

Lesson 7: Boston Tea Party

Historical Career Assumed

- Journalist

Historical Skills Practiced

- Contextualizing diversity in historical institutions
- Rationalizing historical perspectives
- Making past to present connections

Lesson Overview

In this lesson, students will learn about who the Sons of Liberty were in their journalistic investigation of the Boston Tea Party. Students will gather evidence from multiple perspectives in colonial and British newspapers to try to understand causes of the Boston Tea Party and its effects. After sourcing and contextualizing primary documents such as newspapers and letters, students will work together as journalists to write their own newspaper article to get an accurate idea of what happened the night of the Boston Tea Party. After writing their newspaper article, students will find newspaper articles from a modern protest to make past to present connections and understand the similarities and differences between the Boston Tea Party and the modern protest of their choice.

Content Question:

- How did the Boston Tea Party change the relationship between the colonies and England?

Topical Essential Questions:

- How can we “know” what happened at a historical event of the distant past?
- Why was the rhetoric of “enslavement” so important to the colonial leaders and how does it exemplify hypocrisy in relation to enslaving Africans in America?
- What are similarities and differences between modern protests and colonial protests?

Overarching Essential Question:

- What are the causes of the American Revolution?

Learning Objectives:

- Students will analyze the causes and effects of the Boston Tea Party.
- Students will reconstruct the events that happened at the Boston Tea Party through a primary source investigation.
- Students will recognize the hypocrisy of how the American patriots used the symbol of enslavement to Britain as a rallying cry for their cause, while also enslaving Africans in America themselves.
- Students will make past to present connections between colonial and modern protests.

Instructional Plan

Do Now:

In their almanac for today's lesson, there is a brief summary of the events of the Boston Tea Party. Have students independently read and annotate this summary for their do now.

<http://web.archive.org/web/20070425123709/http://odur.let.rug.nl/~usa/E/teaparty/bostonxx.htm>

Boston Tea Party Introduction:

Have students share their annotations with a partner and remind them to support, extend, and challenge their comments and questions. After this, come back together as a whole class to examine the main causes of the Boston Tea Party.

Share that the key opposition to British Parliament during this time was the colonists' objection to the Townshend Act of 1767 and the Tea Act of 1773, which limited the power of the colonists because they were being taxed without their consent. The rallying call for the colonists was "no taxation without representation" which eventually resulted in the colonial leaders, who were members of the secret Sons of Liberty, to protest the taxes by dumping tea into the Boston Harbor. Share that after the Boston Tea Party of 1773, the British passed the Intolerable Acts which closed trade imports and exports from the Boston Harbor and served as a punitive response to the Boston Tea Party. The Intolerable Acts is what led to the creation of the First Continental Congress, which was another measure for colonists to distance themselves from Britain.

Lesson Overview:

Share with students that today they will work with partners to act as journalists to uncover the truths of the Boston Tea Party and to find similarities and differences between colonial protests and modern protests. Share that they will read and annotate primary sources about the Boston Tea Party to get a diverse set of perspectives about its causes and consequences and then write a newspaper article highlighting the main ideas of the Boston Tea Party considering the multiple perspectives. Additionally, students will complete a past to present investigation on a modern protest to find similarities and differences between the modern protest and the colonial protest. Students will write their analysis in the same newspaper article.

Being a journalist:

Have students flip their almanacs to the "Historical Jobs" section on their syllabus and have them write "Journalist" on the next line. Students may already be familiar with the job of a journalist, but share specifically that journalists collect, write, and distribute information to the public. Oftentimes, journalists work for newspapers, magazines, news websites, and news tv shows. Share that the job of a journalist is critically important because it is their job to look at a wide variety of information to try to tell a story that is as unbiased as possible and truthful to inform the public of current events. Explain to students that today they will take the role of being a colonial journalist to tell the story of the Boston Tea Party and a modern journalist to tell the story of a modern protest. In both instances, the role of the journalist is the same, to tell a truthful story of an event.

Have students flip to the Historical Skills section of their almanac

Explain that while students will be using all the other skills we have learned so far such as corroboration, sourcing, contextualizing, and interpretation, today they will also practice the skill

of making past to present connections. Ask students what they think “Making past to present connections” means? What are some everyday past to present connections that we all use to explain our own experiences in the world? After a few students share a few answers, highlight that historians almost always make some sort of past to present connection in their analysis of an event to understand how the repercussions of the first event impacted the later event.

Making past to present connections in today’s lesson

In today’s lesson, students will look at the colonial protest of the Boston Tea Party and make connections between that and a modern protest, like the Black Lives Matter protest for example. Making past to present connections allows students to view history as a fluid and dynamic theme that is not separated into distinct events, but that is all encompassing and has many impacts and connections to seemingly unrelated events. In order to understand why the present is the way it is, it is critical to understand the past and the root causes of the systems of today. For example, the Black Lives Matter protests stem from the injustices that Black Americans have experienced since 1619, when the first African slaves were forced to the Jamestown colony to work as hostages. Making past to present connections allows historians to understand the causes and systems of the past to understand the systems that exist today. Once people understand the causes of the system, the next step is to adjust or dismantle that system to promote true justice in the future.

Journalism Activity:

Split students up into small groups and explain the activity they will complete together. In their almanacs, there are multiple primary sources examining the Boston Tea Party (1773) and its various perspectives. Have students investigate these sources by sourcing, contextualizing, and corroborating them to write one journalistic narrative about the causes and events of the Boston Tea Party. After students write a summary of the Boston Tea Party, they should also search a modern protest and find two journal articles about that protest. Make sure students know how to find a credible source online by looking at the URL, source title, author, date, and content to make sure the source is from a reputable site. Students will then make a past to present connection highlighting the similarities and differences they notice between the Boston Tea Party and the modern protest they chose. In this connection students should think about the following questions:

- What were the protestors fighting for?
- What was the goal of the protestors?
- What were the causes of the protest?
- What were the consequences of the protest?
- What actions did the protestors do to get their voice heard?
- What were the reactions to these protests?

Whole class share out:

Have each group share the modern protest they chose and have them explain the past to present connections they made between that protest and the Boston Tea Party.

Exit Slip:

Why was the Boston Tea Party a turning point to the start of the American Revolution? How will you incorporate the Boston Tea Party into your final project?

Lesson sources

https://www.masshist.org/revolution/teachers/lessons/lesson_concept_4b.php

<https://edsitement.neh.gov/lesson-plans/revolutionary-tea-parties-and-reasons-revolution>

<http://web.archive.org/web/20070425123709/http://odur.let.rug.nl/~usa/E/teaparty/bostonxx.htm>