

1. Explain why the colonists objected to the Stamp Act and its policies.

The Stamp Act was passed by Parliament in 1765, and it required colonists to purchase special stamps on all paper products. The colonists objected to the Stamp Act and its policies because this was the first time colonists themselves had to pay a direct tax on an item they purchased. The colonists believed that they should tax themselves instead of having some distant royal authority imposing taxes on them. Also, the American colonists felt that they were not represented in Parliament and therefore believed that Parliament only had limited authority when it came to taxation. The colonists thought that the crown was able to impose external taxes on imported goods; however they could not impose internal taxes that directly affected colonists. The British prime minister, George Grenville, claimed that the colonists had virtual representation in Parliament since Parliament governed on the behalf of the entire British Empire; however with no physical representative in Parliament the colonists still believed that the British government had no right to impose such taxes on them.

2. Why did the British pass the Intolerable Acts? What did the colonists think the laws showed about British intentions?

The British passed the Intolerable Acts after the American colonists retaliated against the Tea Act by dumping tons of imported British tea into the Boston Harbor. The Intolerable Acts, which consisted of the Coercive Acts and the Quebec Act, were passed in order to punish the colonies for what they had done. Under these acts, Boston Harbor was closed until the dumped tea was paid for, the charter of Massachusetts was revoked, and the Quartering Act was expanded to allow soldiers to be housed in empty private buildings. The Quebec Act allowed Quebec to be more self-sufficient, expanded its borders and took away land that could've been used by American colonists, and made the religion of Quebec Catholicism. The colonists believed that the laws showed that Britain was hoping to destroy traditional English liberties and that corrupt sheriffs and judges would be appointed in the colonies. They believed that Britain would take away as many of their rights as they could, essentially "enslaving" the colonies. Colonists became enraged, yet many were still loyal to the crown at this point.

3. Why did the Second Continental Congress reverse itself on the question of independence between 1775 and 1776?

The First Continental Congress met in late 1774, and many people were loyal to the king and wanted to avoid an outright rebellion. After the Battle at Bunker Hill in 1775, however, the British public was angry and wanted retaliation. America, on the other hand, still wanted to reconcile. Around this time, the Second Continental Congress was meeting for the first time. During the meeting, John Dickinson from Pennsylvania drafted the Olive Branch Petition, which asked the king to restore peace to the colonies by negotiating with Parliament. The king rejected the petition and declared the colonies in rebellion. Then in 1776 Thomas Paine published *Common Sense*. Paine blamed King George III instead of corrupt politicians for the passing of the acts and opened the colonists' eyes. He said that America no longer needed Britain and America could become a new kind of nation. People began to accept the fact that revolution was inevitable, but America could triumph. On July 4, 1776, the Declaration of Independence was officially adopted by Congress.