

DISCOVER AMERICA

Teacher Guide



United for Liberty: The
Stamp Act Congress and
the Seeds of Revolution

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Key Themes

- Key Decisions That Shaped Independence
- The Colonists' Fight Against Tyranny
- The Impact of Unfair Laws
- The Role of the Stamp Act in Sparking Change
- Unity Through Shared Challenges

Core Values

- Community
- Life
- Faith
- Liberty



Learning Objectives

Students will be able to

- Explain why the colonists wanted a say in decisions made by Great Britain's government.
- Identify key events, like the French and Indian War, and explain their impact on the colonies.
- Understand the Stamp Act and why it upset the colonists, leading them to work together for change.
- Explain the colonists' rallying cry of "No taxation without representation" and its significance.
- Recognize how unity, through efforts like the Stamp Act Congress, helped the colonies stand up to unfair treatment.
- Explain how the Declaration of Independence marked the beginning of a free and self-governed nation.

Key Terms

- 0 1 **Boston Tea Party:** a 1773 event in which colonists in Boston, upset about a tax on tea, dressed up as Native Americans and dumped an entire shipment of British tea into the harbor.
- 0 2 **colony:** a piece of land controlled by another country.
- 0 3 **Continental Army:** a group of men from all the colonies who fought against Britain during the Revolutionary War.
- 0 4 **Declaration of Independence:** a document that explained why the colonies were breaking away from Britain.
- 0 5 **freedom:** being able to make your own choices and having the power to decide what's best for yourself, your family, and your community.
- 0 6 **Founding Fathers:** the leaders who helped create the United States and fought for its independence.
- 0 7 **independent:** free to make your own decisions.
- 0 8 **militias:** citizen armies.
- 0 9 **Parliament:** Britain's government.
- 1 0 **repealed:** canceled.
- 1 1 **Revolutionary War:** the fight between the colonies and Great Britain that lasted from 1775 to 1783 and ended with the colonies winning their freedom and becoming the United States of America.
- 1 2 **self-government:** a type of government in which people have the power to make their own rules and decisions.

Key Terms

- 1 3 **Stamp Act:** a law created by Great Britain that said the colonists had to pay extra money, called a tax, on things made from paper.
- 1 4 **synonym:** a word that means the same, or almost the same, as another word.
- 1 5 **tax:** extra money people must pay to the government.
- 1 6 **The French and Indian War:** a conflict between Great Britain and France over land in North America, where many Native American tribes helped each side.
- 1 7 **treason:** betraying your country or turning your back on it.
- 1 8 **tyranny:** when a government acts like a bully and doesn't listen to the people.

Introduction

TELL Students 🗣️

Let's start by learning about synonyms! A **synonym** is a word that means the same, or almost the same, as another word. For example, the words joyful and cheerful are synonyms for "happy," and quick and speedy are synonyms for "fast."

Now, let's think about the word freedom. What words might mean the same as freedom? Some synonyms for freedom are independence, liberty, and choice. These words describe the ability to make your own decisions and live without someone unfairly controlling you. Long before the United States became its own country, the idea of freedom—or liberty—was already starting to grow in the colonies. But what does freedom mean? **Freedom** means being able to make your own choices and having the power to do what you think is best for yourself, your family, and your community. For the colonists, freedom—or independence—wasn't just about small choices like what to eat or wear. It was about having a say in important decisions. The colonists wanted the right to speak up for themselves, work hard for their dreams, and live without unfair control from Great Britain. Freedom—or liberty—was about having a fair chance to live the life they wanted, and that idea began to grow stronger every day. Synonyms like independence and choice remind us just how important freedom was to the colonists—and how important it still is today! Freedom allows us to make decisions, follow our dreams, and work toward a better future, just like the colonists wanted for themselves and their families.

ASK Students

What does freedom mean to you? Can you think of a time when you were able to make an important decision that affected you or your family? Please turn to your neighbor and discuss. [Give students three to five minutes to discuss with their neighbor and then discuss as a class.]

TELL Students 🗣️

Freedom means being able to make your own choices and having a say in what happens around you. For example, deciding what to play at recess or helping choose what to have for dinner are ways you practice freedom. But long ago, the colonists didn't always have that freedom because they were part of something called a colony. A **colony** is a piece of land controlled by another country. In this case, the colonies were controlled by Great Britain. You can think of it like this: Great Britain was like a parent, and the colonies were like grown-up kids who had gone to college to start their own lives.

Introduction

TELL Students (continued)

Even though they were living far apart, the colonies and Great Britain still had a connection. But when decisions were made—especially decisions about important things like taxes or laws—the colonies didn't get to have a say. This lack of freedom led to disagreements, as the colonists began to feel they should have the right to make more of their own choices.

