

Name: _____

George III and the American Revolution

“It is the French and Indian War that has brought about this rebellion of the American colonists against George the Third,” said the French statesmen when the Revolution began.



KING GEORGE III.

George III

“I have always feared that a rebellion would be the result of the French and Indian War,” said the great William Pitt of England.

“We learned our lessons in the French and Indian War,” said the American colonists.

Now, what do you suppose these people meant? How did the French

and Indian War bring about the American Revolution? Why did William Pitt fear this result? What were the lessons that the American colonists believed they had learned from it?

revolution

In the first place, the French and Indian War taught the people of the different colonies to unite their forces. They were then compelled to stop quarrelling, and begin to work side by side. It was natural that they should feel more kindly toward one another after that.

Then again, when the French were driven out of the American west, the English-speaking colonists began to move there. They found it a rich

Name: _____

and wonderful country. Trade increased and the colonists began to grow rich.

colonists

1. After the French and Indian War, the American colonies grew rich.

- a. True
- b. False

“We do not now need to go to the Indies for everything,” the Europeans began to say. “We can get many things from the American colonies, and America is a fine market for our goods.”

The American colonists themselves now said, “See how important we are growing! We shall soon have trade with all Europe. Look at the European ships that come into our harbors!”

But the most far-reaching result of the war was this: As the French were driven from the continent and

the Spanish gave up their claims, the colonists grew to have less need of England's protection. They began to feel like real “grown-up” people. As they could take care of themselves, they turned less and less to England for help and advice, and more and more to one another.

continent

protection

This, then, was what the French meant when they said, “We told you so.”

It was what the English meant when they said, “We were afraid this might happen.”

And it was what the colonists meant when they said, “We learned our lesson in the French and Indian War.”

Name: _____

At the end of the French and Indian War, a new king came to the English throne. This new king—George III—proved to be the wrong kind of king for England to have just at this time. It was the time when the liberty spirit was rising anew everywhere. Old ideas were being outgrown. New ideas were coming in.

2. Who was the ruler of England during the American Revolution?

- a. Elizabeth I
- b. George III
- c. Henry VIII
- d. Oliver Cromwell

In times past, all the people in Europe had thought that certain forms of government were right. They had thought so for centuries and centuries. But before the middle of the seventeenth century, people began to say, “It is time we had more liberty! It is time we had more freedom!”

But George III was old-fashioned. He did not believe in changes, and he declared that the old ways of thinking were good enough. “We will have none of this new-

fashioned nonsense in England,” he said. So he set to work to govern England and the colonies according to his own narrow, old-fashioned ideas.

Indeed, so great a tyrant did George III become, that even the people in England said when the American Revolution was over, “George Washington has done as much for freedom in England as in the colonies. He has helped to free us, one and all, from a tyrant.”

tyrant

England

One of the first things George III had to think about when he became king was the great debt that England had on its shoulders.

“Why are we burdened with such a debt as this?” the king demanded.

Name: _____

“The French and Indian War has caused this debt,” was the answer his council made.

“But the debt must be paid,” replied the king.

“That is very true, your Majesty,” said the council.

“And is there money in the treasury?”

“Not enough, by any means.”

“Then taxes must be increased. The money must be raised. Duties must be put on the goods that come into the country from abroad. In some way—in any way—the money must be raised.”

“You speak wisely, sir,” the council said.

“But the American colonies must help,” the king went on. “This French and Indian War was to protect them. It is but fair that they should help. Then, too, see how rich they are growing. Indeed, they are quite able to help.”

“We are willing to help,” said the colonies.

“Isn’t there an old Navigation Act?” the king asked. “A Navigation

Act which says the colonies shall trade with no country but England?”

“There is such a law,” said the council. “But it was never carried out because it was unwise and unfair.”

“But would it not bring money to England if we should carry it out?”

“Yes, it would bring money to England.”

“Then that is all we need to know. Money is what we must have. Let the law be brought before us,” said the king.

Navigation Act

So the old law was looked up and brought before the council. And this is what it said: “Only English ships shall carry goods to the American colonies. The colonies shall send goods only to England.”

“But we have now a large trade with the countries of Europe,” said the colonies. “Surely, you would not spoil that trade!”

Name: _____

3. England needed to pay its debts from what war?

- a. American Revolution
- b. French and Indian War
- c. Spanish-American War
- d. World War II

“England must have money,” was all that George III would say. “If the Navigation Act is well carried out, it will bring it to us. For we can then ask what price we will for the goods that we send to the colonies, and we can put what duties we will on the goods that the colonies bring to us.”

“This is a foolish law, as well as an unfair one,” said the colonies. “To ruin America's trade is not an honest way to bring money into England.”

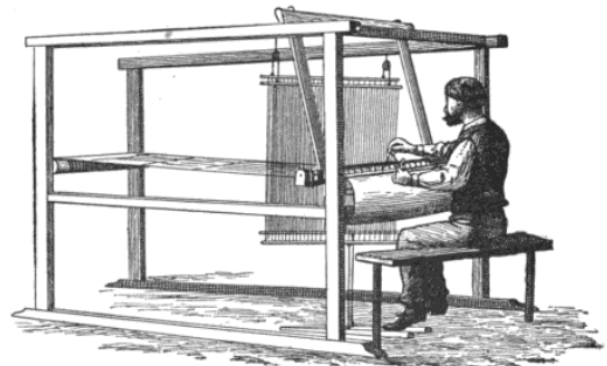
The wisest men in England and in all Europe thought so, too. But King George and his advisers could not or would not listen, and the law began to do its work.

By and by, the English merchants complained to the king: “The colonies are ruining our manufactures! They are making the same things that we make. There is no market for such a quantity of goods.”

“England must be protected first of all,” said George III.

So another law was sent over to the colonies. And this law said: “No woolen goods...yarn, cloth, and no made goods shall be loaded upon any cart or carriage or vessel to be taken out of the colony where they have been made.”

Now, this was a hard law. It might as well have said there should be no woolen goods made in the colonies; for of course if the maker could not send them anywhere, he might as well not make them.



A WEAVER AT A HAND-LOOM.

“This will ruin us,” said the colonies.

“We are sorry,” said George III. “But our own merchants must be protected.”

“Doesn't England see that it is making trouble for itself?” said France. “Does it think that the

Name : _____

colonies will stand such treatment?” Then the French statesmen laughed to think of the trouble that was surely ahead for their old enemy, England.

However, we must not think the English people were as foolish as the king. No, indeed! We must remember that during the whole war, the American colonies had strong friends in England. If there had not been an unwise king on the throne just at this time, very likely there would have been no war at all. But in those days, a king had great power. What he said had to be obeyed, and the people who were friendly to the Americans could not do very much to help.

obeyed



SOME HATS OF COLONIAL TIMES.

By and by, the English hat-makers began to complain to King George. “We pray you, sir, to stop the

hat-making in the colonies,” they said. “There is no market for both English and colonial hats.”

So again, word was sent over to the colonies. “We are very sorry,” said George III. “But our own hat-makers must be protected. If there is not a market for you both, then the colonies must stop making hats.”

“This is not taxation,” said the colonies. “This is tyranny. We will not endure it!”

“You are slaves if you do,” said France.

“We are bringing sorrow upon ourselves,” said the wise statesmen of England.

“But we must raise money to pay the French and Indian War debts!” said George III. To him and his advisers, these laws seemed well enough.

taxation

Name : _____

4. Why did George III insist on taxing the American colonies?

5. Imagine that you are an American colonist. Would you find George III to be unfair? Why or why not?

6. Draw a line between England and North America on the map below.



Name: _____

7. Draw a picture illustrating George III's actions.

