

CH 05 PRIMARY SOURCE EXERCISE - INTRODUCTION

FOCUS QUESTION 2. What key events sharpened the divisions between Britain and the colonists in the late 1760s and early 1770s?

The Stamp Act Crisis of 1765 gave rise to the famous revolutionary slogan "No taxation without representation." It is clear from the documents included in this exercise how seriously the British colonists of North America believed in that principle. After months of angry protests and successfully organized boycotts in the American colonies, the British Parliament repealed the Stamp Act. But instead of calming down, the colonists became more empowered, leading eventually to creation of the Declaration of Independence and the beginning of the Revolutionary War.

DOCUMENTS

Document 1 is a digitized image of a popular protest stamp from the 1760s. The modern student can think of this image as similar to a political cartoon. As we learned in the last chapter, the power of the printed word (or image) cannot be underestimated. To colonists angered by Parliament's actions and the passing of the Stamp Act, this image needed no explanation.

Document 2 is known as the "Declaration of Rights and Grievances." This declaration represents the collective thinking of the Stamp Act Congress, which met from October 7 to October 25, 1765. The Stamp Act Congress is considered to be the first time that elected representatives from several of the British American colonies included elected representatives from several of the British American colonies and came together in organized and unified protest against the British imperial system.

This document is the result of hours of discussion and debate. An examination of the document provides a clear sense of what was at stake. The British citizens, who happened to live in the colonies, did not believe they were being treated as "citizens." The way in which the Stamp Act Congress worded and ordered their complaints and intentions provides compelling evidence that they believed they were being treated more as servants of a tyrant.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Read chapter 5 of the textbook, especially the section titled, "The Road to Revolution" (Full pp. 178-181; Seagull pp. 190-194).

2. Examine Document 1, the Skull and Crossbones stamp image from the year 1765, and read Document 2, the Declaration of Rights and Grievances.
3. Answer the questions that follow these documents.

DOCUMENT 1

Skull and Crossbones Stamp, 1765



SOURCE: Bradford, William, *The Pennsylvania Journal and Weekly Advertiser*, 1765, October 24. Accessed through the Library of Congress, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2004672606/>

DOCUMENT 2

The Stamp Act Congress, Declaration of Rights and Grievances, 1765

The Members of this Congress, sincerely devoted, with the warmest Sentiments of Affection and Duty to his Majesty's Person and Government, inviolably attached to the present happy establishment of the Protestant Succession, and with Minds deeply impressed by a Sense of the present and impending misfortunes of the *British Colonies* on this continent; having considered as maturely as Time will permit, the Circumstances of the said Colonies, esteem it our indispensable Duty to make the following Declarations, of our humble Opinion, respecting the most Essential Rights and Liberties of the Colonists, and of the Grievances under which they labor, by Reason of several late Acts of Parliament.

1st. That his Majesty's subjects in these Colonies, owe the same Allegiance to the Crown of *Great Britain*, that is owing from his Subjects born within the Realm, and all due subordination to that August Body, the Parliament of *Great Britain*.

2nd. That his Majesty's Liege Subjects in these Colonies are entitled to all the inherent Rights and liberties of his Natural born Subjects within the Kingdom of *Great Britain*.

3rd. That it is inseparably essential to the Freedom of a People, and the undoubted Rights of *Englishmen*, that no taxes should be imposed on them, but with their own Consent, given personally, or by their Representatives.

4th. That the people of these colonies are not, and from their local circumstances cannot be, Represented in the House of Commons in *Great Britain*.

5th. That the only Representatives of the People of these Colonies, are Persons chosen therein by themselves and that no taxes ever have been, or can be Constitutionally imposed on them, but by their respective Legislatures.

6th. That all supplies to the crown, being free gifts of the people, it is unreasonable and inconsistent with the Principles and Spirit of the *British* Constitution, for the People of *Great Britain* to grant to his Majesty the Property of the Colonists.

7th. That TRIAL by Jury is the inherent and invaluable Right of every *British* subject in these Colonies.

8th. That the late Act of Parliament, entitled, an Act for granting and applying certain Stamp Duties, and other Duties in the British colonies and plantations in America, etc., by imposing taxes on the inhabitants of these Colonies, and the said Act, and several other Acts, by extending the Jurisdiction of the Courts of Admiralty beyond its ancient Limits, have a manifest Tendency to subvert the Rights and Liberties of the Colonists.

9th. That the Duties imposed by several late Acts of Parliament, from their peculiar circumstances of these Colonies, will be extremely Burthensome and Grievous, and from the scarcity of Specie, the Payment of them absolutely impracticable.

10th. That as the Profits of the Trade of these Colonies ultimately centre in *Great Britain*, to pay for the Manufactures which which they are obliged to take from thence, they eventually contribute very largely to all Supplies granted there to the crown.

11th. That the Restrictions imposed by several late Acts of Parliament, on the Trade of these Colonies, will render them unable to purchase the Manufactures of *Great Britain*.

12th. That the increase, prosperity and happiness of these Colonies, depend on the full and free enjoyment of their Rights and Liberties, and an Intercourse, with *Great Britain*, mutually affectionate and Advantageous.

13th. That it is the Right of the *British* subjects in these Colonies, to Petition the King of either House of Parliament.

Lastly, that it is indispensable duty of these Colonies to the best Sovereigns, to the Mother Country, and to themselves, to endeavor by a loyal and dutiful address to his Majesty, and humble Application to both Houses of Parliament, to procure the repeal of the act for granting and applying certain stamp duties, of all clauses of any other acts of Parliament, whereby the jurisdiction of the admiralty is extended as aforesaid, and of the other last acts for the restriction of the *American* commerce.

SOURCE: Declaration of Rights and Grievances, issued on October 19, 1765 by what has become known as The Stamp Act Congress. TeachingAmericanHistory.org

<http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/resolutions-of-the-stamp-act-congress/>