How would you feel if you walked into your classroom one morning and your teacher told you that you had to pay a nickel for each piece of paper you used for your work and another nickel for each page you read in your textbooks that day? That is probably a little like what the American colonists felt when they got word from England that they were going to have to pay a Stamp Tax. King George III was not happy with the independent spirit being born in the colonies. These people in the colonies needed to be held accountable for the support that England was giving them, even though the great majority of English leaders had never set foot on this soil, nor did they have any desire to do so. England had spent a lot of money protecting itself and its colonies against France and other continental armies. Its treasury was low. What better way to control the colonies and fill its coffers than to tax the very people who had left England to escape unfair treatment by the king.

There had been a Glorious Revolution in England that took much of the power away from the king and placed it in the hands of Parliament. Parliament became the head of the English government. King George had some say in who the government officials would be, so he made sure that he appointed men who would be loyal to him. One of these men was Charles Townshend. He wanted to please the king, so he presented taxes to Parliament that would be harsh to the colonists but would bring much needed revenue to the king's treasury.

One of the taxes that Townshend proposed was to be called the Stamp Tax. This tax would require the colonists to pay a tax for every piece of printed paper the colonists used. This included newspapers, playing cards, pamphlets, legal documents, and advertisements. Parliament passed this tax in 1765, and the colonists were livid. They believed that the Magna Carta had given them rights against such unfair taxes, even if they were thousands of miles away from the mother country. They were so angry, in fact, that many of the agents sent by the king to collect these taxes were covered in sticky tar and then rolled in feathers. This was a humiliating act to these representatives of the king, but it sent a message back to England that the colonists were not going to sit by and accept the king's decisions. The Stamp Tax lasted about one year before it was repealed.

The Stamp Act

Questions

1. The word "coffers" in this article refers to:
   A. a place where money is kept
   B. people who cough a lot
   C. parliament
   D. a pond
2. What words would you use to best describe Charles Townshend?
   A. a brilliant man
   B. a fair man
   C. a man who wanted to please the king
   D. a hard worker

3. When the Stamp Act was repealed, Townshend suggested a tax on:
   A. all exports
   B. all imports
   C. matches
   D. lead, glass, paper, paint, and tea

4. True or false? King George was a very fair king.

5. Which product was not taxed by the British?
   A. paper
   B. glass
   C. silk
   D. lead

6. Who caused the repeal of this tax?
   A. British merchants
   B. Charles Townshend
   C. King George III
   D. Parliament
Taxation without Representation

After the French and Indian War, England was broke. They had spent a lot of money to protect the colonists in America. England thought that America should help to pay off the debt.

England decided to tax the colonists. They thought this would be the best way to get the money back. They started with the Sugar Act. This acted molasses and other items like wine and cloth. Then, England passed the Stamp Act.

The Stamp Act made Americans very angry. It required that any printed material be taxed. A stamp would be put on the paper saying the tax had been paid. The tax would affect almost all Americans. It also affected powerful people like printers and lawyers.

The phrase "no taxation without representation" became very popular. The idea was simple. American colonists did not have representatives in Parliament. There was no one who could stand up for the colonists' ideas. This was not fair. If England wanted to tax the colonists, the colonists should be able to state their opinion in Parliament.

This is also an issue in the United States today. People who live in Washington, D.C. do not have representatives in Congress. These people still have to pay taxes. This is the same idea that the colonists were fighting against.

The Stamp Act Congress met in 1765. People from nine colonies came. They wanted to protest the Stamp Act. "No taxation without representation" was their argument. The people wanted the colonists to have the same rights as the people in Britain. They sent letters to the king telling him this. They did not want to be taxed without being able to state their ideas in Parliament.

The Stamp Act was repealed in 1766. The larger issue was still there. Did England have the right to tax the colonies without representation? Parliament passed another act to answer this question. It said Parliament could make any laws for the colonists. The colonists did not agree. They continued to fight back. Soon, these two countries would fight a war to settle the question.
Name: ____________________________

No Taxation without Representation

**Questions**

1. Why was England broke after the French and Indian War?
   A. They lost the war.
   B. They spent a lot of money to protect the colonists.
   C. They had to pay the colonists for helping England win the war.

2. What year was the Stamp Act repealed?
   A. 1766
   B. 1765
   C. 1767

3. Name three things taxed by the Sugar Act.

4. What was taxed under the Stamp Act?
   A. Wine
   B. Cloth
   C. Printed Material

5. How many colonies sent people to the Stamp Act Congress?
   A. nine
   B. thirteen
   C. six

6. What was the phrase the colonists used to support their argument?
The Townshend Acts

Charles Townshend was an English government official. In order for Townshend to be included in the social life of the British upper class, he made himself a favorite of King George III. The best way to make yourself the favorite of a king is to support ideas that the king likes. Charles Townshend was able to accomplish this by proposing taxes to Parliament that would keep the colonists in the New World connected to the mother country, keep the poor citizens of England poor, and fill the treasury that the English government had allowed to get frighteningly low. King George III may have been the only person made happy by these actions.

In 1765, the House of Parliament passed a tax on every piece of printed paper the colonists used. This tax was designed to require the purchase of a stamp for each newspaper page, playing card, pamphlet, or advertisement the colonists used. The colonists called it the Stamp Act. They rebelled against it and treated the tax collectors badly. The Stamp Act was repealed one year later.

Then Townshend proposed a tax on the people in the colonies for all the lead, glass, paper, paint, and tea that they had to import from England. Not only did they have to pay for these goods and the cost to ship them to the new world, but now they also had to pay an extra tax to the king. The colonists decided to try a new way of protesting the tax. This time they decided to boycott each of these products. By agreeing not to purchase any of these items, the colonists sent a very strong message to the king that they did not like the tax. It made a statement to the king, but not quite the way you might imagine. The British merchants who made their livings selling goods to the colonists started losing money. They felt the pinch much more strongly than the government. In the end, it was the British merchants who demanded and won the repeal of this particular tax.

King George III did not like to be defeated. What he wanted was to be obeyed. Charles Townshend helped to convince him that they could not give up the idea of taxing the colonies. Townshend's alternative plan was to keep the tax that had been levied on tea. It was a small tax, but it would remind the colonies that King George was still in charge. In 1770, all but the tax on tea was repealed.

The Townshend Acts

Questions

1. The Stamp Act levied taxes on:
   A. steel
   B. luggage
   C. letters
   D. printed paper
Name: ____________________________

The Intolerable Acts

Questions

1. What reason did the British give for creating the Coercive Acts of 1774?

2. What effect would closing the port of Boston have on the colonists?
   A. The colonists could no longer drink tea.
   B. The colonists could no longer watch the yacht races in the harbor.
   C. The colonists could no longer visit their relatives in England.
   D. The colonists could no longer earn a living fishing or trading.

3. What change in government did the British demand of Massachusetts?
   A. They were no longer able to make their own laws.
   B. They were no longer able to trade with England.
   C. They were no longer able to raise their own salaries.
   D. They were no longer able to elect their own governor.

4. Where could British officials accused of a crime request to have their trial?

5. What does "intolerable" mean?

6. Which colonist was the first to suggest a Committee of Correspondence?
   A. John Adams
   B. Paul Revere
   C. Benjamin Franklin
   D. Samuel Adams

7. Why do you think the Committees of Correspondence sent goods and money to Massachusetts?