



Day 1 American Revolution
70 Minutes

Stamp Act and Sons of Liberty

Lesson Title

Stamp Act

Taxation, Protest, and the Road to Revolution

Grade Level: 6–8

Time: One class period (55 - 80 minutes)

Unit Context: Road to the American Revolution

Lesson Type: Anchor lesson + literacy + creative protest activity

Lesson Objectives

Students will:

- Explain why Parliament passed the Stamp Act
 - Describe colonial reactions to the Stamp Act
 - Understand the idea of “**no taxation without representation**”
 - Analyze political protest through images and symbolism
 - Express dissent respectfully through a creative design task
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Essential Question

Why did the Stamp Act anger colonists more than earlier British taxes?

Materials

- **Stamp Act PowerPoint** (anchor instruction)
 - **Differentiated Stamp Act article** (provided text)
 - Reading comprehension exercises (varied difficulty)
 - Optional articles:
 - **Sons of Liberty**
 - **Sugar Act**
 - “Design a Protest Stamp” activity sheet
 - Colored pencils / crayons
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Key Vocabulary

- Stamp Act
 - Sugar Act
 - Quartering Act
 - Parliament
 - Representation
 - Protest
 - Repeal
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Lesson Procedure

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

Prompt (projected):

How would you feel if you were charged money every time you used paper for school—tests, notes, or homework—but had no say in the rule?

Teacher Purpose:

This immediately connects students' experiences to colonial frustration.

2. Anchor Instruction: PowerPoint with Teaching Script (18–20 minutes)

<https://learnaboutamerica.com/american-history/revolutionary-war/presentations-and-bundles/stamp-act-power-point-presentation>

Use the **uploaded Stamp Act PowerPoint** as the anchor.

Below is a **slide-by-slide teaching script** that matches typical Stamp Act slide sequencing and your article content.

Slide 1 – The Stamp Act

Teacher Script:

Today we are learning about the Stamp Act, one of the most important laws passed by Britain before the American Revolution. This law didn't just cost colonists money—it challenged their rights.

Slide 2 – Why Britain Needed Money

Key Ideas: French and Indian War costs

Script:

The French and Indian War was extremely expensive. Britain had protected the colonies, but Parliament was nearly bankrupt. British leaders believed colonists should help pay for their own defense.

Slide 3 – The Sugar Act (1764)

Key Ideas: First enforced tax

Script:

Before the Stamp Act, Parliament passed the Sugar Act. It taxed items like sugar and molasses and, for the first time, was strictly enforced. Colonists were angry because they felt they were being treated unfairly.

Slide 4 – “No Taxation Without Representation”

Key Ideas: Colonial argument

Script:

Colonists argued that Parliament had no right to tax them because they had no representatives there. This is where the famous phrase “*no taxation without representation*” comes from.

Slide 5 – The Stamp Act (1765)

Key Ideas: What was taxed

Script:

The Stamp Act went even further. Colonists had to buy stamps for newspapers, legal documents, marriage licenses, and other printed materials. This affected nearly everyone.

Slide 6 – The Quartering Act

Key Ideas: British troops

Script:

Around the same time, Parliament passed the Quartering Act, which required colonists to house and supply British soldiers. Colonists began to wonder if the troops were there to protect them—or control them.

Slide 7 – Colonial Resistance

Key Ideas: Widespread opposition

Script:

Opposition was immediate and intense. Colonies organized protests, wrote petitions, and refused to cooperate. Many colonists believed Parliament had gone too far.

Slide 8 – The Sons of Liberty

Key Ideas: Organized protest

Script:

Groups like the Sons of Liberty used protests, intimidation, and sometimes violence to stop the Stamp Act. Stamp agents were harassed until all of them resigned before the law even took effect.

OPTIONAL: Here, you can expand on this slide with a full differentiated article and activities on the Sons of Liberty

<https://learnaboutamerica.com/american-history/revolutionary-war/people-of-the-revolutionary-war/sons-of-liberty>

Slide 9 – Economic Pressure

Key Ideas: Boycotts

Script:

Colonists also stopped buying British goods. This hurt British merchants, who pressured Parliament to change the law.

Slide 10 – Repeal and the Declaratory Act

Key Ideas: Mixed victory

Script:

In 1766, Parliament repealed the Stamp Act—but passed the Declaratory Act, which said they still had the right to make laws for the colonies. This solved one problem, but created another.

3. Differentiated Reading: Stamp Act Article (15 minutes)

Students read the **Stamp Act article text** you provided.

<https://learnaboutamerica.com/american-history/revolutionary-war/causes-of-the-revolutionary-war/stamp-act>

Differentiation Options

- **Level A:** Chunked text + guided questions
- **Level B:** Standard comprehension + cause/effect
- **Level C:** Inference and analysis (why this tax mattered more)

Optional Article Choices

Students may instead (or additionally) read:

- **Sons of Liberty article** (focus on protest methods)

<https://learnaboutamerica.com/american-history/revolutionary-war/people-of-the-revolutionary-war/sons-of-liberty>

- **Sugar Act article** (compare earlier vs later taxes)

<https://learnaboutamerica.com/american-history/13-colonies/events-of-the-13-colonies/the-sugar-act>

Teacher Move:

Let students **choose one extension article** to increase engagement and ownership.

4. Activity Option: Creative Protest — Design a Stamp (15–18 minutes)

<https://learnaboutamerica.com/american-history/revolutionary-war/fun-printables-of-the-revolutionary-war/symbols-of-rage-the-emblem-of-the-effect-of-homework>

Context Provided to Students

When Parliament passed the Stamp Act, colonists protested in many ways. Some even used images and cartoons to express their anger, such as *An Emblem of the Effects of the Stamp*.

Student Task

Students design a **protest stamp** that represents frustration with **too much homework**, while remaining respectful.

They must:

- Design a stamp image
- Add a short caption or slogan
- Explain what the symbol represents

Teacher Emphasis

- Protest ≠ disrespect

- Symbols can send powerful messages
- Connect back to colonial resistance

5. Reading Comprehension Options - (15 minutes)

Below are options for literacy integration. These activities come in both printable and online form and feature reading passages and seven multiple choice questions. Use your discretion to choose the option best for your students or classes.

- [Sons of Liberty Printable Reading Comprehension](#) - Lexile 1100
 - [Sons of Liberty Online Reading Comprehension](#) - Lexile 1100
 - [Stamp Act Printable Reading Comprehension](#) - Lexile 900
 - [Stamp Act Online Reading Comprehension](#) - Lexile 900
 - [No Taxation Without Representation Printable Reading Comprehension](#) - Lexile 800
 - [No Taxation Without Representation Online Reading Comprehension](#) - Lexile 800
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6. Closure / Exit Ticket (5 minutes)

Students answer one:

- *Why did the Stamp Act unite colonists across different colonies?*
 - *How did colonists show protest without fighting a war?*
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