

Name _____



The Intolerable Acts

By Jane Runyon

The colonists were so upset with the tax that King George and Parliament imposed on tea that they threw 342 trunks of tea into Boston Harbor. They knew that they would get the attention of the British that way. It did get the attention of the king and Parliament. They were furious. They decided that the colonists must be punished, just as a naughty child was punished for destroying something which belonged to his parents. The list of punishments was long and severe. The British called them the **Coercive** Acts. The colonists called them the **Intolerable** Acts. Here is a summary of the five new laws the British imposed on the colonists as punishment in 1774.

Act I- The Boston Port Act. Boston Harbor would be closed to all ships until the colonists paid the East India Tea Company for all the tea that had been destroyed.

Act II- Massachusetts Government Act. The colony of Massachusetts was no longer allowed to make its own laws.

Act III- Administration of Justice Act. If a British official was accused of a crime in the colonies, he would be sent back to England to face charges instead of going to trial in the colonies.

Act IV- The Quartering Act. Parliament had already made it mandatory for colonists to allow British soldiers to live in their homes. Now they were to be given access to any building in the colony. They could take over any building for their use and the colonists must leave.

Act V- The Quebec Act. This had nothing directly to do with the colonists. Parliament threw it in to allow them to expand the boundaries of their holdings farther into Canada.

The effects of these acts would be swift and long lasting. Closing Boston Harbor would keep fishermen from making a living. Nothing would be imported into the country. None of the colonies' products would be exported and sold. Massachusetts had been very

proud of the self-government they had set up. Now the British would be telling them what to do. Sending an English official back to London for trial was bound to go in the favor of the official. They could be kicked out of their own businesses if the British so desired. No, these acts could not, nor would not be tolerated.

Two years earlier, in 1772, Samuel Adams had created the Committees of Correspondence. Representatives from each of the colonies, except Pennsylvania, were to stay in communication with representatives from each of the other colonies. Any news of moves by the British was to be reported as quickly as possible so that appropriate actions could be taken. Through this system, other colonists saw what effect the Intolerable Acts would have on the people of Massachusetts. They gathered supplies and money which were sent to the people in Massachusetts. Because of this help, Massachusetts was able to survive and defy the British. They refused to pay the British back for the lost tea. The colonists were beginning to unite in their belief that British rule would no longer be allowed in the colonies. The seeds of rebellion had been planted.

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Questions

- _____ 1. According to the Intolerable Acts, what would happen to a British official accused of a crime?
- A. He would be sent to England to stand trial.
 - B. He would be proved innocent.
 - C. He would be executed in the colonies.
 - D. He would be imprisoned in England.
- _____ 2. Who was responsible for the establishment of the Committees of Correspondence?
- A. King George III
 - B. John Adams
 - C. Boston Harbor
 - D. Samuel Adams



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- _____ 3. Which act allowed British soldiers to take over any building they wanted?
 - A. The Quartering Act
 - B. The Massachusetts Act
 - C. The Boston Port Act
 - D. The Quebec Act

- _____ 4. The colonists paid the East India Tea Company for the tea they destroyed.
 - A. False
 - B. True

- _____ 5. The Constitutional Committee sent money to Massachusetts to help them survive.
 - A. False
 - B. True

- 6. What effect would the closing of Boston Harbor have on the economy of Massachusetts?

- 7. Do you think this was a fair punishment for what the colonists did to the tea? Why or why not?

- 8. What are some of the possible outcomes of the enactment of the Intolerable Acts?

Why did the British call the Acts the "Coersive" Acts? Why did the colonists call them the "Intolerable" Acts?
