British Acts and Colonial Reactions

Cause and Effect
The Navigation Acts (1650)

- Colonists were required to transport goods only on British ships
- Certain goods (sugar, tobacco, indigo, furs) could only go to England.
- Purpose: To make England a wealthy nation
The Navigations Acts (1650)...

- **COLONIAL REACTION:**
  - many colonists ignored these laws. Smuggling was prominent.

- **BRITISH RESPONSE:**
  - Passed Sugar Act and Writs of Assistance
After the French–Indian War

Who Is Going to Pay?
After the French and Indian War

- Proclamation of 1763
Britain’s Empty Treasury

• Wars cost money
• How about the colonies?
Proclamation of 1763

• Prohibited all settlement and fur trapping west of the Appalachian Mountains
• This was meant to keep peace with the Native Americans and keep costs of protecting colonists low.
• Many colonists defied this and moved anyway.
Writs of Assistance (1764)

• Legal papers which gave custom officials the right to search any building for any reason.
• An attempt to stop smuggling.
• The colonists complained that these writs violated their rights as English subjects.
Sugar Act (1764)

- Reduced the tax on sugar but sent suspected smugglers to England for trial by judge.
- The colonists felt that this Sugar Act took away their rights of trial by jury and taxation with representation as guaranteed to them as English subjects.
Stamp Act (1765)

- The Stamp Act was a direct tax on the colonies which placed a tax on almost all printed materials.
- It was an attempt to raise revenue for Britain.
Why Were the Colonists So Angry?

- People in Britain were shocked at the uproar in the colonies.
- Britain had spent a great deal of $ protecting the colonists from the French.
- British citizens paid 26 TIMES the taxes of the colonists.
Here’s Why...

• Britain taxing the colonies went against the long-established British principle of **no taxation without representation** (see Magna Carta 1215)

• ONLY the colonists or their elected representatives had the right to pass taxes

• No colonial representation in Parliament = No British taxes

• Colonists were willing to pay taxes passed by colonial legislatures
Reactions to the Stamp Act:

- Formed the Sons of Liberty (and Daughters of Liberty)
- Protested and harrassed tax collectors
- Boycotted trade with Great Britain
- Created Stamp Act Congress and wrote petitions (letters) to Great Britain against act
Declaratory Act (1766)

- The Declaratory Act repealed the Stamp Act but also gave British authority to tax the colonists in “all cases whatsoever”.
- The colonists considered this act a victory.
Townshend Act (1767)

• Placed duties (taxes) on glass, paper, paint, lead, and tea
• Suspended the New York legislature.
• The Townshend Act was an effort by England’s new Finance Minister to tax the colonies “without offense”.
Townshend Acts (1767)

- In response, the colonists renewed their boycotts of British goods.
- Five colonists killed in a clash with British troops in 1770 known as “The Boston Massacre”.
- The Townshend Act was repealed one month after the Boston Massacre.
**Tea Act (1773)**

- Kept the tax on tea and gave the East India Company a monopoly over the American tea trade.
- In response to the Tea Act the Sons of Liberty organized the Boston Tea Party.
- The King was furious. Parliament passed four new laws (Intolerable Acts) to punish the colonists.
The Boston Tea Party

Colonists boarded three British ships full of tea and dumped it into the harbor (about 90,000 lbs)

King George III was furious!
**Intolerable Acts (1774) also called the Coercive Acts**

- These acts were meant to punish Boston for the Boston Tea Party and to isolate Boston from the rest of the colonies.
  1. Closed Boston harbor until the colonists paid for all the tea they dumped.
  2. Greatly restricted colonial government
  3. Allowed British commanders to house troops wherever necessary.
Intolerable Acts (1774)

- Colonists sent supplies to aid Boston; Boycotted British goods; Established the First Continental Congress
- Britain stood firm and tension between Britain and the American colonies increased; the colonists prepared for war; Fighting begins at Lexington and Concord (the shot heard ‘round the world)