



Day 5-6 American Revolution
130 Minutes

Boston Tea Party and Intolerable Acts

The Boston Tea Party & the Intolerable Acts**

Grade Level: 6–8

Time: Two class periods (50–55 minutes each)

Unit Context: Causes of the American Revolution

Lesson Type: Anchor instruction + inquiry + literacy + creative civic simulations

Lesson Objectives

Students will:

- Explain why Parliament passed the Tea Act
- Understand the role of the **East India Company** and monopolies
- Describe the Boston Tea Party and why it was carefully organized
- Analyze the Intolerable Acts and why they unified the colonies
- Apply historical ideas through creative and persuasive writing
- Evaluate the power of protest and boycotts

Essential Questions

- **Why did the Boston Tea Party mark a turning point in colonial resistance?**
- **How did punishment of one colony unite all thirteen?**
- **When is protest justified—and how far should it go?**

Key Vocabulary

- Monopoly
- Smuggling
- Boycott
- Tea Act
- Intolerable Acts
- East India Company
- Continental Congress

DAY 1 – THE BOSTON TEA PARTY

1. Warm-Up / Do Now (5 minutes)

Prompt:

How would you feel if one company controlled everything you were allowed to buy—and the government helped them do it?

Brief share-out.

2. Anchor Instruction: PowerPoint with Teaching Script (20–25 minutes)

Use the uploaded PowerPoint as written. Below is a **slide-aligned teaching script**.

<https://learnaboutamerica.com/american-history/revolutionary-war/presentations-and-bundles/boston-tea-party-power-point-presentation-and-activity-bundle>

Slide 1 – Boston Tea Party & Intolerable Acts

Script:

Peace had returned to Boston after the Boston Massacre, but in 1773, Parliament made a decision that reignited colonial anger.

Slides 2–5 – The Tea Act & Monopoly

Script:

Parliament passed the Tea Act, giving the East India Company total control of the tea trade. This is called a monopoly—when one company controls all supply. Monopolies are dangerous because they eliminate choice, reduce competition, and often raise prices.

Slides 6–8 – Why Parliament Did This

Script:

Parliament wanted to save the struggling East India Company and stop smuggling of Dutch tea. But colonists saw this as unfair interference in American business.

Slides 9–11 – The Boston Tea Party

Script:

In response, the Sons of Liberty organized the Boston Tea Party. Over 100 men, disguised as Mohawk Indians, boarded ships and dumped 342 chests of tea into Boston Harbor. It was expensive—but carefully controlled and non-violent.

Slides 12–13 – Etiquette of the Tea Party

Script:

This was not chaos. No private property was damaged. A broken padlock was replaced. The decks were swept clean. This was protest—with rules.

3. Article Stations (15 minutes)

Students choose **one article** to read (teacher may assign by level):

Article Options

- [Etiquette of the Boston Tea Party](#)
- [The East India Company](#)
- [Boston Tea Party overview](#)

Differentiation

- **Support:** Chunked text + guiding questions
- **On-Level:** Standard comprehension
- **Challenge:** Cause-and-effect and economic analysis

4. Activity #1 – Fun With Acts and Taxes (15 minutes)

<https://learnaboutamerica.com/american-history/revolutionary-war/fun-printables-of-the-revolutionary-war/fun-with-acts-and-taxes-playing-the-bad-guy>

Students “play the bad guy.”

Task

Students imagine their school passes unjust laws:

- Homework Act
- Cafeteria Act
- PLUS one original act of their own

They must explain:

- What the act does
- Why it is unfair
- Who it affects

Teacher Framing:

Parliament believed these laws were reasonable. Your job is to understand how unfair rules *feel* from the other side.

Day 1 Exit Ticket

Why was the Tea Act more than just a tax?

DAY 2 – THE INTOLERABLE ACTS & UNITY

<https://learnaboutamerica.com/american-history/revolutionary-war/presentations-and-bundles/boston-tea-party-power-point-presentation-and-activity-bundle>

1. Review (5 minutes)

Quick recap:

- Tea Act
- Monopoly
- Boston Tea Party

Ask:

How do you think Parliament reacted to the destruction of the tea?