ASK Students

Why do you think the colonists wanted to have a say in the decisions Great Britain was making for them?

TELL Students 🗣️

The colonists wanted to have a say in the decisions Great Britain was making because those decisions affected their daily lives. They felt it was unfair to follow rules they didn't help create, especially since they were so far away from Great Britain. The colonies—places like Virginia and New York—were far across the Atlantic Ocean from Great Britain. But Great Britain wasn't the only country interested in the land we now know as America. France also wanted land, and this led to a fight over land and power called the French and Indian War. The **French and Indian War** was a conflict between Great Britain and France over land in North America. But, it wasn't just British and French soldiers fighting. Some Native American tribes supported the French, while others sided with the British. The colonists also helped Great Britain during the war. These colonial soldiers, sometimes called "Yankee Doodles" by the British, showed great bravery. In the end, Great Britain won the war, but the victory cost them a lot of money, which later caused tensions between Britain and the colonies.

ASK Students

What was the French and Indian War? How did it impact the colonists?

TELL Students 📷🗣️

The French and Indian War cost Great Britain a lot of money, and they needed a way to pay for it. After the war, they decided that the colonists should help cover the costs. To do this, they created the **Stamp Act**, a rule that added a tax to paper items like newspapers, playing cards, and legal documents. A **tax** is extra money people must pay to the government.

Introduction

TELL Students (continued)

For example, if a toy costs \$5 and the government adds a \$1 tax, you would have to pay \$6. Under the Stamp Act, the colonists had to buy special stamps to stick on paper items to prove they had paid the tax. **[Reference Stamp Image]** This included everyday things like newspapers, playing cards, and even important legal papers. The colonists were very upset about this tax because they thought it was unfair to pay money to the government without having a say in its decisions. In Great Britain's government, called **Parliament**, the colonists had no representatives to speak for them. In the United States today, taxes are used to pay for important things like schools, roads, and emergency services. And, today, we have the right to vote on things like taxes. But back then, the colonists felt it was wrong to be taxed when they had no voice in Parliament. This unfair treatment encouraged the colonists to work together to fight for their freedom. The Stamp Act became one of the first steps on the road to independence.

ASK Students

Why do you think the colonists felt it was unfair to pay taxes like the Stamp Act without having a say in the government's decisions?

TELL Students 🦋

The colonists felt it was unfair to pay taxes like the Stamp Act because they didn't have anyone in the British government, called Parliament, to speak up for them or explain why the tax was wrong. They believed it wasn't fair to follow rules and pay taxes when they had no voice in making those decisions. In our last class, we talked about how the First Great Awakening brought the colonists together through shared faith and beliefs, creating unity. Now, the colonists were finding a new reason to unite—fighting against unfair treatment. They began to say something very important: "No taxation without representation!" This meant they didn't think it was fair to pay taxes if they didn't get to help make the rules. This idea of working together made the colonies stronger and brought them closer as a team. They started standing up to Great Britain and fighting for their freedom. This was the beginning of something big—the road to becoming **independent**, or free to make their own decisions as a country. But, independence didn't happen overnight; it took many events working together to create the great nation we have today. Let's watch a Star Spangled Adventures cartoon to learn more!

Introduction

WATCH

Star Spangled Adventures Cartoon Ep. 38: Stamp Act
Congress/Road to Revolution



Lesson

TELL Students

In Virginia, Patrick Henry, one of America's Founding Fathers gave a powerful speech about why the Stamp Act was wrong. **[Reference Patrick Henry Image]** Remember, the **Founding Fathers** were a group of extraordinary leaders who worked together to create the United States and secure its independence from Great Britain. These men, including figures like Patrick Henry, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, and John Adams, shared a vision of freedom. They played essential roles in writing important documents, such as the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, and making decisions that would shape the future of the nation. They were not only leaders but also thinkers, writers, and brave individuals who stood up for what they believed was right, even when it was risky. For speaking out against Great Britain, Patrick Henry faced being accused of treason. **Treason** means betraying your country or turning your back on it. During his speech, Patrick Henry showed he would boldly face opposition for his actions by crying, "If this be treason, make the most of it!" He warned that **tyranny**—when a government acts like a bully and doesn't listen to the people—must be resisted. His words inspired many colonists to stand up against the unfair treatment they were experiencing and strengthened their determination to fight for freedom. The Founding Fathers' courage and leadership helped unite the colonies and laid the foundation for the United States of America.

