

8th Grade Social Studies

Post-Assessment 2014-2015

Unit 1-American Revolution

Taxes

As the colonies took root, they grew used to mostly governing themselves. Great Britain decided it wanted more control. It began to force new taxes on the colonists. They wanted to raise money from the goods they were shipping to the colonies. In 1764, the British Parliament passed the Sugar Act to raise the tax on sugar. The next year, the British Parliament passed the Stamp Act. Colonists now had to pay taxes for newspapers, marriage licenses, and all other legal documents. Many colonists were angered by these taxes. They hadn't agreed to them and felt they were illegal and unfair. Each new tax led to a bigger protest by the colonists. Besides taxes, many colonists were also unhappy about some of the rules the British were forcing on them. In 1765, the British Parliament passed the Quartering Act. The act stated that colonists had to agree to give British troops food and let them stay in their homes. Colonists who were unhappy with how the British were treating them decided to fight back peacefully.

In 1765, the Stamp Act Congress met in New York. The Congress was made up of representatives from many colonies. The representatives agreed to boycott British goods until the Stamp Act was repealed (took back). That same year, the Sons of Liberty, a secret organization of colonists in favor of liberty, was formed. Tensions grew between the Colonists and the British.

In 1770, tensions erupted with the Boston Massacre. British troops in Boston found themselves confronted by a crowd of angry colonists. The crowd shouted at the troops and threw snowballs and other small objects at them. The soldiers panicked. One soldier started firing his gun. Then more soldiers fired into the unarmed crowd. Five colonists were killed and six were injured. The British government was afraid of losing control over the colonies. They removed all the taxes on imports to try to make the colonists happy. They repealed however, one tax to remain in place for tea.

In 1774, they passed several measures known as the Intolerable Acts. They closed the Boston port and made it difficult for the major city to **function**. Other colonies, especially Maryland, helped Boston survive by sending food and supplies. All of these events had two main consequences. First, they made the colonists resent Britain. Britain's government seemed far away and out of touch with the colonists' needs. Many colonists began to think about ruling themselves. Second, they helped unite the colonists. In September 1774, the first meeting of the First Continental Congress took place. Representatives from 12 of the American colonies met to discuss how they would unite and defend their rights as men. Within months the Revolutionary War would begin. Less than two years later, on July 4, 1776, America would declare its independence.

RI 8.2

Question 1. What was the author's purpose?

- a. To explain the events that led American colonists to declare independence from the British independence from the British.

- b. To convince the reader that the American colonists were overreacting to British actions
- c. To compare the American colonies to other colonies in the British empire
- d. To illustrate how American politics are different from British politics.

RI 8.4

Question 2. Read the following sentences: “They closed the Boston port and made it difficult for the major city to function. Other colonies, especially Maryland, helped Boston survive by sending food and supplies.” The word *function* means:

- a. hold rallies
- b. work normally
- c. start existing
- d. obey orders

Unit 2. The Constitution

The Preamble

The words written in italics above are the Preamble to the Constitution of the United States. The Constitution is the document that defines our American democracy. It sets forth the nation’s laws. It also spells out the rights and liberties of the American people. The preamble, or introduction, explains why people wrote the Constitution. The first three words are, “We the People.” At the time, these words were revolutionary.

Before the United States was established, the 13 colonies were part of England. Their ruler was the king of England. The colonists had no say over what happened to them. When Americans established their own government, they wanted the people to have a say. They wanted government to protect the people’s rights. They wanted the Constitution to create a democracy. In a democracy, the people elect, or vote for, the people they want to run their government. The government’s power comes from the people. The government cannot exist without the consent of the majority of its people. If the government fails to protect the people, then the people can use their voting power to elect new people to run the government.

What should the government do for the people? The preamble answers part of this question. It says that the government should provide justice, or fairness. It should ensure tranquility, or peace, by working to solve problems within the country when they arise. The government should also defend the country when necessary. It should care for the general well-being of the people. Finally, it should provide liberty for all. The Constitution – with its many democratic goals and methods to reach them – has stood the test of time. It was written in 1787. More than 200 years later, this document still works for the people of the United States.

