

The Boston Tea Party

Saving Dr. Warren... "A True Patriot"

Before starting this lesson you will need to have read Ch. 25, 26 & 27 (pg. 120-136) of *Saving Dr. Warren... "A True Patriot."*

Key Historical Question:

What led the colonists to rebel against the Tea Act, and why do Americans still have to pay taxes on their tea?

S.W.B.A.T:

- Provide a detailed explanation for why the colonists behaved the way they did.
- Analyze primary source documents to get the perspective of colonists at the time of the Tea Party

Plan of Instruction:

1. **Hook:** Start with asking your students to answer this question: *Two students decide that after school they're going to go to Starbucks to get a cup of coffee. The coffee is on sale, and it's buy one get one 50% off. How much will the two students pay **in total** if one cup of coffee costs \$3.75?*
 - a. A lot of students will respond with \$7.50. This answer is incorrect, unless you live in Alaska, Delaware, Montana, New Hampshire, or Oregon...in which case this hook doesn't work...sorry.
 - b. The correct answer will vary depending on state, but make sure you let them know that **in total** they will pay \$7.50 + your state's sales tax.
 - c. Provide a brief explanation of how taxes work, and explain that they are still VERY prevalent today.
 - d. Introduce the Boston Tea Party as today's class discussion
2. **Understanding the Events Leading to the Tea Party**
 - a. Distribute "Understanding the Background" worksheet to students. Make sure they have access to a copy of *Saving Dr. Warren*. ***Note: The filling out of this worksheet can also be done while reading the novel.
3. **Document Analysis:**
 - a. Distribute modified primary sources to students, and place students in document groups.
 - b. For time-management, it may make sense to allow students within one group to divide the documents (or, alternatively, assign reading at home).
 - c. Students are to fill in the Document Analysis sheet attached below as they read each document.
4. **Class Discussion:**

After going through the background leading up to the tea party and analyzing the documents, create a class discussion surrounding the historical question: What led the colonists to rebel against the Tea Act, and why do Americans still have to pay taxes on their tea?
5. **Wrap It Up:** Have students fill out an exit slip answering the key historical questions.

Name:
Period:

Understanding The Background

With the help of *Saving Dr. Warren*

Question 1: Why did England choose to tax the tea....they could have taxed so many other things, why tea? (*use footnote 13 on page 123 in Saving Dr. Warren to find your answer*)

Question 2: What did the Tea Act do to the price of tea? (*use footnote 13 on page 123 in Saving Dr. Warren to find your answer*)

Question 3: Based on what you discovered in Question 2 and Footnote 13, why do the colonists become so upset about the Tea Act?

Question 4: Oftentimes we only focus on *Boston* when we think of colonists refusing to accept the

Tea Act. However, *Saving Dr. Warren* teaches us that other major cities were also refusing to accept the tea. What two cities are specifically mentioned? (*use the bottom of page 127 & top of 128 in Saving Dr. Warren*)

1. _____ 2. _____

Question 5: At the top of page 132 Dr. Warren makes it clear to the Sons of Liberty disguising themselves as Mohawks, that under no circumstances is anyone allowed to take the tea for personal use. It must all be destroyed. **Why do YOU think it was so important that they destroyed it all and didn't take it home with them instead?**

DOCUMENT A: LETTER ADDRESSED TO GEORGE DUDLEY
(George Dudley was an official and former chairman of the East India Company in London)
Boston, New England, 17th Dec. 1773
(modified)

Gentleman:

Your tea is destroyed, which was brought in three ships. If the tea goes on shore, it will share the same fate. Every possible means has been used to send it home safe again to you, but the tea commissioners would not send it; the application was made to the commissioners of the customs to clear out the vessel, they would not do it, then to the Governor to grant a pass, which he refused and finally the people were obliged to destroy it. Or else, by an unlawful unrighteous act, imposing a duty this tea would have destroyed them.

This whole province (colony) of some hundred thousand people, and the other provinces (colonies) on the continent, are determined to not use it, or suffer it to be brought ashore, nor pay the duty. Force can never make them, and if the East India Trading Company can ever expect to sell any tea in America, they must use all their interest to get this Tea Act repealed, otherwise they will never sell one ounce. Get the Tea Act repealed, and you'll sell all your tea, otherwise you must keep all. The people will risk life and fortune in this affair, the very being of America depends on it. The Americans will not swallow cheap tea, which has a poison in the heart of it. I am a well wisher to the Company, and also to America; but death to an American is more desirable than slavery.

I am, gentlemen, with all due respect,

Your honor's most obedient, humble servant,

Anglo Americanus

Excerpts from "Tea leaves: being a collection of letters and documents relating to the shipment of tea to the American colonies in the year 1773," Digital Public Library of America,
<http://dp.la/item/96d60b8bf26d5ec98c9bd4d4eb6140a4>.

DOCUMENT B: BOSTON GAZETTE DECEMBER 20, 1773
(modified)

Boston,

On Tuesday last the people of Boston and all the adjacent towns, and others from the distance of twenty miles, assembled at the old south meeting-house, to inquire the reason for the delay in sending the ship, the Dartmouth, with the East-India Tea back to London. When the people of Boston found that the owner had not taken the necessary steps to send the tea away, they demanded that the tea commissioners give the ships permission to leave. When they met and Mr. Rotch refused clearance, they immediately entered a protest and asked the governor for a pass to send the Dartmouth back to London with its tea. After waiting till near sunset Mr. Rotch came in and informed them that he had waited on the governor for a pass, but his excellency told him he could not grant it.

The people finding all their efforts to preserve the tea of the East India company and return it safely to London, frustrated by the sea consignees, the collector of the customs and the governor of the province, DISSOLVED their meeting.--But, BEHOLD what followed! A number of brave & resolute men, determined to do all in their power to save their country from the ruin which their enemies had plotted, in less than four hours, emptied every chest of tea on board the three ships, amounting to 342 chests, into the sea! Without the least damage done to the ships or any other property. The matters and owners are well pleased that their ships are thus cleared; and the people are almost universally congratulating each other on this happy event.

Boston, December 20, on Tuesday last the body of the people of this and all the adjacent towns, an others from the distance of twenty miles, assembled at the old south meeting house to inquire the reason of the delay in sending the ship Dartmout. Boston, 1773. Pdf. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <www.loc.gov/item/rbpe.0370250a/>.

Name:
Period:

Document Analysis

Document A

1. The first paragraph of the document lists 3 attempts made by the colonists to get rid of the tea before they threw it off the ship. What were those 3 attempts?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
2. What do the colonists say the East India Company must do in order to sell tea in America?
3. The author of the letter says the tea “has a poison in the heart of it.” What do you think that means?
4. In the last sentence of the letter it alludes to the idea that Americans are slaves to England. What does it mean to be a slave? Do you agree with the idea of Americans being slaves to England? Why?

Document B

5. In the article written by the Boston Gazette do you think the newspaper owner is pleased or upset that the Sons of Liberty threw the tea into the harbor?
6. Give 2 examples from the article to support your answer to question 4.
 - a.
 - b.

Walking in someone else's shoes: Based on what you've learned about the Boston Tea Party, how would you have responded to the situation if you were a colonist? Why?