Voices for Independence

Weigh the arguments colonists heard in 1774.

8.C.1.5.E "Evaluate the diverse political, economic, and religious influences that shaped colonial arguments for independence."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one political claim, circle one economic effect, and number two different religious views in the passage. Use your marks to compare how these influences shaped arguments about independence.

A Debate in Boston

1 In 1774, a Boston printer could fill a page with arguments about the closing of the city's port. Parliament had shut the harbor after colonists dumped tea into it. For many colonists, the dispute was political: Parliament made laws for them, but they elected no members of Parliament. Writers drew on the idea that government needed the consent of the governed and must protect people's rights. If a government ignored those duties, some argued, the people could change it. Other colonists still believed Parliament had the right to govern the colonies.

2 The closed port also made an economic argument easy to feel. Ships could not unload goods in Boston, so dockworkers lost wages and merchants lost sales. Earlier British trade rules had limited where colonists could sell certain products, while taxes on items such as tea raised disputes over who could tax them. Some merchants wanted fewer limits on trade, and workers feared losing jobs. Yet other colonists depended on British trade and feared that breaking away would damage their businesses. The same policy could push neighbors toward different positions.

3 Religion added another voice, though it did not speak with one mind. Some Protestant ministers taught that rulers should answer to a higher moral law. They urged listeners to resist power they considered unjust, giving political claims about rights a moral force. Experience in congregations that chose their own leaders also made some colonists value local decision-making. But other ministers taught that rebellion threatened peace and defied rightful authority. In debates over independence, colonists weighed these religious views alongside their concerns about representation, trade, and work.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How could closing Boston's port strengthen both a political and an economic argument for independence?

2. Why might a dockworker and a merchant who depended on British trade disagree about independence?

3. How could two ministers reach opposite conclusions about resisting British rule?

4. Why would an argument about rights alone fail to explain every colonist's position on independence? Use one economic and one religious detail.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a short newspaper letter from the viewpoint of a colonist in 1774 who supports or opposes independence. Use one political, one economic, and one religious influence from the passage, and explain how at least two of them work together or pull in different directions.

ANSWER KEY

Voices for Independence

GRADE 8 · 8.C.1.5.E

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one political claim, circle one economic effect, and number two different religious views in the passage. Use your marks to compare how these influences shaped arguments about independence. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How could closing Boston's port strengthen both a political and an economic argument for independence?	**Parliament closed the port although colonists elected no members of Parliament, supporting an argument about government without their consent. The closure also cost dockworkers wages and merchants sales.**
2	Why might a dockworker and a merchant who depended on British trade disagree about independence?	**A dockworker who lost wages when the port closed might favor breaking away. A merchant who depended on British trade might fear that independence would hurt business.**
3	How could two ministers reach opposite conclusions about resisting British rule?	**One might say people should resist rulers who violate a higher moral law. Another might say rebellion defies rightful authority and threatens peace.**
4	Why would an argument about rights alone fail to explain every colonist's position on independence? Use one economic and one religious detail.	**Some colonists feared losing British trade even if they objected to laws made without their consent. Some ministers also taught that rebellion defied rightful authority, while others urged resistance to unjust power.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

To my neighbors: Parliament closes Boston's port while we have no representatives in Parliament. If laws require our consent, this punishment attacks our rights. The shutdown also takes wages from dockworkers and sales from merchants, so the loss of political power harms families at work. My minister says rulers must answer to a higher moral law, which gives me another reason to resist unjust power. I know some traders fear losing British customers, but I believe that risk is worth taking. We should seek independence.

Accept either position in the letter if the student accurately uses all three influences and explains a connection or tension between at least two. For the marking job, accept any passage details that correctly represent the requested influences.