Authority and Rights

Trace how Parliament's laws led to a united colonial response.

8.C.1.3.E "Explain continued attempts by Parliament to exert its authority through the Coercive Acts (Intolerable Acts), prompting the formation of the First Continental Congress and its Declaration of Resolves..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two ways Parliament asserted its authority, and circle two rights the colonists claimed. Number the events that led from the Coercive Acts to the First Continental Congress and its Declaration and Resolves.

From Boston to Philadelphia

1. In December 1773, protesters dumped tea into Boston Harbor to oppose a tax imposed without their consent. Parliament answered in 1774 with laws colonists called the Coercive Acts, or Intolerable Acts. The Boston Port Act closed Boston's port to most trade until the destroyed tea was paid for and order was restored. Ships could no longer bring in the goods many Boston workers and merchants relied on. Parliament intended this punishment to show that it could enforce its laws, even when a colony resisted.

2. Parliament also tried to tighten control over the Massachusetts government. Under the Massachusetts Government Act, the royal governor, rather than elected colonists, would appoint most members of the colony's council. The act also limited town meetings, where residents had discussed local decisions. Another measure, the Administration of Justice Act, allowed some officials accused of serious crimes while enforcing the law to be tried outside Massachusetts. To Parliament, these changes strengthened government. To many colonists, they weakened local self-government and made it harder to hold officials accountable.

3. News of the acts reached other colonies, whose leaders feared that Parliament might restrict their governments next. In September 1774, delegates from twelve colonies met in Philadelphia at the First Continental Congress. They adopted the Declaration and Resolves, saying colonists had the rights of Englishmen, including a voice in taxation through their own elected representatives and the right to trial by jury. Congress argued that Parliament's recent acts violated those rights and called for a boycott of British goods. The delegates sought to defend colonial rights, not to declare independence.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the Boston Port Act help Parliament assert its authority?

2. How did the Massachusetts Government Act shift power to the royal governor, and why did colonists object?

3. Why did leaders from other colonies meet after Parliament passed the acts?

4. How did the Declaration and Resolves challenge Parliament's recent acts?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you are a delegate in 1774 writing to a Boston merchant who is unsure whether to join the boycott. In 5 to 6 sentences, explain two ways Parliament asserted authority, connect those actions to Congress's claim about the rights of Englishmen, and argue for or against joining the boycott.

ANSWER KEY

Authority and Rights

GRADE 8 · 8.C.1.3.E

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two ways Parliament asserted its authority, and circle two rights the colonists claimed. Number the events that led from the Coercive Acts to the First Continental Congress and its Declaration and Resolves. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the Boston Port Act help Parliament assert its authority?	**It closed Boston's port to most trade until the tea was paid for and order restored, showing that Parliament could punish a colony that resisted its laws.**
2	How did the Massachusetts Government Act shift power to the royal governor, and why did colonists object?	**The royal governor would appoint most council members instead of elected colonists doing so. Colonists objected because this weakened local self-government.**
3	Why did leaders from other colonies meet after Parliament passed the acts?	**They feared Parliament might restrict their governments next, so delegates from twelve colonies met at the First Continental Congress.**
4	How did the Declaration and Resolves challenge Parliament's recent acts?	**Congress said colonists had the rights of Englishmen, including a voice in taxation through their own representatives and trial by jury. It argued that Parliament's acts violated those rights.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

You may worry that a boycott will cost your shop customers, and I share that concern. Yet Parliament closed Boston's port to most trade to punish resistance, leaving merchants with fewer goods to sell. It also gave the royal governor the power to appoint most council members, taking that choice from elected colonists. At the First Continental Congress, we declared that colonists possess the rights of Englishmen and that Parliament's recent acts violate those rights. I ask you to join the boycott because acting with merchants in other colonies gives us a stronger way to defend those rights.

Accept explanations that connect Parliament's measures to its effort to enforce authority and Congress's response to its defense of colonial rights. For the open task, accept either position on the boycott if the argument uses two accurate measures and the rights claim.