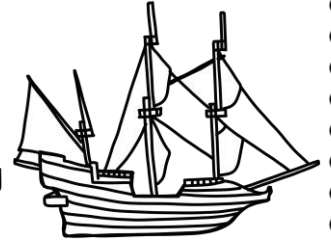


# THE BOSTON TEA PARTY

## Background

On a cold December night in Boston, Massachusetts, three British ships: the Dartmouth, the Eleanor, and the Beaver were sitting in the Boston Harbor. The ships were full of tea, but were not being unloaded because the residents of Boston were threatening to boycott buying or drinking tea.



## Tea Act

This hostility was directed at the government of Great Britain, who had passed the Tea Act. The law almost guaranteed American colonists bought tea from the East India Company. The law lowered the price so the East India Company's tea was the cheapest and way below the price charged by other tea companies. Most American colonists were looking for ways to cut costs and save money, so they chose a cheaper tea over a more expensive tea any day. Understandably, other tea companies were unhappy with the Tea Act. American colonists viewed the act as another example of "taxation without representation." Essentially, the Tea Act was putting a tax on tea sold by companies other than the East India Company. The Tea Act was approved by Parliament thousands of miles away and American colonists had no way of influencing the law or speaking out against it while it was debated.

## Sons of Liberty

Colonists were furious with this taxation without representation and wanted to express their unhappiness with the Tea Act to the British. Some wanted to keep things nonviolent, while others wanted bloodshed. The result was somewhere in the middle. The Sons of Liberty, a group of colonists, were determined to make a change. They were led by impassioned patriots Samuel Adams and John Hancock. The group had secret meetings to discuss the best way to get their message across to Great Britain that the American people wanted more of a role in governing themselves.

## Plan and Execution

Christmas was approaching and the colonists faced another year of unopposed and unrepresented taxes, so the Sons of Liberty decided to take action. A large group of them dressed in disguises to look like Mohawk Indians on December 16, 1773. They stormed aboard the three unsuspecting British ships and dumped 342 crates full of tea overboard. The crates were jammed full of tea, so the tea companies lost a lot of money in one night. Since the Sons of Liberty were disguised as Native Americans, they claimed they were not guilty of dumping the tea, but the British government knew better. The British grew angrier than ever at what they viewed as Americans' ingratitude. The next year saw the passage of what came to be known as the Intolerable Acts, one of which closed the port of Boston entirely.

## Impact

The Boston Tea Party was a symbolic act and example of how far Americans were willing to go to speak out for their freedom. In only two short years, Americans were willing to give their lives for freedom, as shots rang out on the Lexington Green and the American Revolution began.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

# The Boston Tea Party



**True or False?** Place a check in the correct column.

Statement	T	F
1. The Tea Act made the East India Company's tea the cheapest.		
2. There were two ships raided by the Sons of Liberty.		
3. Samuel Adams and John Hancock were leaders of the Sons of Liberty.		
4. The Sons of Liberty disguises fooled the British leaders.		
5. The Boston Tea Party encouraged the British to repeal the Tea Act.		
6. The British created the Intolerable Acts in reaction to the Boston Tea Party.		
7. The Sons of Liberty were supportive of Parliament's actions to tax American colonists.		
8. The Revolutionary War started two months after the Tea Party.		

**Multiple Choice:** Choose the best answer.

9. What is the MAIN reason the Sons of Liberty were upset with the Tea Act?
- A. It forced them to pay more for tea.
  - B. It took away their freedom to choose from whom they purchased tea.
  - C. They were being taxed without any representation in Parliament.
  - D. Parliament kept adding more and more taxes.



10. How did Great Britain MAINLY react to the Boston Tea Party?
- A. They realized they were in the wrong and gave the colonists a seat in Parliament.
  - B. They passed even more laws that caused the colonists frustration.
  - C. They were frustrated, but decided to end the Tea Act.
  - D. They fined the colonists for the tea they had ruined.
11. Which of the following events occurred FIRST?
- A. Parliament passed more laws, known as the Intolerable Acts.
  - B. The Sons of Liberty threw tea into Boston Harbor.
  - C. The Tea Act was passed by Parliament.
  - D. The colonists were given a seat in Parliament.
12. What is the MAIN reason the tea on the ships in Boston Harbor had not been unloaded?
- A. The colonists were frustrated with the Tea Act.
  - B. The colonists were waiting for the Tea Act to be abolished.
  - C. The residents of Boston were hoping the tea would be taken back to England.
  - D. The residents of Boston had been threatened to not buy or use the tea.
13. The Boston Tea Party would MOSTLY be considered a \_\_\_\_\_ of the Revolutionary War.
- A. Cause
  - B. Effect
  - C. Example
  - D. Challenge

