Tea and Choices

How conditions in 1773 shaped decisions in Boston

6-9.WH.6.5 "Analyze the context of historical events to determine the motivations of people in those events."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two conditions that shaped people's choices, then circle words that show what Parliament, merchants, or protesters wanted or feared.

Why Tea Caused Trouble

1 In 1773, ships carrying tea reached Boston, a busy port in a British colony. Britain had borrowed heavily to fight the Seven Years' War, and leaders in Parliament wanted the colonies to help pay the costs of running the empire. Parliament kept a tax on tea sold in the colonies. Colonists could not elect members of Parliament, so many argued that the tax took their money without their consent. To British leaders, collecting it also defended Parliament's right to make rules for the colonies.

2 The East India Company, a British trading business, had large amounts of unsold tea and faced serious money troubles. To help it, Parliament passed the Tea Act in 1773. The law let the company ship tea directly to the colonies and sell it through chosen agents, cutting costs. Parliament hoped colonists would buy this cheaper tea, giving the company sales and Britain tax revenue. But Boston tea merchants feared the special deal would make it harder for them to compete.

3 Some Boston protesters believed that buying even cheap tea meant accepting Parliament's power to tax them. They demanded that the ships leave without unloading, but the governor refused to let them go. On December 16, 1773, protesters boarded three ships and threw 342 chests of tea into the harbor. They destroyed the tea rather than steal it to challenge the tax and the company's special treatment. British officials saw ruined property and a direct challenge to Parliament's authority.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Britain's war debt shape Parliament's reason for keeping the tea tax?

2. Why did Parliament give the East India Company a cheaper way to sell tea?

3. Why did Boston tea merchants worry about the Tea Act's special deal?

4. Why did some protesters reject the tea even though it was cheaper?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you are a Boston tea merchant in 1773 who opposes the Tea Act but worries about destroyed property. In four or five sentences, explain what you would ask Parliament and the protesters to do, using two conditions from the passage to explain your choices.

ANSWER KEY

Tea and Choices

GRADES 6-9 · 6-9.WH.6.5

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two conditions that shaped people's choices, then circle words that show what Parliament, merchants, or protesters wanted or feared. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Britain's war debt shape Parliament's reason for keeping the tea tax?	**The war left Britain owing money. Parliament wanted the colonies to help pay the costs of running the empire, so it kept the tea tax to collect revenue.**
2	Why did Parliament give the East India Company a cheaper way to sell tea?	**The company had unsold tea and money troubles. Parliament hoped lower costs would lead to sales for the company and tax revenue for Britain.**
3	Why did Boston tea merchants worry about the Tea Act's special deal?	**They feared the East India Company's lower costs and chosen agents would make it harder for local merchants to compete.**
4	Why did some protesters reject the tea even though it was cheaper?	**They believed buying it would mean accepting Parliament's power to tax them, and they opposed the company's special treatment.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would ask Parliament to end the tea tax because colonists cannot elect its members. I would also ask Parliament to stop giving the East India Company a special deal, since local merchants could lose customers. I would ask protesters to speak against the law without destroying tea. Ruined property could make British officials focus on the damage instead of our concerns.

Accept other requests if the student explains them using at least two accurate conditions from the passage. The response should address both Parliament and the protesters.