Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Period\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Unit 4 Day 6

**The Boston Tea Party**

**DIRECTIONS**: After the Boston Massacre on March 5, 1770, tensions between the Colonists and the British were high. The situation was to become even more tense three years later with the passage of the Tea Act. Below you will find a reading on the Boston Tea Party. As your read, highlight important information and answer the questions that follow.

**Background**

On a cold December night in Boston, Massachusetts, three British ships: the Dartmouth, the Eleanor, and the Beaver were sitting in the Boston Harbor. The ships were full of tea, but were not being unloaded because the residents of Boston were threatening to boycott buying or drinking the tea.

**Tea Act**

This hostility was directed at the government of Great Britain, who had passed the Tea Act. The law almost guaranteed that American colonists would buy tea from the East India Company, which was owned by the British. The law lowered the price so the East India Company’s tea was the cheapest and fell way below the price charged by tea imported from other companies. American colonists viewed the act as another examples of “taxation without representation.” Essentially, the Tea Act was putting a tax on tea sold by companies other than the East India Company. The Tea Act was approved by Parliament thousands of miles away and American colonists had no way of influencing the law or speaking out against it while it was debated.

**Sons of Liberty**

![A cup of coffee

Description automatically generated]()Colonists were divided into two groups: loyalists and patriots. Loyalists were those colonists that wanted to remain loyal to the British and did not want to cause problems with them. Patriots were those colonists that wanted to separate from the British and become independent. The Sons of Liberty were a group made up of many patriots that were furious with this taxation without representation and wanted to express their unhappiness with the Tea Act to the British. The Sons of Liberty were determined to make a change. They were led by impassioned patriots Samuel Adams and John Hancock. The group had secret meetings to discuss the best way to get their message across to Great Britain that the American people wanted more of a role in governing themselves.

**Plan and Execution**

Christmas was approaching and the colonists faced another year of unopposed and unrepresented taxes, so the Sons of Liberty decided to take action. A large group of them dressed in disguises to look like Mohawk Indians on December 16, 1773. They stormed aboard the three unsuspecting British ships and dumped 342 crates full of tea overboard. The crates were jammed full of tea, so the tea companies lost a lot of money in one night. Since the Sons of Liberty were disguised as Native Americas, they claimed they were not guilty of dumping the tea, but the British government knew better. The British grew angrier at the American colonists and wanted to punish them, especially the colonists in Boston. The next year saw the passage of what came to be known as the Intolerable Acts, one of which closed the port of Boston entirely.

1. Why were the British not unloading the tea from their ships?

***Residents of Boston were to boycott the tea.***

1. How did the American colonists view the Tea Act?

***Another examples of “taxation without representation.”***

1. Who was a loyalist? ***Colonists that wanted to remain loyal to the British and did not want to cause problems with them.***
2. Who was a patriot? ***Colonists that wanted to separate from the British and become independent.***
3. Explain what happened on December 16, 1776.

***The Sons of Liberty dressed in disguises to look like Mohawk Indians. They stormed aboard the three British ships and dumped 342 crates full of tea overboard.***