2. Anchor Instruction Continued: PowerPoint (15–18 minutes)

Slides 14–16 – The Intolerable Acts

Script:

Parliament was furious. Instead of backing down, it punished Massachusetts with five harsh laws called the Intolerable Acts.

Slides 17–18 – Breakdown of the Acts

Script:

Boston Harbor was closed. Soldiers were quartered. Trials could be moved to England. Massachusetts lost self-government. Even land claims were altered.

Slides 19–20 – Colonial Reaction

Script:

These laws angered not just Massachusetts—but all colonies. If Parliament could do this to one, it could do it to all.

Slide 21 – First Continental Congress

Script:

Representatives from 12 colonies met in Philadelphia to coordinate a united response. Colonial unity had arrived.

3. Activity #2 – “The Tolerable Acts” (15 minutes)

<https://learnaboutamerica.com/american-history/revolutionary-war/fun-printables-of-the-revolutionary-war/the-tolerable-acts>

Student Role

Students act as **Members of Parliament** who believe punishment will cause rebellion.

Task

Design **five “Tolerable Acts”** meant to reward the colonies and restore peace

Examples:

- Repeal taxes
- Expand colonial self-government
- Symbolic gestures (statues, apologies)

Students must explain **why** each act would reduce tension.

4. Activity #3 – Power of the Boycott (10–12 minutes)

<https://learnaboutamerica.com/american-history/revolutionary-war/revolutionary-war-writing-activities/the-power-of-the-boycott>

Prompt

Students choose a modern:

- Company
- Product
- Service

They explain:

- Why it deserves a boycott
- How boycotts pressure change
- Risks and benefits of protest

Connection:

Colonists didn't just protest—they stopped buying.

5. Reading Comprehension Options (Choice / Homework / Extension)

Recommended: Flip the Narrative: Making a Case for the Intolerable Acts

<https://learnaboutamerica.com/american-history/revolutionary-war/flipping-the-narrative-comprehension-debates/the-case-for-and-against-the-intolerable-acts-flip-the-narrative-debate-comprehension>

These **Flipping the Narrative** activities help students explore history by comparing two contrasting perspectives on the same event. Students read both passages, annotate key ideas, and examine how each side uses evidence to support its arguments. By toggling between viewpoints and answering deeper-level questions, learners build critical thinking skills and a richer understanding of historical complexity.

Other Reading Comprehension and Literacy Activities:

- [Boston Tea Party Printable Reading Comprehension](#) - Lexile 900
- [Boston Tea Party Printable Reading Comprehension](#) - Lexile 700
- [Boston Tea Party Online Reading Comprehension](#) - Lexile 900

- [Boston Tea Party Online Reading Comprehension](#) - Lexile 700
- [Sons of Liberty Printable Reading Comprehension](#) - Lexile 1100
- [Sons of Liberty Online Reading Comprehension](#) - Lexile 1100
- [Boston Tea Party: Mob Etiquette Printable Reading Comprehension](#) - Lexile 1150
- [Boston Tea Party: Mob Etiquette Printable Reading Comprehension](#) - Lexile 850
- [Boston Tea Printable Party Fact or Fiction](#) - Lexile 900
- [Boston Tea Party Fact or Fiction](#) - Lexile 900
- [Boston Tea Party: Virtual History Teacher](#)

This fun activity requires students to role play as a history teacher grading a student's history test that reflects a poor effort. "Teachers" must grade the test and then elaborate on student answers to make them complete answers.

Final Exit Ticket

Why did the Intolerable Acts unite the colonies instead of isolating Massachusetts?

Why This Lesson Works

- ✓ Strong economic and civic reasoning
- ✓ Student choice and creativity
- ✓ Deep cause-and-effect understanding
- ✓ Builds empathy for historical actors
- ✓ Smooth transition toward revolution