Road to Resistance

Trace how British policies led to colonial resistance, 1761–1775.

8.H.4 "Identify and explain the reasons and actions for the resistance and rebellion against British imperial rule by the 13 colonies in North America (1761–1775)."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline British policies and actions, circle colonial responses, and number each matching pair. Use your marks to explain why colonists resisted.

From Protest to Fighting

1 In 1761, British customs officers in Boston sought writs of assistance, papers that let them search many places for smuggled goods without naming a specific location. Lawyer James Otis argued in court that such broad searches threatened colonists' rights. After the costly French and Indian War, Parliament wanted the colonies to help pay imperial debts. Its 1765 Stamp Act taxed printed items, including newspapers and legal documents. Colonists who lacked elected representatives in Parliament protested the tax. They petitioned, boycotted British goods, and formed groups called the Sons of Liberty.

2 Parliament repealed the Stamp Act in 1766 but later placed new duties on imported goods, including tea. Many colonists said Parliament could not tax them without their consent. Merchants and households refused to buy British imports, hoping lost sales would push British leaders to change course. In 1773, Parliament passed the Tea Act, which helped the British East India Company sell tea in the colonies while keeping a tea tax. Boston protesters dumped its tea into the harbor, rejecting both the tax and Parliament's claim of power to impose it.

3 In 1774, Parliament answered the Boston Tea Party with laws that closed Boston's port and limited Massachusetts self-government. Colonists called these measures the Intolerable Acts. Many colonists feared that Britain could take away their local power next. Delegates from twelve colonies met at the First Continental Congress and agreed to stop importing British goods. Some communities also trained militias in case fighting began. In April 1775, British soldiers marched toward Concord, Massachusetts, to seize colonial military supplies. Colonial militiamen confronted them at Lexington and Concord, and fighting broke out.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why did James Otis oppose writs of assistance, and what did he do about them?

2. Why did colonists object to the Stamp Act? Describe one action they took in response.

3. What did Boston protesters reject about the Tea Act, and how did they show their opposition?

4. Why did the 1774 laws alarm colonists, and how did the First Continental Congress respond?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you are writing to a colonial newspaper in early 1775. In four or five sentences, connect two different British actions to colonists' reasons for resisting, compare two colonial responses, and argue which response might put more pressure on British leaders.

ANSWER KEY

Road to Resistance

GRADE 8 · 8.H.4

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline British policies and actions, circle colonial responses, and number each matching pair. Use your marks to explain why colonists resisted. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why did James Otis oppose writs of assistance, and what did he do about them?	**He believed the broad searches threatened colonists' rights, so he argued against the writs in court.**
2	Why did colonists object to the Stamp Act? Describe one action they took in response.	**They objected to being taxed without elected representatives in Parliament. They petitioned, boycotted British goods, or formed the Sons of Liberty.**
3	What did Boston protesters reject about the Tea Act, and how did they show their opposition?	**They rejected the tea tax and Parliament's claim that it could impose the tax. They dumped the company's tea into the harbor.**
4	Why did the 1774 laws alarm colonists, and how did the First Continental Congress respond?	**Colonists feared Britain could take away their local power. Congress agreed to stop importing British goods.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Parliament's Stamp Act taxed printed papers even though colonists had no elected representatives in Parliament. Colonists petitioned against the tax because they wanted a say in taxes. Later, Britain's laws closed Boston's port and limited Massachusetts self-government, raising fears for other colonies' local power. Delegates at the First Continental Congress answered by agreeing to stop importing British goods. That united boycott might put more pressure on British leaders than petitions because it threatened sales across twelve colonies.

Accept other accurate cause-and-response pairs supported by the passage. For Part 3, look for two distinct British actions, a reason and response for each, and a supported comparison of the responses.