

Pre-Revolutionary Era
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This DBQ is intended for AP History classes as modeled for the National AP History test, which does not utilize scaffolding questions to guide students. Students should analyze the documents below then write an essay based on the documents and their knowledge of the American Revolution.

Question: Use your knowledge of events leading up to the Revolutionary War to discern whether the Sons of Liberty were fervent Patriots of Liberty or treasonous Traitors bent on fomenting rebellion?

At a general meeting of the Freeman, inhabitants of the county of Essex, in New-Jersey, at the free Borough of Elizabeth, on the 25th day of October, in the year of our Lord 1765, being the anniversary of the happy accession of his present Majesty King George the Third, to the crown of Great-Britain, &c. upon which occasion the said freemen unanimously, and with one voice declared,

Secondly. That the stamp act, prepared for the British colonies in America, in their opinion, is unconstitutional; and should the same take place, agreeable to the tenor of it, would be a manifest destruction and overthrow of their long enjoyed, boasted and invaluable liberties and privileges.

Fourthly. That they will discountenance and discourage, by all lawful measures, the execution and effect of the stamp act.

Fifthly. That they will detest, abhor, and hold in the utmost contempt, all and every person or persons, who shall meanly accept of any employment or office, relating to the stamp act, or shall take any shelter or advantage from the same; and all and every stamp pimp, informer, faviourer and encourager of the execution of the said act; and that they will have no communication with any such person, nor speak to them on any occasion, unless it be to inform them of their vileness.

Essex County, New Jersey Resolutions. October 25, 1765 – Library of Congress

Document 1

The true Sons of Liberty

And Supporters of the Non-Importation
Agreement,

ARE determined to resent any the least Insult or Menace offer'd to any one or more of the several Committees appointed by the Body at Faneuil-Hall, and chastise any one or more of them as they deserve; and will also support the Printers in any Thing the Committees shall desire them to print.

AS a Warning to any one that shall affront as aforesaid, upon sure Information given, one of these Advertisements will be posted up at the Door or Dwelling-House of the Offender.

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL SOCIETY
FENWAY BOSTON 1768

Document 2

To the MERCHANTS and TRADERS, of the City of Philadelphia. 1770

GENTLEMEN,

THE worthy and patriotic Writer of the Farmer's Letters, has clearly demonstrated, that the Liberties of the British Colonies in America, have been most cruelly violated by the late parliamentary Impositions on Paper, Glass, etc. **for the sole Purpose of raising a Revenue upon us without our Consent**; every Lover of his Country must therefore rejoice in seeing those Measures taken, which are most likely to obtain Redress of our present Grievances.

The Merchants of Boston have unanimously resolved to suspend the Importation of Goods from Great-Britain during Twelve Months. The Efficacy of such a Resolution has been most happily experienced by the Abolition of the Stamp-Act,

Library of Congress

Document 3

A Member of the Church of England, and a Son of Liberty, presents his Compliments once more, to those Gentlemen, who are endeavoring for an immediate and untimely Importation of Goods from Great-Britain;

that they being now foremost, appear to the World TRAITEROUS, and fix an indelible infamy on the Respectable Province of New-York;

please likewise to observe, that our numerous Noble and powerful Friends in Great-Britain, may very possibly be irritated, and when Opportunity suits, they may resent these irregular Steps., we lessen ourselves in the Esteem of all Parties, and should proceed with the very utmost Caution.—

the Provinces must act in strict Unity, or become absolutely Slaves.

A Card Number 2, June 20 1770 from a Sons of Liberty member

Document 4

William Pitt, Britain's Prime Minister and Secretary of State address Parliament June 17, 1774

But, my Lords, I am apt to think, that Administration has purposely irritated them into those late violent acts for which they now so severely smart; purposely to be revenged on them for the victory they gained by the repeal of the Stamp-act

For what other motive could induce them to redress Taxation, but to break in upon that mutual peace and harmony which then so happily subsisted between them and the Mother country?

My Lords, I am an old man, and will advise the noble Lords now in office, to adopt a more gentle mode of governing America; for the day is not far distant, when America may vie with these kingdoms, not only in arms, but in arts also.

Library of Congress

Document 5



American colonists tarring and feathering a British commissions officer

Document 6

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Members of the Association of the Sons of Liberty, are requested to meet at the City-Hall, at one o'Clock, To-morrow, (being Friday) on Business of the utmost Importance;—And every other Friend to the Liberties, and Trade of America, are hereby most cordially invited, to meet at the same Time and Place.

The Committee of the Association.

Thursday, NEW-YORK, 16th December, 1773.

Document 7

I have acted with the same temper; anxious to prevent, if it had been possible, the effusion of the blood of my subjects; and the calamities which are inseparable from a state of war; still hoping that my people in America would have discerned the traitorous views of their leaders, and have been convinced, that to be a subject of Great Britain, is to be the freest member of any civil society in the known world. – Library of Congress

Document 8

The following excerpts, originally published in the Atlantic Monthly (Volume 39, Issue 234, April 1877), are from a diary kept by a British Army officer serving in Massachusetts in 1774-1775.

Fri. 30th. . . . If an Alarm happens in the night the Troops will march to their Posts without loading, and on no account to load their firelocks. It is forbid under the most severe penalty to fire in the night, even if the Troops shou'd be fired upon; but they will oppose and put to rout any Body (that shall dare to attack them) with their Bayonets; and the greatest care will be taken that the Counter-Sign is well known by all the Corps; and small Parties advanced, that in case of meeting they may know their friends and not attack each other in the night through mistake. . . .Library of Congress

Document 9

His Majesty's most gracious speech to both Houses of Parliament, on Friday, October 27, 1775

The authors and promoters of this desperate conspiracy have, in the conduct of it, derived great advantage from the difference of our intentions and theirs.

On our part, though it was declared in your last session that a rebellion existed within the province of the Massachusetts Bay, yet even that province we wished rather to reclaim than to subdue.

Document 10

Scoring Rubric

- 13-15 * Strong thesis clearly developed; well organized and well written
- * Addresses entire question, balance not required
 - * Sophisticated use of substantial number of documents
 - * Substantial outside information
 - * May have insignificant errors
- 10-12 * Consistent, well developed thesis; clearly organized and written
- * Acknowledges both sides of question
 - * Effective use of several documents
 - * Significant outside information
 - * May have minor errors
- 7-9 * Partially developed thesis which may restate question, acceptable organization
And writing
- * May discuss only one side of question
 - * Paraphrases and/or uses some documents
 - * Sketchy and scattered outside information
 - * may contain errors
- 4-6 * Limited, confused, and/or poorly developed thesis; weak organization and
Writing
- * Limited understanding of question
 - * Uses documents ineffectively, may only briefly cite or quote documents
 - * Little outside information, or information which is inaccurate or irrelevant
 - * May contain major errors
- 1-3 * No thesis, disorganized, poorly written
- * irrelevant response to the question
 - * Poor, confused, or no use of documents
 - * Inappropriate or no outside information
 - * Major and minor errors