



Post-Visit Activity: Petitioning for Independence

During their visit to Tudor Place, students explored many of the motivations for America's declaring independence from Great Britain. During the Second Continental Congress, each colony voted for or against adopting the Declaration of Independence. One way that citizens of the colonies tried to influence their delegates was through **petitions**. A petition is a letter from a large group of people. One of the challenges in writing a petition is in making it specific enough to be persuasive but general enough that lots of people will sign on to it.

In this activity, students write petitions as an 18th century citizen to convince a colony of their choice to vote for independence.

After completing this activity, students will be better able to:

- Research and form an argument
- Write persuasively
- Present in front of an audience

Procedure

Students should choose one of the 13 colonies to try to influence and research reasons that that colony might vote for or against independence. The student should write a petition attempting to persuade the delegate to vote for or against independence. The petition should include clear reasons why independence is or is not the best idea for that state. Students can then sign one another's petitions.

Take it further: have students present their petition to the class

Take it further: have students research a current issue and write a petition to their state or District government outlining their ideas about how the issue should be resolved.



Glossary

Artifact—An object that was made, modified, or used by humans in the past for a useful purpose.

Boston Massacre—An occurrence in 1771 in which a group of colonists encountered British troops in Boston, Massachusetts; the conflict resulted in the deaths of three colonists.

Boston Tea Party—A reaction to the Tea Act (see below), this resulted in 1773 when a group of men boarded a British ship that had recently docked in Boston Harbor and dumped the tea into the harbor.

Boycott—to refuse to buy.

Colony—A body of people who settle far from home but maintain ties with their homeland.

Coercive Acts—The group of acts forced on the city of Boston by Britain as a reaction to the Boston Tea Party (see above); the main effects of these acts closed the port of Boston and brought the Massachusetts government under British control.

Declaration—A formal statement.

French and Indian War—A war fought in North America between Britain and France from 1754 to 1763.

Import—To bring in.

Intercept—to capture.

Interpret—To explain.

Loyalists—The name used to refer to the group of people who sided with, and fought for, the British during the American Revolution (see below).

Patriots—The name used to refer to the group of people who sided with, and fought for, the thirteen colonies during the American Revolution (see below). p. 16

Quartering Acts—the act imposed on the colonies by Britain in 1765 that required colonists to provide housing and supplies to British troops.

Reproduction—a present day copy of an original artifact.

Revolution—an uprising by the governed with the goal of taking over the government.

Sons of Liberty—a political group made up of people who supported American independence.



Stamp Act—the act imposed on the colonies by Britain in 1765 that taxed all paper goods and documents.

Sugar Act—the act imposed on the colonies by Britain in 1764 that taxed sugar and non-British goods shipped to the colonies.

Tea Act—the act imposed on the colonies by Britain in 1773 that reduced the tax on tea imported (see above) from Britain.

Townshend Acts—the acts imposed on the colonies by Britain in 1767 that taxed glass, lead, paper, paint, and tea.



Additional Resources

Resources on the American Revolution from Colonial Williamsburg

<http://www.history.org/history/revolution.cfm>

Timeline of the American Revolution from the British perspective, British Library

<https://www.bl.uk/the-american-revolution/articles/american-revolution-timeline#>

Museum of the American Revolution, Philadelphia

<https://www.amrevmuseum.org/>

Myths of the American Revolution, Smithsonian

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/myths-of-the-american-revolution-10941835/>

America's Founding Documents, National Archives

<https://museum.archives.gov/founding-documents>