

US History — Prep & Practice Guide

Topic: Causes of the American Revolution, 1763–1776

How to use this guide. If this material is new to your child, read Part A together first, then do Part B. If it has already been taught, try Part B first — and use Part A afterwards for whatever was missed. Either way, upload the finished Part B pages as a Performance Review with this guide as the prior guide: the answers come back with that review, and it ends with the next practice set.

Part A — Learn

6 short lessons, one for each idea in the practice test that follows. Each says what the idea is in the course's own method, works one example with the reasoning before the answer, and names the mistake to watch for. Each lesson also has a two-minute video, on this guide's page in your Guru portal.

Sequencing events on the 1763–1776 timeline in chronological order

This is the skill of putting the major events of the Road to Revolution in the order they actually happened, from the Proclamation of 1763 all the way to the Declaration of Independence in 1776. You'll need this for worksheet questions that just list events scrambled up and ask you to order them, and also any time you explain cause and effect, since a cause always has to come before its effect. The anchor dates to memorize are 1763, 1765, 1767, 1770, 1773, 1774, and 1776. A good trick is to notice that the events generally get more serious over time — laws and taxes first, then protests, then violence, then war. If you remember the escalation pattern, the order almost sequences itself.

WORKED EXAMPLE

Put these in chronological order: Townshend Acts; Boston Tea Party; Proclamation of 1763; Stamp Act; Lexington and Concord.

First I recall the anchor years for each event: Proclamation is 1763, Stamp Act is 1765, Townshend Acts is 1767, Boston Tea Party is 1773, Lexington and Concord is 1775. Next I line them up from earliest year to latest year. I double check using the escalation pattern: land policy, then taxes, then more taxes, then a protest destroying property, then actual battles — that matches increasing seriousness, which confirms the order makes sense.

Answer: Proclamation of 1763 → Stamp Act (1765) → Townshend Acts (1767) → Boston Tea Party (1773) → Lexington and Concord (1775).

WATCH OUT — Students often mix up the Stamp Act and the Townshend Acts because both are taxes, but the Stamp Act taxed printed paper items and documents while the Townshend Acts taxed imported goods like glass, lead, paint, paper, and tea. Students also place the Boston Massacre after the Boston Tea Party since they're both 'Boston events.' Notice this by checking: Massacre is 1770, Tea Party is 1773, so Massacre comes first. Always match the event to its specific year and provisions rather than grouping by city or by 'it's a tax.'

Explaining why Britain tightened control over the colonies after 1763

This idea explains the big turning point of the whole unit: why Britain suddenly started paying much closer attention to the colonies after 1763. Before that year, the colonies had been mostly left alone to govern themselves, a policy called salutary neglect. The French and Indian War left Britain deeply in debt and with soldiers still stationed in North America, so Parliament decided the colonies should help pay those costs. This applies anytime a worksheet question asks 'why did Britain start taxing or regulating the colonies more strictly' — the answer is always rooted in war debt and the end of salutary neglect.

WORKED EXAMPLE

Give two reasons Britain began to tax and regulate the colonies more strictly after 1763.

I start by asking what changed right around 1763 — that's when the French and Indian War ended. A war that big costs a lot of money, so I think about debt: Britain needed to pay it off. I also recall that British soldiers stayed in North America after the war, and keeping an army there costs money too. Finally I connect this to the policy change: before 1763 it was salutary neglect, after 1763 Parliament decided the colonies should help pay, ending that hands-off approach.

Answer: Britain was deeply in debt from the French and Indian War, and it had soldiers stationed in North America that needed to be paid for, so Parliament ended salutary neglect and began taxing and regulating the colonies to raise money.

WATCH OUT — Students often just say 'Britain wanted more money' without explaining where the debt came from or connecting it to the end of salutary neglect, which only gets partial credit. Catch this by checking your answer names the specific war and mentions that colonial self-government had been loose before 1763.

Explaining the colonial argument of 'no taxation without representation' versus the British counter-argument

This is the core political argument of the unit: colonists said that only their own elected assemblies had the right to tax them, since they had no elected members sitting in Parliament. This phrase applies anytime a question is about the Stamp Act, Townshend Acts, or any direct tax Parliament placed on the colonies. British officials disagreed and used the idea of virtual representation, arguing that every member of Parliament represented all British subjects everywhere, colonies included, even without a colonist actually voting for them. You need both sides of this argument, not just the colonial slogan, to fully answer worksheet questions about it.

WORKED EXAMPLE

Explain the phrase 'no taxation without representation.' How did British officials respond to it?

