

DBQ: Stamp Act of 1765

“You say you want a revolution?”

Exercise A: Analyzing Sources

An excerpt of the Stamp Act of 1765

March 22, 1765

AN ACT for granting and applying certain stamp duties, and other duties, in the British colonies and plantations in America, towards further defraying the expenses of defending, protecting, and securing the same...

WHEREAS, by an act made in the last session of Parliament several duties were granted, continued, and appropriated toward defraying the expenses of defending, protecting, and securing the British colonies and plantations in America; and whereas it is just and necessary that provision be made for raising a further revenue within your majesty's dominions in America toward defraying the said expenses; we, your majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Commons of Great Britain, in Parliament assembled, have therefore resolved to give and grant unto your majesty the several rates and duties hereinafter mentioned... there shall be raised, levied, collected, and paid unto his majesty, his heirs, and successors, throughout the colonies and plantations in America...

<http://www.ushistory.org/declaration/related/stampact.htm>

1. Why did the British Parliament pass the Stamp Act?

Excerpts of the Stamp Act of 1765

And for and upon every pack of playing cards, and all dice, which shall be sold or used within the said colonies and plantations, the several stamp duties following (that is to say):

- For every pack of such cards, *one shilling*.
- And for every pair of such dice, *ten shillings*.

For every ... sheet or piece of paper, on which shall be engrossed, written, or printed, ... certificate of any degree taken in any university, academy, college, or seminary of learning within the said colonies and plantations, a stamp duty of *two pounds*.

And for and every paper called a *pamphlet*, and upon every newspaper, containing public news or occurrences, which shall be printed, dispersed, and made public, within any of the said colonies and plantations...

For every advertisement to be contained in any gazette newspaper, or other paper, or any pamphlet which shall be so printed, a duty of *two shillings*.

For every other almanac or calendar, for any one particular year, which shall be written or printed within the said colonies and plantations, a stamp duty of *four pence*.

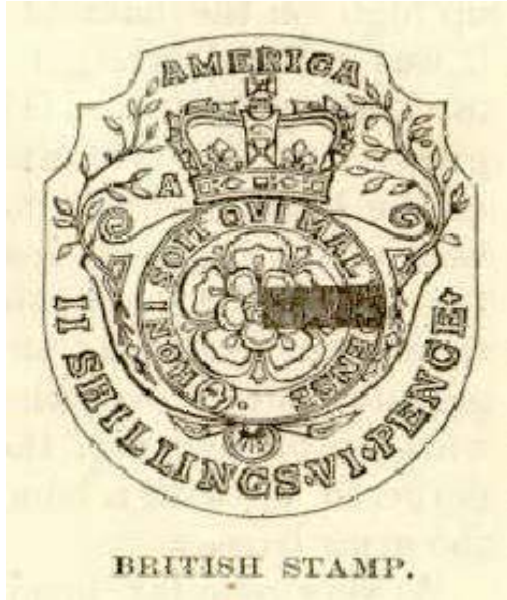
For every ... sheet or piece of paper, on which any ... matter or thing aforesaid, shall be ... written, or printed, within the said colonies and plantations, in any other than the English language, a stamp duty of double the amount of the respective duties before charged thereon.

<http://www.ushistory.org/declaration/related/stampact.htm>

2. According to the Stamp Act of 1765, list items that were taxed.

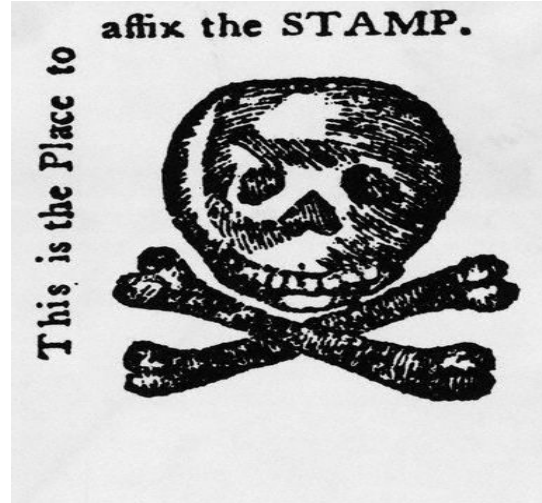
An official British Tax stamp (left) and a colonist's political cartoon (right)

Official British Tax Stamp



http://www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_publications_and_archives/

Political Cartoon



"An Emblem of the Effects of the STAMP"
Credit: Rare Books and Manuscripts Division,
The New York Public Library,
Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations)

3. How does the skull and crossbones in the political cartoon make you feel?

4. Why do you think the artist drew this political cartoon? What was the artist trying to say?

“Paying the EXCISE MAN or TARRING & FEATHERING”



Source: Philip Dawe(?), 1774, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.

5. Look at the pictures above. Using the *4 quadrants* in the second picture, describe what you see.

Patrick Henry's proposed resolutions
(to the Virginia House of Burgesses) against the Stamp Act

Resolved, that the taxation of the people by themselves, or by persons chosen by themselves to represent them, who can only know what taxes the people are able to bear... is the only security against a burdensome taxation, and the distinguishing characteristic of British freedom, without which the ancient constitution cannot exist...

Resolved, therefor that the General Assembly of this Colony have the only and exclusive Right and Power to lay Taxes and Impositions upon the inhabitants of this Colony and that every Attempt to vest such Power in any person or persons whatsoever other than the General Assembly aforesaid has a manifest Tendency to destroy British as well as American Freedom.

Source: John Pendleton Kennedy, ed., *Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia, 1761-1765* (Richmond, Va., 1907).

6. Why does Patrick Henry disagree with the Stamp Act?
