

Freeze Frame: The Boston Tea Party

Introduction

The Tea Tax

A strange period of calm descended on Boston and the colonies after the Boston Massacre. Then the British made a huge mistake.

The British wanted to control the tea trade in the 13 Colonies and help a company called the British East India Company. To accomplish both goals, Parliament cut the price of tea sold by this company and forbade any other group from selling tea in the colonies (called a monopoly). They reasoned people would buy the cheap tea and not care that only the British East India Company could sell them the tea. Parliament's plan, however, backfired. Their big mistake was to put a tax on the tea. They figured as long as the tea was cheap, no one would care about the tax.

Unfortunately for the British, the colonists did care about the tax. Colonial merchants began to smuggle in tea from different companies to protest both the tax and the monopoly held by the British East India Company. Soon, a crisis erupted in Boston about the tea tax!

The Tea Crisis

(Taken from *The Boston Tea Party Ship and Museum website*)

On the winter night of Thursday, December 16, 1773 the "tea crisis" in Boston came to a head. Members of the Sons of Liberty, disguised as Mohawk Indians, were armed with an assortment of axes. They quietly boarded three ships carrying cargoes of British East India Company tea moored at Griffin's Wharf. In a span of three hours, 340 chests of British East India Tea were smashed and dumped into Boston Harbor. Over 92,000 pounds of tea were destroyed! The impact of the Boston Tea Party was enormous. The event led directly to sparking the American Revolution.

Why did the colonists protest the tea tax even though the tea from the British East India Co. was the cheapest to buy?

Hi-lite the amount of tea dumped into Boston Harbor.

Task:

Watch and listen to your classmates as they create a "Freeze Frame" about the Boston Tea Party.

- Create a "Freeze Frame" about the Boston Tea Party
- Write two sentences about the scenes that you see on the back of this paper.
- Create a summary of the Boston Tea Party using your sentences.
- End your summary by responding to:
 - Why do you think the Boston Tea Party did so much to spark the colonist's rebellion against the British?
 - What did King George III mean when he said after the Tea Party: "The die is now cast. The colonies must either submit or triumph."

Scene One Title: _____ /Grade _____

Scene Two Title: _____ /Grade _____

Scene Three Title: _____ /Grade _____

Scene Four Title: _____ /Grade _____

Scene Five Title: _____ /Grade _____

Scene Six Title: _____ /Grade _____

Make a Title

- Scene 1: The Tax Deadline

Narrator

- Say:

Three ships carried more than one hundred chests of British East India Company Tea to Griffin's Wharf in Boston Harbor. The deadline to unload the tea and pay the tax was 20 days after the arrival of the first ship, the Dartmouth. That date was December 17, 1773. Following the arrival of the tea ships, the Sons of Liberty distributed pamphlets around the city of Boston proclaiming, "Friends! Brethen! Countrymen! That worst of plagues, the detested tea shipped for this port by the East India Company, is now arrived in the harbor. The hour of destruction . . . now stares you in the face!" Many meetings occurred in places like the Green Dragon Tavern on what was to be done about the detested tea. Soon the Sons of Liberty would take action!

- Create your "Freeze Frame" Scene!
 - Create a title (Scene Title)
 - You can use signs and simple props.
 - You must have 1 or 2 narrator(s).
 - All other group members must be in the scene.
 - Create a scene based on a section of the reading.
 - You can't move while the narrator is explaining the scene!

Make a Title

- Scene 2: The Final Straw

Narrator

- Say:

As the tax deadline approached tension in Boston grew to an all time high. Massachusetts Lieutenant Governor Thomas Hutchinson ordered that no ship leave Boston Harbor without a pass. Later, the Sons of Liberty planned a large meeting in the Old South Meeting House to deal with the tea crisis. On the morning of December 16th, one day before the tea tax was due, thousands from all over Massachusetts gathered in Boston. They crowded the streets, taverns, Griffin's Wharf, and the Old South Meeting House. That same day, the Sons of Liberty sent a group to Thomas Hutchinson to request a pass for the Dartmouth to leave Boston Harbor. Hutchinson refused. After news of the refusal for a pass reached the Old South Meeting House, a Patriot said, "Perhaps salt water and tea will mix tonight!"

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- Scene 3: The Secret Plan, December 16, 1773

Narrator

- Say:

With no pass for the Dartmouth to leave Boston Harbor and return the cargo of British East India Company Tea, the Patriots were running out of options. Since the arrival of the tea ships, the Sons of Liberty had been planning a last resort idea to stop the unloading of the tea into Boston. Thousands gathered at the Old South Meeting House on December 16th to hear Sam Adams call the Sons of Liberty to action. He declared, "This meeting can do nothing more to save the country!" With those words, Adams signaled the Sons of Liberty to carry out their plan. Cries of "make Boston Harbor a teapot tonight!" echoed around the building. Members of the Sons of Liberty, dressed in "Indian dress," emerged from the Old South Meeting House and marched to Griffin's Wharf. Many had small hatchets and painted their faces with coal dust. Hundreds took part in the march to the wharf.

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Make a Title

- Scene 4: The Destruction of the Tea, December 16, 1773

Narrator

- Say:

The Sons of Liberty marched through the streets of Boston toward Griffin's Wharf. Their secret mission required silence. The Patriots boarded the ships disguised as Indians and opened the hatches to remove the chests of tea. They cut and split the chests with their axes and threw the tea overboard. They were careful not to damage the ships and after the destruction of the tea, they swept the decks clean and put everything back in its proper place. Nothing was broken or stolen, and no one was injured. In three hours, the Sons of Liberty dumped 340 chests of British East India Company tea weighing 92,000 pounds into Boston Harbor. The cargo was worth more than \$1,700,000 in today's money. By 9:00 in the evening the destruction was complete. Many fled Boston to avoid arrest.

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Make a Title

- Scene 5: The Aftermath

Narrator

- Say:

After the Boston Tea Party was over, many participants quietly fled the city and kept quiet about their fellow conspirators. One participant said, “We then quietly retired to our several places of residence, without having any conversation with each other . . .” For weeks after, Boston Harbor smelled of tea. Only one member of the Sons of Liberty was caught and imprisoned for his participation. There was no violence and no confrontation between the Patriots and the British soldiers stationed in Boston. The Sons of Liberty pulled off the first organized, carefully planned act of rebellion against British rule. By January 20, 1774, the news also reached London. King George III was furious and Parliament was determined to punish those responsible for this bold, humiliating defiance of British rule.

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Make a Title

- Scene 6: The Intolerable Acts, 1774

Narrator

- Say:

The Boston Tea Party was the first important act of defiance by American colonists against British rule. When news reached London of the destruction of the tea, King George III and Parliament reacted with anger and surprise. Determined to make Boston and Massachusetts submit to British authority, they passed the Intolerable Acts. The harsh punishment closed Boston Harbor until the cost of the tea was paid back, shut down the Massachusetts government, including town hall meetings, and put the military in charge of Boston under General Thomas Gage. King George III famously said after the Intolerable Acts were passed, "The die is now cast. The colonies must either submit or triumph." Unfortunately for the British, the plan backfired. The colonies called the First Continental Congress to meet in Philadelphia to support Massachusetts and to demand their rights.

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