ASK Students

Why do you think the Founding Fathers, like Patrick Henry, were willing to speak out and take risks to stand up against unfair treatment?

TELL Students

The Founding Fathers were willing to speak out and take risks because they believed strongly in fairness and freedom. They knew that staying silent would allow unfair laws, like the Stamp Act, to continue. By speaking up, they inspired others to join the fight for justice and stand up to Great Britain. And, Virginia wasn't the only colony upset about the Stamp Act. In North Carolina, John Ashe, another key American leader, is believed to have said, "This law will be resisted in blood and death." Massachusetts suggested holding a big meeting called the Stamp Act Congress in New York in 1765. This meeting would represent the angry colonists and give them a chance to speak up. Nine of the 13 colonies sent representatives, and six of them signed a paper saying that, as British citizens, they could only be taxed if they agreed to it.

Lesson

TELL Students (continued)

Since the colonies had no representatives in Britain's government, called Parliament, many of them said they would not obey the Stamp Act. Men across the colonies started forming groups called the Sons of Liberty to stand up to Great Britain. The Sons of Liberty warned the people asked to sell the stamped paper not to do it, or they would be treated like traitors. Because of this, not a single sheet of stamped paper was ever sold in the colonies! One Pennsylvania newspaper even printed, "No stamped paper to be had." People marched through the streets shouting, "Liberty, Property, and No Stamps!" and even, "Taxation without representation is tyranny!" This famous phrase is believed to have been created by a Massachusetts lawyer named James Otis.

ASK Students

Why do you think the colonists worked together in the Stamp Act Congress and formed groups like the Sons of Liberty to stand up against the Stamp Act?

TELL Students 🦋

The colonists worked together in the Stamp Act Congress and formed groups like the Sons of Liberty because they knew they were stronger when united. They realized that by standing together, they had a better chance of fighting against unfair laws like the Stamp Act. These early efforts to resist British control were important steps that helped lead the colonies toward independence. But by 1774, the problems between the colonies and Britain had gotten worse. The British Parliament passed harsh laws called the Coercive Acts (also known as the Intolerable Acts) to punish Massachusetts for the Boston Tea Party. The **Boston Tea Party** happened in 1773 when colonists in Boston, angry about a tax on tea, dressed as Native Americans and threw an entire shipment of British tea into the harbor to protest "taxation without representation." The Coercive Acts also took away many freedoms and caused widespread concern among many of the colonies. In response to these laws, the colonies decided to meet and work together again. They held a meeting in Philadelphia called the First Continental Congress. Unlike the earlier Stamp Act Congress, this time 12 out of the 13 colonies sent representatives to discuss how they could stand up to Britain and protect their rights. These actions brought the colonies closer together and set the stage for their fight for independence.

Lesson

ASK Students

Why do you think the colonies decided to work together at the First Continental Congress instead of handling the problems with Britain on their own?

TELL Students 🦋

The colonies knew they would be stronger if they worked together. Eventually, the colonies sent the Olive Branch Petition to King George III as a final attempt to avoid war and restore peaceful relations with Britain. This document explained that the colonists believed there should be no taxation without representation in Parliament. They hoped these efforts would fix their problems with Great Britain. However, the colonies also realized they might need to protect themselves if Britain didn't listen. They told each colony to form local **militias**, or citizen armies, to prepare for any battles that might come. In Virginia, Patrick Henry's powerful speech declaring, "Give me liberty, or give me death!" inspired the colonists. The colonies were united in their desire for fair treatment and were also ready to defend their freedom.

ASK Students

Why do you think the colonies sent the Olive Branch Petition to King George III and also prepared militias at the same time?

TELL Students 🦋

On April 19, 1775, British soldiers marched from Boston to the town of Lexington with orders to capture important colonial leaders and take weapons that the colonists had stored. A group of colonists, known as the Minutemen, gathered to stop them. The Minutemen were regular people—farmers, shopkeepers, and blacksmiths—who were ready to fight at a moment's notice. The two sides faced each other on the Lexington Green. And, it's not clear who fired the first shot but a shot was fired. This moment became known as "the shot heard 'round the world." This name is used because it marked the beginning of the Revolutionary War, a fight that would change history and inspire other countries to fight for freedom, too. The **Revolutionary War** was the struggle between the colonies and Great Britain over independence. It lasted from 1775 to 1783 and involved many battles and brave sacrifices. In the end, the colonies were victorious, and they won their freedom, officially becoming the United States of America.

Lesson

TELL Students (continued)

This victory was a major turning point in history, as it gave birth to a new nation built on the ideas of freedom and self-government. **Self-government** means that people have the power to make their own rules and decisions, rather than being controlled by a king or another country. It gave United States citizens the right to choose leaders who would listen to their needs and represent their voices.

