

WORLD HISTORY READERS

Level 3-0

Tea and Wars

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Seed
Learning



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Tea

The world loves tea. But did you know wars have been fought over it?

Long ago, tea was at the center of two very important events in world history.

The first was the Boston Tea Party in 1773 in North America. The second was in China in the 19th century—the Opium Wars.



Types of tea



A tea picker in Kerala, India



Tea

The American Colonies

In the 18th century, many people from Britain went to live in the American colonies near present-day Boston.

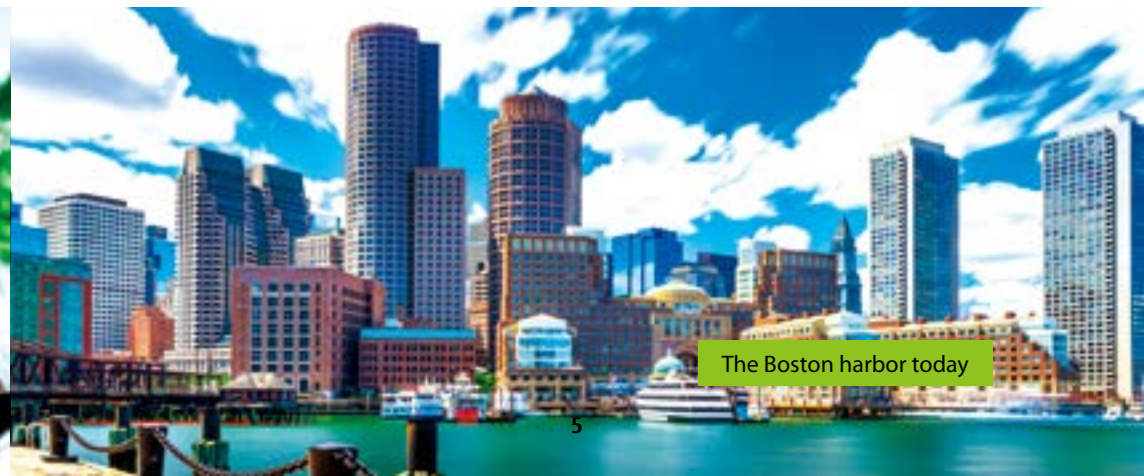
The colonies were owned by the British and ruled by the British king. However, the people who lived there, the colonists, did not want to be ruled by the British government.



King George III of England (1738-1820)



American colonists



The Boston harbor today

The Tea Tax

At that time, the British government put a costly tax on tea. Plus, they allowed only the British East India Company to import tea into the American colonies.



An antique tea set

The colonists were angry because of the tax. Some colonists stopped drinking tea altogether. And others bought tea on the black market from Holland.

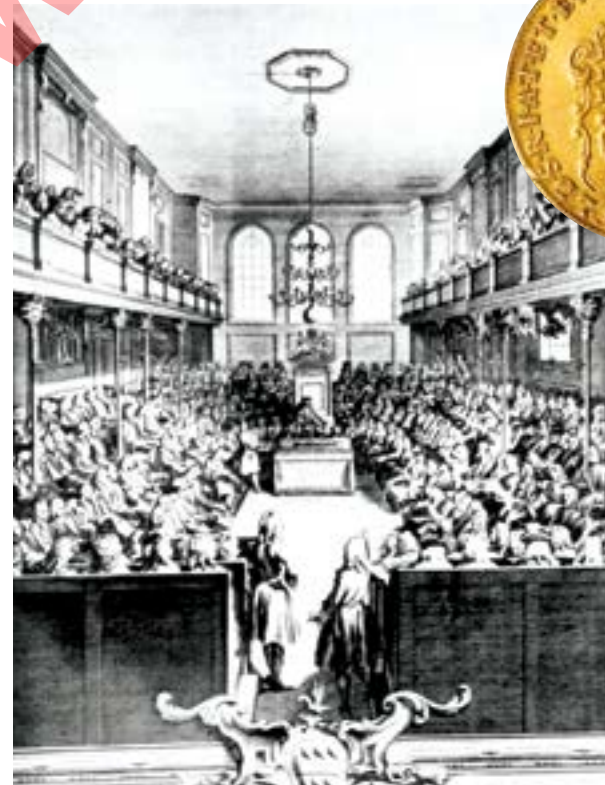


A ship at Jamestown, USA



A trading ship

The colonists did not want to pay extra taxes to the British government. They protested, saying that the taxes violated their rights as British citizens. The colonists had no political power in Britain. The taxes had been passed by Parliament, not by their own colonial governments.



British Parliament, 18th century



A British gold coin: A George III guinea



Ships at the docks, Philadelphia

In September of 1773, the East India Company sent ships loaded with tea to the American colonies. In New York and Philadelphia, the tea was sent back to England.



A cartoon of people talking about tea taxes

In other ports, the tea was unloaded from the ships and left on the docks to rot.



A cartoon showing the conflict

Tea into the Sea

In Boston, the governor decided that the ships should be allowed to stay and unload. That night, about 60 colonists took action.

These colonists called themselves the Sons of Liberty. They dressed up as American Indians, boarded the ships, and dumped

the tea into the harbor. It was called the Boston Tea Party, and 340 chests of tea were dumped into the harbor that night.



Outside the Boston Tea Party Museum



A depiction of the Boston Tea Party



Throwing the tea into the sea

Comprehension Questions

1. Which happened first?
 - (a) The Boston Tea Party
 - (b) The First Opium War
 - (c) The Revolutionary War
 - (d) American Independence
2. In the 18th century, parts of North America were owned and controlled by...
 - (a) the East India Company.
 - (b) the Chinese.
 - (c) the British.
 - (d) All of these.
3. The colonists were angry because they...
 - (a) had no political power.
 - (b) had to buy expensive tea.
 - (c) could not buy tea from Holland.
 - (d) All of these.
4. The colonists protested by...
 - (a) drinking all the tea.
 - (b) throwing the tea in the sea.
 - (c) giving the tea back to India.
 - (d) selling the tea for opium.
5. The Boston Tea Party led to...
 - (a) higher taxes.
 - (b) poorer people.
 - (c) a war.
 - (d) more opium users.
6. In the 19th century, Britain bought opium from ... and sold it to...
 - (a) France ... India.
 - (b) India ... China.
 - (c) America ... China.
 - (d) France ... America.
7. Opium...
 - (a) is good for your health.
 - (b) is very bad for you.
 - (c) is made in China.
 - (d) is used in tea.
8. The British used the opium money to buy...
 - (a) tea.
 - (b) porcelain.
 - (c) silk.
 - (d) All of these.
9. The Opium Wars were started by...
 - (a) the opium traders.
 - (b) the British.
 - (c) the French.
 - (d) the colonists.
10. Chests of both opium and tea were...
 - (a) destroyed.
 - (b) used in the war.
 - (c) given as gifts.
 - (d) taxed.

Glossary

- **addictive** causing someone to become unable to stop taking a drug
- **black market** illegal trading of goods that are not allowed to be bought and sold
- **colony** a country or area controlled by a more powerful country
- **costly** expensive
- **dock** the place where ships stop and goods are taken off or put on
- **drug** a chemical which can either be good or very bad for your health
- **goods** items that are made to be sold
- **illegal** not allowed by the law
- **import** to bring something made in another country into your country for people to buy
- **medicine** something you take when you are sick to make you feel better
- **opium** a very strong drug with bad side effects
- **port** a town where trading ships can stop to do business
- **protest** to show that you disagree with something by shouting, carrying signs, etc.
- **rot** to become bad; to turn to dirt in the end