One Harbor, Many Views

How roles shape interpretations of one event

6-9.WH.6.3 "Explain how and why events may be interpreted differently according to the points of view of participants and observers."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline what each person might say about the tea dumping, and circle the detail that helps explain that person's view.

What Happened in Boston Harbor?

1. On December 16, 1773, a group of colonists boarded three ships in Boston Harbor and dumped 342 chests of tea into the water. The tea belonged to the British East India Company. Britain had recently passed the Tea Act, which helped the company sell tea in the colonies while keeping a tax on tea. Many colonists objected because they had no elected representatives in Britain's Parliament. But not everyone watching the harbor that night would have told the same story about what the tea's destruction meant.

2. A colonist who helped throw the tea overboard might have called the act a protest against a tax imposed without colonial consent. The person risked punishment but wanted British leaders to notice the anger in Boston. A merchant who sold other kinds of tea might also have opposed the Tea Act, but for another reason: the company's cheap tea could threaten the merchant's business. Both people might have welcomed the dumped tea, yet one could stress political rights while the other stressed the danger to a livelihood.

3. A dock worker watching from the shore might have focused on how quickly the colonists emptied the ships. The worker could see an organized action rather than a random fight. A British official reading news of the event later might instead have called it destruction of private property. That official's job was to uphold British laws and protect trade. The dock worker saw the actions firsthand, while the official relied on reports; their different positions could shape which details they trusted and what they believed the event showed.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How might the colonist who dumped tea and the merchant both approve of the act for different reasons?

2. How might the colonist who dumped tea and the British official describe the same act differently? Explain why.

3. The merchant and the British official both care about trade. Why might they still disagree about the tea dumping?

4. How could the dock worker's and the British official's different ways of learning about the event affect their views?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a town closes a footbridge for repairs during a busy market day. In 4 or 5 sentences, compare how a repair worker taking part and a shopper watching nearby might interpret the closure. Include a detail each might notice and explain how their roles shape their views.

ANSWER KEY

One Harbor, Many Views

GRADES 6-9 · 6-9.WH.6.3

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline what each person might say about the tea dumping, and circle the detail that helps explain that person's view. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How might the colonist who dumped tea and the merchant both approve of the act for different reasons?	**The colonist might see a protest against taxation without colonial consent. The merchant might welcome the loss of cheap tea that threatened the merchant's business.**
2	How might the colonist who dumped tea and the British official describe the same act differently? Explain why.	**The colonist might call it a protest for political rights. The official might call it destruction of private property because the official's job was to uphold British laws and protect trade.**
3	The merchant and the British official both care about trade. Why might they still disagree about the tea dumping?	**The merchant might welcome the loss of cheap tea that threatened a business. The official might object to the destruction of company property and see it as a threat to lawful trade.**
4	How could the dock worker's and the British official's different ways of learning about the event affect their views?	**The worker saw the colonists act and might focus on how organized they were. The official learned about it later through reports and might focus on the loss of property.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The repair worker sees loose boards and calls the closure a needed safety step. Fixing the bridge is the worker's job, so preventing an injury comes first. A shopper watching nearby sees people taking a long detour around the market. The shopper calls the closure a disruption because it makes the trip harder, even though the worker sees it as protection.

Accept other interpretations supported by the passage. In Part 3, look for two distinct views, a noticed detail for each person, and an explanation tied to each person's role.