

## Protests Lead to Violence

**Directions:** Read the paragraph. In the box, write one sentence summarizing the paragraph.

The Stamp Act crisis showed that the colonists would not accept a direct tax. But the British government still needed to raise money to pay its debt and support troops in the colonies. Charles Townshend, the Crown's chief financial officer, thought that colonists would accept indirect taxes on commerce. After all, they had long accepted customs duties in principle, though evading them in practice. In 1767, Parliament passed the Townshend Acts, which levied new import duties on everyday items such as glass, lead, paint, paper, and tea.

To Townshend's surprise, the colonists insisted that they would pay no new taxes of any sort to Parliament. They also resented Townshend's plans to use the money to pay the salaries of colonial governors and judges, making them more independent of the colonial assemblies. That prospect alarmed the colonists, who valued their financial control of the governors.

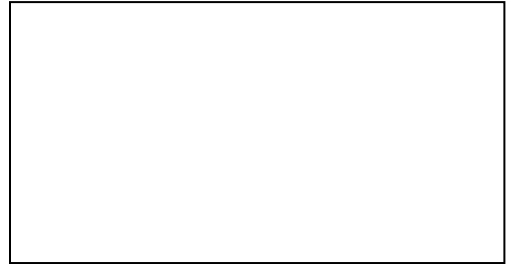
**The Boston Massacre** In response to the Townshend Acts, the colonists revived their protests, boycotts, and street violence. Once again, the largest riots occurred in Boston, where many of the British customs officials abused their power. The Massachusetts legislature issued a circular letter denouncing the Townshend duties. Few other colonial legislatures paid attention to it until the governor dissolved the Massachusetts legislature in retaliation for their protest.

In an already tense situation, customs officers seized the merchant ship *Liberty* in June 1768 for smuggling. The ship belonged to John Hancock, a wealthy merchant and a prominent colonial politician. The seizure set off riots against the customs officers. To suppress the riots, the Crown sent 4,000 troops to occupy Boston, a city of only 16,000 people. For over a year, the presence of British troops inflamed popular anger, especially because the poorly-paid soldiers competed with unskilled workers for jobs.

One night in March 1770, a group of colonists hurled snowballs and rocks at British soldiers guarding the Customs House. The nervous soldiers fired into the crowd, killing five colonists. The dead included Crispus Attucks, a sailor who may have been an escaped slave of mixed American Indian and African ancestry. Under the leadership of Samuel Adams, Patriots called the killings the *Boston Massacre*. Adams later organized a network of local *committees of correspondence* throughout Massachusetts. The committees provided leadership and promoted cooperation. By 1773, several other colonies had created committees, which helped build colonial unity.



Once again, Parliament backed down. The British withdrew troops from Boston and dropped most of the Townshend duties. But to preserve the principle of Parliamentary supremacy, Parliament kept the tax on tea. Therefore, colonists continued to boycott British tea and to drink smuggled Dutch tea.




**CHECK UNDERSTANDING:** In 20 words or less, answer the following questions.

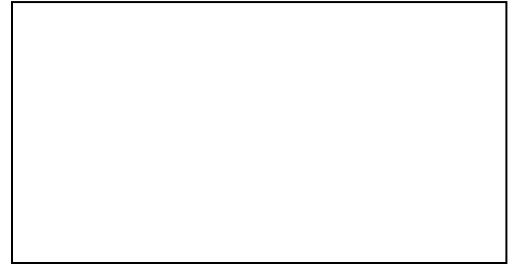
What was the caused of the Boston Massacre?



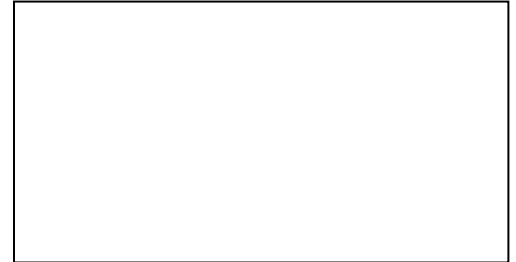
What was the effect of the Boston Massacre?



**The Boston Tea Party** The tea boycott worsened financial problems for the already struggling British East India Company. To help the company and encourage the colonists to pay the tax, Parliament passed a law allowing the company to sell directly to the colonists. This made their tea cheaper than the smuggled tea, even with the tax.



Instead of buying the cheaper tea, the colonists protested that the British were trying to trick them into paying the tax. If the East India Company sold tea directly, it would also hurt the wealthy colonists who smuggled tea. On the night of December 16, 1773, Boston Patriots took matters into their own hands. They boarded three British ships laden with tea and dumped the tea into the harbor. The event became known as the *Boston Tea Party*.



**CHECK UNDERSTANDING:** In 20 words or less, answer the following questions.

What was the cause of the Boston Tea Party?



What do you think was the effect of the Boston Tea Party?