ASK Students

Why do you think it was important for the colonies to fight for self-government and make their own decisions instead of being controlled by Great Britain?

TELL Students

The colonies believed it was important to fight for self-government because they wanted the freedom to make their own decisions and the freedom to create fair laws that worked for their people, rather than being controlled by a government that didn't understand their needs. The road to America's freedom didn't happen all at once. It was caused by many events that made the colonists feel they were being treated unfairly. One of the earliest events was the Stamp Act, which forced the colonists to pay taxes without having a say in British government decisions. Over time, unfair laws, harsh punishments, and the colonies' desire for self-government led to growing anger. The Revolutionary War was the result of these many events, as the colonies united to stand up for their rights and fight for the freedom to govern themselves. The first battle at Lexington marked the beginning of a long and difficult journey to independence.

ASK Students

What do you think made the colonists feel it was so important to stand up for their rights and work together for freedom?

TELL Students

In May 1775, after fighting began between the colonies and British soldiers, the colonies held the Second Continental Congress in Philadelphia. This meeting was different from the First Continental Congress, which was held in 1774 to discuss complaints about British laws and to try to find peaceful solutions.

Lesson

TELL Students (continued)

At the Second Continental Congress, all 13 colonies sent representatives to decide what to do next because the conflict had already escalated into fighting. One of their first decisions was to create the **Continental Army**, a united colonial military force, and to appoint George Washington as its leader. **[Reference George Washington Image]** This was an important step in organizing the colonies for war. The Second Continental Congress also took a huge step toward independence from Britain. Five Founding Fathers—Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Roger Sherman, and Robert Livingston—were asked to write the **Declaration of Independence**. The Declaration of Independence is a document that explained why the colonies were breaking away from Britain. This declaration, adopted—or approved—on July 4, 1776, was important because it declared (or officially announced) the colonies' freedom and stated that all people have the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and that governments exist to protect these rights.

ASK Students

What important decisions did the Second Continental Congress make to help the colonies during the conflict with Britain?