I start with what the colonists believed: as English subjects, they thought only assemblies they actually elected could tax them. I note they had no elected members in Parliament, so Parliament taxing them felt illegitimate. Then I recall the British response, which was the idea of virtual representation — that Parliament represented all British subjects as a whole, not just the specific people who voted. I put both sides together since the question asks for both the colonial argument and the counter-argument.

Answer: Colonists argued that as English subjects they could only be taxed by assemblies they themselves elected, and since they had no elected representatives in Parliament, its taxes were illegitimate. British officials responded with the idea of virtual representation, claiming every member of Parliament represented all British subjects everywhere, including the colonies, whether or not they had directly voted.

WATCH OUT — Students often give only the colonial slogan and forget the British counter-argument entirely, or they confuse virtual representation with actual elected representation. Check your answer by making sure it names 'virtual representation' specifically and explains what it means, not just that 'Britain disagreed.'

Comparing two British measures to explain why one provoked greater resistance

This idea asks you to compare two similar-looking British laws and explain why colonists reacted much more strongly to one than the other. It applies especially to the Sugar Act (1764) versus the Stamp Act (1765), since both were meant to raise money but had very different levels of impact. The key is to think about who was affected and how directly. The Sugar Act mostly hit merchants and smugglers, while the Stamp Act touched nearly everyone who used paper — newspapers, legal documents, even playing cards — and it was the first direct tax, not just a trade regulation.

WORKED EXAMPLE

The Sugar Act (1764) and the Stamp Act (1765) both raised money from the colonies. Why did the Stamp Act provoke much wider resistance?

I think about what each law actually did: the Sugar Act lowered a molasses tax but enforced it strictly, mostly affecting merchants and smugglers in trade. The Stamp Act, by contrast, taxed everyday paper items — newspapers, legal documents, licenses, playing cards — so it touched ordinary colonists, printers, and lawyers directly, not just merchants. I also recall that the Stamp Act was the first direct internal tax, which made it feel like a bigger overreach than a trade duty. Because so many more people and professions were affected, organized resistance like the Stamp Act Congress and the Sons of Liberty sprang up.

Answer: The Sugar Act mainly affected merchants involved in trade, while the Stamp Act was a direct tax that touched almost every colonist who used paper goods, including printers and lawyers who were especially vocal — so it provoked much broader, more organized resistance like the Stamp Act Congress and boycotts.

WATCH OUT — Students often just repeat that 'the Stamp Act was a bigger tax' without explaining who was affected or why it felt more direct and personal. Check your answer by asking: did I explain WHO was impacted and WHY that made people angrier, not just that resistance happened?

Connecting a grievance or quoted text from the Declaration of Independence to the specific British law it describes

This idea is about reading a specific line from the Declaration of Independence's list of grievances and figuring out which actual British law or event it's complaining about. It applies whenever a worksheet quotes language like 'quartering troops' or 'cutting off our Trade' and asks what it refers to. To do this, you match

keywords in the quote to the law you studied: 'quartering troops' points to the Quartering Act and the Coercive Acts, 'taxes without consent' points to acts like the Stamp Act or Townshend Acts, and 'cutting off trade' points to things like the blockade of Boston's port under the Coercive Acts.

WORKED EXAMPLE

Read the grievance 'For quartering large bodies of armed troops among us.' Which British law or laws is it complaining about?

I look at the key word 'quartering,' which means housing or boarding soldiers. I recall which laws dealt with housing British troops in the colonies — the Quartering Act required colonists to provide housing and supplies for soldiers. I also remember that after the Coercive Acts in 1774, quartering was expanded further as punishment after the Boston Tea Party, so both connect to this grievance. I name both since the language says 'large bodies,' suggesting the expanded, later version too.

Answer: It refers to the Quartering Act, which required colonists to house and supply British soldiers, and to the expanded quartering provisions in the Coercive (Intolerable) Acts of 1774.

WATCH OUT — Students often match the quote to the wrong law by focusing on the wrong keyword, like connecting 'cutting off our Trade' to the Stamp Act instead of the Coercive Acts' port closure. Check this by underlining the specific keyword in the quote first, then asking which law's actual provisions match that exact keyword, not just the general time period.

Constructing an evidence-based argument about which event most advanced the push toward independence

This is the short essay skill where you pick one event from 1763 to 1776 and argue it did the most to move the colonies toward independence, backing it up with at least two pieces of evidence. It applies to open-ended essay questions, not short-answer recall, so there's no single correct event — any choice can work if it's well supported. Strong answers usually explain both what happened in the event and what change it caused afterward, like increased unity, anger, or organized resistance. The best essays also briefly explain why other events were less important, to show you considered alternatives.

