

Lesson 8: The Bostonians in Distress, the Intolerable Acts and the First Continental Congress

Historical Career Assumed

- Podcaster

Historical Skills Practiced

- Corroboration
- Analyzing cause and effect relationships
- Developing a well-organized written and verbal argument

Lesson Overview

In this lesson, students will create podcasts to define and examine each of the five Intolerable Acts the British passed in response to the Boston Tea Party. Students will work in groups to read and annotate primary and secondary sources from one of the five acts and discuss what the purpose of the act was, what the message Britain was trying to convey with enacting it, and what its effect was. Students will then play their podcasts out loud to the class and discuss what impact the Intolerable Acts had on the colonists. After this discussion, students will learn about how the colonies responded to the Intolerable Acts by establishing the First Continental Congress.

Content Questions

- What were the five acts that British Parliament passed as punishment for the Boston Tea Party?
- What did each of these acts do and what was the message Britain was trying to convey through the Intolerable Acts?

Topical Essential Question

- What effect did the Intolerable Acts have on the American colonists?

Overarching Essential Question

- What are the causes of the American Revolution?

Learning Objectives

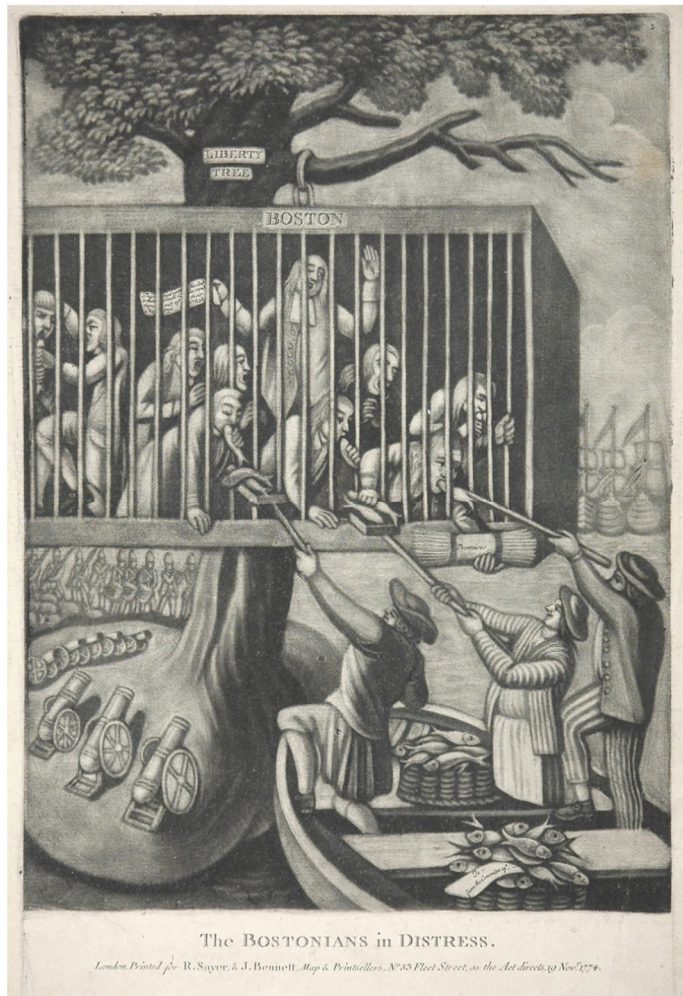
- Students will be able to describe the five acts known as the Coercive/Intolerable Acts.
- Students will be able to explain the message Britain was trying to convey through the Intolerable Acts.
- Students will be able to infer the effect that these acts had on the American colonists.

Instructional Plan

Do Now

If you were a British leader, how would you have reacted to the Boston Tea Party? Look at the following image. It is a political cartoon created by American colonists titled “Bostonians in Distress.”

- What do you think is happening in this cartoon?
- What is the purpose of the cartoon?
- How are the British portrayed in this cartoon?
- How are the American colonists portrayed in this cartoon?
- What symbols do you see to promote the American colonists?



The BOSTONIANS in DISTRESS.

London Printed for R. Sayer & J. Bennett, Map & Printers, No. 65 Fleet Street, in the Strand, to the Art directed Nov. 1774.

Introduction.

