



Understanding a Cause of the American Revolution*

Objective: To understand reaction to the Tea Act in the American colonies (SC Standard 8-2.1)

The Tea Act, passed by Parliament in May of 1773, would launch the final spark to the revolutionary movement in Boston. The act was not intended to raise revenue in the American colonies, and in fact imposed no new taxes. It was designed to prop up the East India Company which was floundering financially and burdened with eighteen million pounds of unsold tea. This tea was to be shipped directly to the colonies, and sold at a bargain price. The Townshend Duties were still in place, however, and the radical leaders in America found reason to believe that this act was a maneuver to buy popular support for the taxes already in force. The direct sale of tea, via British agents, would also have undercut the business of local merchants.

Colonists in Philadelphia and New York turned the tea ships back to Britain. In Charleston the cargo was left to rot on the docks. In Boston the Royal Governor was stubborn & held the ships in port, where the colonists would not allow them to unload. Cargoes of tea filled the harbor, and the British ship's crews were stalled in Boston looking for work and often finding trouble. This situation led to the Boston Tea Party.

In this learning station, you will learn more about the American colonists' reaction to the Tea Act.

Please complete the following:

1. With your group, read and discuss "Revolutionary Tea". Consider the following:
 - a. Who does the mother represent?
 - b. Who does the daughter represent?
 - c. What feelings are evident?
 - d. Do you believe the poem accurately portrays the attitudes of the people/institutions that are represented?
2. With your group, plan and rehearse a dramatic presentation of the poem. These will be presented in class on a date of your teacher's choice.

*Students will need a basic knowledge of the Tea Act and the Boston Tea Party in order to complete this learning station.