WORKED EXAMPLE

Which single event from 1763–1776 do you think did the most to move the colonies toward independence? Support your choice with at least two pieces of evidence.

I pick an event I can support well — I choose the Coercive Acts of 1774. First piece of evidence: they punished all of Massachusetts by closing Boston's port and restricting self-government, which made colonists elsewhere realize any colony could be punished collectively, not just the one involved in the Tea Party. Second piece of evidence: this directly led to the First Continental Congress, where twelve colonies met together for the first time to organize a unified, coordinated intercolonial boycott — showing an even broader level of unity than earlier efforts like the Stamp Act Congress. I connect both pieces back to the claim: punishment that scared other colonies into uniting at this larger scale is a bigger step toward independence than an isolated protest.

Answer: The Coercive Acts of 1774 did the most to advance independence, because their harsh punishment of all of Massachusetts alarmed other colonies into seeing a shared threat, and this fear directly produced the First Continental Congress, which organized a broader and more coordinated intercolonial response than earlier resistance efforts like the Stamp Act Congress.

WATCH OUT — Students often just assert an opinion ('I think the Boston Tea Party was most important') without giving two specific pieces of evidence, or they give evidence that only describes the event without explaining its effect on moving toward independence. Check your essay by making sure each piece of evidence ends with 'and this caused/led to...' rather than just restating what happened.

Part B — Practice. A practice test on the ideas these pages say matter most at this level. Level: Middle/early high school US History, Unit 2 — Causes of the American Revolution (1763–1776), mixing short-answer worksheet recall with chronological and cause-effect reasoning.

11 questions across 6 ideas these pages cover — one or two for each, in the form the course uses. Work them on these pages. **The answers are not printed here: they come back with the review.** When the pages are done, upload them as a Performance Review with this guide as the prior guide, and Guru grades them and says which gaps have closed.

Sequencing events on the 1763–1776 timeline in chronological order

1. Put these events in chronological order: Boston Massacre; Declaratory Act; Declaration of Independence; Sugar Act; Coercive Acts.

Answer: _____

2. Put these events in chronological order: First Continental Congress; Townshend Acts; Common Sense published; Stamp Act Congress; Boston Tea Party.

Answer: _____

Explaining why Britain tightened control over the colonies after 1763

3. After the French and Indian War ended in 1763, Britain abandoned its old policy of salutary neglect. Give two reasons for this change in policy.

Answer: _____

4. Explain two reasons the Proclamation of 1763 and the Sugar Act represented a new, stricter approach by Britain toward its colonies.

Answer: _____

Explaining the colonial argument of 'no taxation without representation' versus the British counter-argument

5. Colonists objected that Parliament had no right to tax them directly. Explain their reasoning, and then explain how British officials used the idea of 'virtual representation' to counter it.

Answer: _____

6. A colonial pamphleteer writes that Parliament has no authority to impose the Townshend duties because the colonies elect no members to the House of Commons. How might a British official have responded to this claim, and why did colonists reject that response?

Answer: _____

Comparing two British measures to explain why one provoked greater resistance

7. The Proclamation of 1763 restricted western settlement, while the Stamp Act (1765) taxed everyday paper goods. Why did the Stamp Act provoke much wider and more organized colonial resistance than the Proclamation?

Answer: _____

8. The Townshend Acts (1767) and the Tea Act (1773) both involved taxes connected to trade goods. Why did the Tea Act provoke a more dramatic and unified act of resistance (the Boston Tea Party) compared to the Townshend duties?

Answer: _____

Connecting a grievance or quoted text from the Declaration of Independence to the specific British law it describes

9. Read the grievance from the Declaration of Independence: 'For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by Jury.' Which British law is this grievance most directly describing?

- (A) The Sugar Act, which tried smugglers in vice-admiralty courts without juries
- (B) The Townshend Acts, which taxed imported goods
- (C) The Proclamation of 1763, which banned western settlement
- (D) The Declaratory Act, which asserted Parliament's authority

Answer: _____

Constructing an evidence-based argument about which event most advanced the push toward independence

10. Short essay: Of all the events between 1763 and 1776, which one do you think most convinced ordinary colonists that reconciliation with Britain was no longer possible? Support your answer with at least two pieces of evidence from the timeline.

Answer: _____

11. Short essay: Which single event between 1763 and 1776 do you think most clearly turned colonial resistance into a unified political movement across multiple colonies? Support your choice with at least two pieces of evidence.

Answer: _____



Built from: the ideas these pages say matter most at this level. Guru Seal: every question and its kept answer key were independently checked by separate AI systems; 1 item(s) were dropped in that check.

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