

Patricia Ellison

Topic: Boston Tea Party

Age Group: Fifth Grade

Time: Two, 45 min class sessions

Content Objective: The students will understand what led up to the Boston Tea Party, and what happened during and after the event by reading, participating in a "mock debate" and reacting to what the British did as a result.

Language Objective:

Students will read background information about the Boston Tea Party, write a debate response (based on which side they support), and will write a reaction to what happened after the event.

Key Vocabulary: (Teach as they come up throughout the lesson, OR at the beginning of the lesson... create Vocabulary Cards, etc. as necessary.

boycott

protest

oppression

Tea Act, Coercive Acts

monopoly

Townshend Revenue Act

Materials Used:

Debate Cards, Information Pages, paper, pencils, and First hand accounts found at <http://www.masshist.org/revolution/teaparty.php> and <http://www.boston-tea-party.org/accounts.html>

Higher Order Questions: (Ask throughout the lesson)

Why did the Boston consignees choose to ignore the requests of the Patriot Colonists? What would have happened if the Boston Tea Party had not been a peaceful protest? Would you have been able to keep it a secret if you had participated?

Lesson:

* Building Background (5 min): Ask the students to discuss what they know about the Townshend Revenue Act, and other events leading up to the Boston Tea Party. In groups of 3-4 have students brainstorm and share one fact with the class

about what led up to the actual Boston Tea Party (facts from Townshend Act, etc would be appropriate).

*Activity: (45 min): Split the class into two groups – Patriots, and Loyalists. Have groups write down 3 -5 things that would make people during that time want to be a patriot or a loyalist. (Give out information sheets, or website resources if students do not have enough background information to do this). Once they have come up with a list, have them prepare for a debate at the Old South Church by handing out character debate cards, OR by having students write up their own debate cards. Once done, conduct a short debate – such as one that may have lead up to the Boston Tea Party.

As a whole group, read the following:

*The Boston tea party occurred as a protest against the tax put on tea and the 13 years of increasing British **oppression**. The Tea Act gave the East India Company the right to sell tea directly to America without an export tax. There was however, an import tax on tea that was purchased by Americans. Essentially, the Tea Act was designed to allow the East India Company to make a higher profit in order to get out of financial trouble, and created a **monopoly** on the tea trade. And that was what angered the colonists. The passing of the **Tea Act** imposed no new taxes on the American colonist. They tax on tea had existed since the passing of the 1767 **Townshend Revenue Act**. Due to boycotts and protests, the Townshend Revenue Act taxes were repealed on all commodities except tea in 1770. When people found out that shipments of tea were arriving in the ports of Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Charleston, Americans called on the **consignees**, or people who had been paid to accept the delivery of the tea in port, to resign. Everyone did, except for those working in Boston.*

On November 27th, 1773, 3 ships loaded with tea arrived in Boston. They were not allowed to unload their cargo and were told to leave Boston Harbor. On December 16th, a band of American colonists dressed as Mohawk Indians (lead by Samuel Adams and the Sons of Liberty), approached the 3 ships and began to open the crates and dump tea into the harbor. Crowds of people watched in silence. It took nearly three hours for more than 100 colonists to empty 342 crates (more than 90,000 lbs) of tea into the Boston

Harbor. That would be worth nearly a million dollars today. Though the colonists were upset, they didn't do any damage to the ships – they didn't even to break a lock. They wanted to make a point about the tea tax and nothing else. The British were outraged by what had happened and closed down trade to the Boston Harbor, inflicting even harder penalties (known as the Coercive Acts – 1774), in response to the continual defiance shown by the colonists in America.

(If you have more than an hour, you can watch Liberty's Kids "Boston Tea Party" episode two - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=32eKEg65pQs>)

Have students read about participants in the Boston Tea Party. Use first hand accounts where possible (<http://www.boston-tea-party.org/accounts.html>, http://www.masshist.org/revolution/doc-viewer.php?old=1&mode=nav&item_id=563) and discuss in groups of 3-4 and discuss.

Conclusion:

Have the students write a 3-5 sentence response to the events of the Boston Tea Party as if they had lived in that time. Let the students choose to write from a Patriot, or Loyalist view point as if they were reporting on what was happening in a journal.