Students should think, pair, and share with partners to discuss each of these questions and to support, extend, and challenge each other's responses. After this discussion, have students share some of their answers out loud with the class. After this, share with students that the British Parliament was extremely angry about the colonists' protests during the Boston Tea Party. When Britain learned that 342 chests of tea that belonged to the British were destroyed in the Boston harbor, they decided to act to punish the Bostonian colonists. Explain that to punish the Bostonians, the British passed the Intolerable Acts, which included 5 new laws that restricted the American colonists' power. This political cartoon was created in response to the Intolerable Acts to show how poorly the Bostonians were treated by the British through the Intolerable Acts.

Share the goals of today's lesson.

Explain that today students will take the roles of podcasters and will be split into groups to write and record a podcast that defines, describes, and examines one of the five acts that are a part of the Intolerable Acts. Have students flip to the beginning of their almanac titled, "Historical Jobs" and have them write "Podcaster" down. Ask students if there are any podcasts that they like to listen to? If some students do not know what podcasts or podcasters are, share that podcasts are audio conversations or discussions about any topic. There are podcasts for basically every topic. There are hundreds of historical podcasts where podcasters interview historians and talk about specific events in history. The podcaster is the person who is the main conversationalist in the podcast. So, for this lesson, students will work in groups to create their own podcast episode about one of the 5 acts that make up the Intolerable Acts.

Split students up into 5 groups.

Assign each group to read and annotate primary and secondary sources from their almanacs about the following Intolerable Acts:

1. The Boston Port Act – which closed the port of Boston until the tea was paid for from the Boston Tea Party.
2. The Administration of Justice Act – which allowed British officials accused of murder while enforcing British laws to be tried in England.
3. The Massachusetts Government Act – which brought the control of the government of Massachusetts directly under the control of the British government by requiring that almost all positions in the colonial government be appointed by either the Royal Governor or the King. Also, no town meetings were permitted without permission of the Governor and only business approved by the Governor could be discussed.
4. The Quartering Act – which allowed the governor to house soldiers in any unoccupied building.
5. The Quebec Act – which declared that the Roman Catholic Church was the official church in Quebec and the boundary of Quebec was extended into the Ohio Valley, which had been previously promised to the American colonies.

While students read and annotate each source, they should think about and discuss the purpose the act had and what the potential impact might be. In their almanacs, students should write a short reflection that they will then record into a podcast which articulates how this particular act created "distressed Bostonians" and was a key factor in the start of the American Revolution. Every person in the group must participate in the creation of the podcast, and it should not be longer than 3 minutes.

Sharing podcasts

After each group records their podcast, they will share their podcast for the whole class to listen to together.

The Intolerable Acts Discussion

After listening to each other's podcasts, we will discuss as a whole class how the colonists reacted to the Intolerable Acts. During this discussion, students should take notes in their almanac. Ask the students how they think the colonists might have responded to the Intolerable Acts. After they discuss in partners and share as a whole class, explain that the First Continental Congress was established by colonial leaders after the Intolerable Acts were enforced. The idea of American independence was growing rapidly among many colonists. The Committees of Correspondence were publishing many articles in support of American Independence, and it seemed even more desirable after the Intolerable Acts were passed. Because the desire for independence was growing, the colonists decided that they wanted to have more intercolonial meeting and discussions. In September of 1774, the first Continental Congress was held in Philadelphia to discuss terms for American independence. By October, the members of the First Continental Congress drafted the Articles of Association which was a precursor to the Declaration of Independence, which laid out the conditions and was enforced throughout the colonies to prohibit the import, consumption, export, and trade with Great Britain.

As an extension, you can have students examine the Articles of Association to understand how it resembles the American Declaration of Independence and how it was a strong cause to the start of the American Revolution.

<https://www.ushistory.org/declaration/related/assoc74.html>

Exit Slip:

Do you think Britain overreacted with passing the Intolerable Acts or do you think the acts were a suitable punishment for Bostonians rebelling in the Boston Tea Party?

Lesson sources

<https://www.ushistory.org/declaration/lessonplan/intolerable.html>

<https://www.ushistory.org/declaration/related/assoc74.html>

<https://www.ushistory.org/declaration/related/assoc74.html>

https://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/quarterming_act_1774.asp

https://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/mass_gov_act.asp

https://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/boston_port_act.asp

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