Tea and Tension

Use evidence to compare views of a colonial protest.

7.P.1.2.B "Answer supporting questions related to social studies content knowledge and make connections to different interpretations."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two facts that help explain why people disagreed about the Tea Act, and circle two phrases that show different views of the harbor protest or its aftermath. Number the views you circle 1 and 2 so you can compare them.

One Protest, Different Views

1. In 1773, Parliament passed the Tea Act to help the struggling British East India Company sell tea in the American colonies. The company could ship tea directly to colonial ports, avoiding some middlemen and lowering the price. A small tax on tea still remained. Many colonists objected because they had no representatives in Parliament, the body that set the tax. Some Patriots argued that buying even cheap tea would signal that Parliament could tax them without their consent. British officials saw the lower price as a practical benefit.

2. Other colonists focused on trade rather than the tax. Colonial merchants who had bought tea from other suppliers worried that the company's special access would threaten their businesses. Some people, however, wanted to buy tea at the lower price and saw no reason to waste it. In Boston in December 1773, protesters boarded three ships and dumped 342 chests of the company's tea into the harbor. To supporters, this act defended colonial rights. To critics, it destroyed valuable goods instead of settling a dispute through discussion.

3. Parliament responded in 1774 with laws that included closing Boston's port until the destroyed tea was paid for. British leaders considered the closure a way to enforce laws and demand payment for property. Many colonists saw it as harsh punishment for an entire town. Workers who depended on ships passing through the port could face lost income, even if they had taken no part in the protest. The same event could therefore look like a stand against unfair power, a costly attack on trade, or a reason for the government to restore order.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why did some Patriots oppose tea that cost less? Use two details to explain how their view differed from British officials' view.

2. How might a colonial merchant and a person who wanted cheaper tea answer, “Was the Tea Act helpful?” Support each view with a detail from the passage.

3. Was dumping the tea a defense of rights or a loss of valuable goods? Give one passage detail that supports each interpretation.

4. How could the effects of closing Boston's port support the colonists' view of the closure and challenge British leaders' view?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a Boston dockworker in 1774 judging the port closure. In four sentences, state a possible view, use two separate passage details as evidence, ask a supporting question the passage cannot answer, and explain how an answer might change that view.

ANSWER KEY

Tea and Tension

GRADE 7 · 7.P.1.2.B

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two facts that help explain why people disagreed about the Tea Act, and circle two phrases that show different views of the harbor protest or its aftermath. Number the views you circle 1 and 2 so you can compare them. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why did some Patriots oppose tea that cost less? Use two details to explain how their view differed from British officials' view.	**The tax remained, and colonists had no representatives in Parliament. Patriots feared buying the tea would accept taxation without their consent, while British officials saw the lower price as a benefit.**
2	How might a colonial merchant and a person who wanted cheaper tea answer, "Was the Tea Act helpful?" Support each view with a detail from the passage.	**A merchant might say no because the company's special access threatened merchants who bought from other suppliers. A person who wanted cheaper tea might say yes because the act lowered its price.**
3	Was dumping the tea a defense of rights or a loss of valuable goods? Give one passage detail that supports each interpretation.	**Supporters viewed the protest as defending colonial rights against taxation without consent. Critics could point to the 342 chests of tea destroyed instead of settling the dispute through discussion.**
4	How could the effects of closing Boston's port support the colonists' view of the closure and challenge British leaders' view?	**Workers who had not joined the protest could lose income. That supports the view that the closure harshly punished an entire town and challenges the view that it was simply a way to enforce laws and demand payment.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I might see the port closure as unfair to workers who did not dump tea. Parliament closed the port until the tea was paid for, and workers who depended on ships could lose income without taking part in the protest. Did British leaders consider a way to collect payment without stopping ship traffic? If they tried and found no workable option, I might see the closure as more reasonable, though it still hurt workers.

Accept other interpretations when students connect them to accurate passage details. For Your Turn, the question should seek information the passage does not provide, and the final sentence should explain how a possible answer could affect the dockworker's view.