Rights and Complaints

How colonists connected British laws to rights they claimed

5.C.3.4.E "specific colonial grievances and rights as British citizens."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each colonial complaint and circle the right colonists connected to it.

A Colonist Makes a Case

1. Imagine buying a newspaper in colonial Boston in 1765. A new British law, the Stamp Act, required a paid stamp on newspapers and many legal papers. Colonists were British subjects, but they had elected no members of Parliament, the group that passed the law. Many argued that taxes should have the consent of their elected representatives, such as members of their colonial assemblies.

2. Taxes were not the only complaint. British officials used special courts to hear some cases about trade laws. These courts, called vice-admiralty courts, did not use juries. A Boston merchant accused of breaking a trade law might face a judge without local jurors. Many colonists believed that, as British subjects, they should have a trial by jury, with fellow citizens helping decide the case.

3. In 1765, another British law required colonies to supply British troops and provide places for them to stay, such as barracks or inns. Colonists objected to paying for soldiers they had not asked to keep nearby. They argued that their own elected assemblies should control local spending. Colonists also used a familiar British right, the right to petition, to ask the king and Parliament to change laws they considered unfair.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why did many colonists say the Stamp Act went against a right they claimed as British subjects?

2. What happened in vice-admiralty courts that colonists connected to a right they claimed?

3. What did colonists object to providing for British troops, and what did they believe their elected assemblies should control?

4. Which right could colonists use to challenge the law about British troops, and what could they ask for?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine Parliament proposes a tax on fishing nets used in the colonies. Write a three-sentence petition to Parliament that explains your complaint, connects it to a right colonists claimed as British subjects, and asks for a specific change.

ANSWER KEY

Rights and Complaints

GRADE 5 · 5.C.3.4.E

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each colonial complaint and circle the right colonists connected to it. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why did many colonists say the Stamp Act went against a right they claimed as British subjects?	**They argued that taxes needed the consent of elected representatives, but colonists had elected no members of the Parliament that passed the tax.**
2	What happened in vice-admiralty courts that colonists connected to a right they claimed?	**The courts heard some trade-law cases without juries. Many colonists claimed a right to trial by jury.**
3	What did colonists object to providing for British troops, and what did they believe their elected assemblies should control?	**They objected to paying for troops' supplies and places to stay. They believed their elected assemblies should control local spending.**
4	Which right could colonists use to challenge the law about British troops, and what could they ask for?	**They could use the right to petition to ask the king and Parliament to change the law requiring colonies to provide for troops.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I object to the proposed tax on fishing nets because no representatives we elected voted for it. As British subjects, we believe taxes should have the consent of our elected representatives. Please withdraw the tax and let our colonial assembly decide whether to raise money this way.

Accept answers that accurately connect each grievance to the right colonists claimed. For the petition, look for three sentences that name the proposed tax, explain the representation concern, and request a specific change.