians" that boarded the tea ships that evening. His recollection follows:

"It was now evening, and I immediately dressed myself in the costume of an Indian, equipped with a small hatchet, which I and my associates denominated the tomahawk, with which, and a club, after having painted my face and hands with coal dust in the shop of a blacksmith, I repaired to Griffin's wharf, where the ships lay that contained the tea. When I first appeared in the street after being thus disguised, I fell in with many who were dressed, equipped and painted as I was, and who fell in with me and marched in order to the place of our destination.

When we arrived at the wharf, there were three of our number ...We were immediately ordered ...to board all the ships at the same time, which we promptly obeyed.... We then were ordered by our commander to open the hatches and take out all the chests of tea and throw them overboard, and we immediately proceeded to execute his orders, first cutting and splitting the chests with our tomahawks, so as thoroughly to expose them to the effects of the water. In about three hours from the time we went on board, we had thus broken and thrown overboard every tea chest to be found in the ship, while those in the other ships were disposing of the tea in the same way, at the same time. We were surrounded by British armed ships, but no attempt was made to resist us.

...The next morning, after we had cleared the ships of the tea, it was discovered that very considerable quantities of it were floating upon the surface of the water; and to prevent the possibility of any of its being saved for use, a number of small boats were manned by sailors and citizens, who rowed them into those parts of the harbor wherever the tea was visible, and by beating it with oars and paddles so thoroughly drenched it as to render its entire destruction inevitable."

Source: "The Boston Tea Party, 1773," EyeWitness to History, www.eyewitnesstohistory.com (2002).

Document 9

This excerpt is from "Declaration of the Causes and Necessity of Taking up Arms," issued by the Second Continental Congress on July 5, 1775. The war had broken out in April, when British forces had marched to Lexington and Concord, two villages just outside of Boston.

(The British declare) that parliament can "of right make laws to bind us in all cases whatsoever." What is to defend us against so enormous, so unlimited a power?...We are reduced to the alternative of choosing an unconditional submission to the tyranny of irritated (British officials), or resistance by force.
– The latter is our choice.

Document 10

These excerpts are from *Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania*, (1767-1768) by John Dickinson. Dickinson was a Pennsylvania political leader who served in the Stamp Act Congress of 1765. Later in his career, he served in the Continental Congress, and later still, in the Constitutional Convention. In the following statement, Dickinson condemned some of the new taxes being imposed by Parliament.

There is another late act of parliament, which appears to me to be unconstitutional, and...destructive to the liberty of these colonies...The parliament unquestionably possesses a legal authority of regulate the trade of Great Britain, and all her colonies. I have looked over every statute (law) relating to these colonies, from their first settlement of this time; and I find every one of them founded on this principle, till the Stamp Act administration...All before, are calculated to regulate trade...The raising of revenues...was never intended...Never did the British parliament, (until the passage of the Stamp Act) think of imposing duties in America for the purpose of raising a revenue. (The Townshend Acts claim the authority) to impose duties on these colonies, not for the regulation of trade...but for the single purpose of levying money upon us.

You may use the graphic organizer below or one of your own to collect your thoughts about the documents analyzed in Part 1. Combine what you analyzed with your knowledge of the Revolutionary era to construct your essay.

Were American colonists justified in fighting a war to break away from Britain?

My position & thesis

Document # _____

Evidence that supports my position:

Document # _____

Evidence that supports my position:

Document # _____

Evidence that supports my position:

Document # _____

Evidence that supports my position:

Concluding
Thoughts