Question 3. RI 8.4

Read the following sentence: “It should ensure tranquility, or peace, by working to solve problems within the country when they arise.”

The word arise means:

- a. get stronger
- b. disappear
- c. go to war
- d. start happening

Question 4. RI 8.6

What is the most basic purpose of the preamble?

- a. to declare independence from England
- b. to establish the goals of the government
- c. to set forth the nation's laws
- d. to declare war on other countries

Question 5. RI 8.2

What is the central idea of the passage?

- a. why the Constitution was written.
- b. why the United States should be a part of England.
- c. why a king should rule over the United States.
- d. why a monarchy is better than a democracy.

Question 6. RI 8.6

The author's purpose in describing how the American colonies were ruled by England was to:

- a. explain why the American colonists wanted a government just like England's.
- b. provide background information about how Americans used to be governed.
- c. illustrate why American colonies wanted to take over England.
- d. show how England helped the Americans in writing their own Constitution.

Unit 3-Civil War

Slavery, the Civil War & Reconstruction: The Emancipation Proclamation

On September 22, 1862, President Lincoln declared that all slaves in the rebellious states were free. The rebellious states of the South were fighting against the northern states because they wanted to secede, or separate from the Union. His announcement was called the Emancipation Proclamation. Emancipation means the same thing as “freedom.” Part of Lincoln’s **declaration** is below:

“I do order and declare that all persons held as slaves...shall be free. The Executive Government of the United States, including the military and naval authorities thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of said persons.”

In the last part of this sentence, Lincoln says that the Union Army will free and protect slaves. Northerners everywhere now knew why they were fighting the Civil War to free the slaves. The war was no longer just a battle to make the southern states come back to the Union. Now it was a war over slavery. Even if the southern states came back to the Union, there would be no more slavery. The entire way of life in the South would have to change. Southerners could no longer sell people as if they were property. They could no longer run large plantations with slaves as workers. They could no longer force black men and women to work all day in their cotton fields. When the North won the Civil War, life in the South did change.

Many black slaves heard about the Emancipation Proclamation before the northern army arrived to free them. They were very excited. Some ran away to meet the northern army as they fought. Many wanted to join the fight and help the Union beat the Confederacy. As northern armies marched south, all of the slaves were freed. In the North, many abolitionists were happy. Abolitionists wanted slaves to be free. They spent their time convincing people that black men and women were no different than white men and women. They gave speeches about the horrible institution of slavery. Slavery, they said, did more than just chain black men and women. It also was against the basic ideas of liberty and equality that were part of the founding of our country. Slavery brought out the worst part of human nature. Slave owners might have been kind men, but slavery made them become cruel. The Emancipation Proclamation was the first big step to ending slavery.

Question 7. RI 8.2

The passage “The Emancipation Proclamation” is mostly about

- a. an announcement that ended slavery in a large part of the United States.
- b. a famous speech that Abraham Lincoln made on a battlefield.
- c. how slavery in the South was different from slavery in the North.
- d. Abraham Lincoln’s most famous speeches

Question 8. RI 8.6

Based on the text, what is the slave owners point of view about the Emancipation Proclamation?

- A. Agitated

- B. Distressed
- C. Perturbed
- D. Offended

Question 9. RI 8.4

Read the following sentences: “On September 22, 1862, President Lincoln declared that all slaves in the rebellious states were free. The rebellious states of the South were fighting against the northern states because they wanted to secede, or separate from the Union. His announcement was called the Emancipation Proclamation.” What does the word “*declared*” most nearly mean?

- A. Repudiated
- B. Announced
- C. Alleged
- D. Concealed

Question 10. RI 8.6

According to the passage, how did the slaves feel when they heard about the Emancipation Proclamation?

- a. Angry
- b. Excited
- c. Bored
- d. Cruel