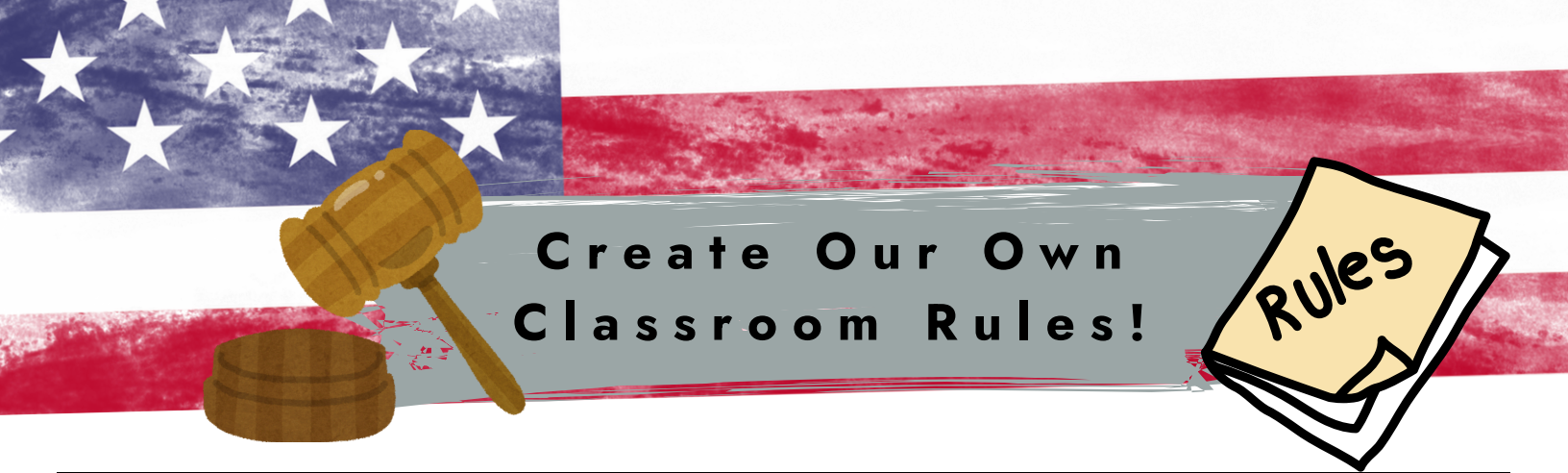
TELL Students 🗝

The Second Continental Congress made several important decisions to help the colonies during their conflict with Britain. First, they created the Continental Army, a united military force, and chose George Washington as its leader to organize and guide the colonies in battle. Second, they took a bold step toward freedom by drafting the Declaration of Independence. The Declaration of Independence wasn't just a statement—it was a powerful message to the world that the colonies were no longer under British control. It declared that everyone deserves freedom and fair treatment and marked the beginning of a new nation where people could have a say in how they were governed. Even though Parliament, Britain's government, had **repealed** (or canceled) the Stamp Act years earlier, they continued to control the colonies and pass unfair laws. Many events, like the Stamp Act, the Boston Tea Party, and the harsh Coercive Acts, made the colonists angrier and more determined to fight for their independence. At first, the colonists hoped Parliament and King George III would listen to their demands for fair treatment as British citizens.

Lesson

TELL Students (continued)

But when they were ignored, they realized they needed to unite fully and fight for complete independence. Many brave colonists, who had once been separate, joined together. Their courage and determination paved the way for the birth of the United States—a country where freedom is at the heart of everything we do. Today, the freedoms we enjoy, like choosing our leaders, going to school, and speaking our minds, are because of the sacrifices made by those who fought for independence long ago. Their fight reminds us how important it is to value and protect our freedom every day.



Objective

First grade students will learn the concept of self-governance by working together to create a set of classroom rules, helping them understand how self-governance allows people to make their own decisions and create fair laws.

Materials Needed

- A large poster board or chart paper
- Markers or crayons
- Pre-written examples of unfair rules (e.g., "Only students with blue shirts can play with toys.")
- Stickers or stamps for students to "vote"

Instructions

1. Introduce the Concept of Self-Governance:

- Start by explaining that self-governance means that people get to help make the rules that they follow, instead of someone else deciding everything for them. For example, the colonists wanted to make their own rules instead of following ones made by far away Great Britain without their input.

2. Discuss Unfair Rules:

- Share a few pre-written examples of unfair rules (e.g., "Only students who have long hair can pick what to play at recess.") Ask the students if they think these rules are fair. Discuss how it feels when they don't get to have a say in decisions that affect them.

3. Work Together to Create Fair Rules:

- Explain that today, the class will work as a team to create their own set of fair classroom rules—just like the colonies wanted to do for their new country.
 - Ask students to suggest rules that would make the classroom a better place for everyone.
 - Write each suggestion on the board or chart paper.

4. Vote on the Rules:

- Once a list of rules is created, give each student a sticker or stamp to "vote" for their favorite rules. They can vote for two or three they think are most important.



Create Our Own Classroom Rules!

5. Finalize the Rules:

- Tally the votes and finalize the classroom rules. Write them on the poster board with colorful markers. Explain that these rules are an example of self-governance because everyone worked together to decide what was fair and important.

6. Celebrate and Reflect:

- Hang the rules in the classroom and explain how these rules will help everyone feel included and treated fairly. Remind students that self-governance allows people to make decisions that work best for their group, just like the colonists wanted to do for their new country.

Extension

- Tie the activity back to history by explaining that self-governance was one of the most important ideas the colonists fought for during the Revolutionary War.
- Let students draw pictures of what “freedom” or “fair rules” mean to them and share their drawings with the class.

Find the Synonyms for Freedom

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

Part 1: Match the Words

Draw a line from the word on the left to its synonym (a word that means almost the same) on the right.

Word

Synonym

Freedom

Self-rule

Happy

Liberty

Fast

Decision

Choice

Joyful

Independence

Quick

Part 2: Fill in the Blank

Choose a synonym from the word bank to complete the sentences below.

Word Bank

Liberty

Choice

Independence

1. The colonists wanted _____ so they could make their own rules.

2. Freedom means having the power of _____ to decide what is best.

3. Another word for freedom is _____.

Find the Synonyms for Freedom

Part 3: Circle the Synonyms

Circle the words that are synonyms for "freedom."

Liberty

Independence

Happiness

Sadness

Choice

Quick

Bonus Activity:

Draw a picture of what "freedom" or "independence" means to you!



Answer Key: Synonym Worksheet

Part 1: Match the Words

Draw a line from the word on the left to its synonym (a word that means almost the same) on the right.

Word	Synonym
Freedom	Liberty
Happy	Joyful
Fast	Quick
Choice	Decision
Independence	Self-rule

Part 2: Fill in the Blank

Choose a synonym from the word bank to complete the sentences below.

1. The colonists wanted **independence** so they could make their own rules.
2. Freedom means having the power of **choice** to decide what is best.
3. Another word for freedom is **liberty**.

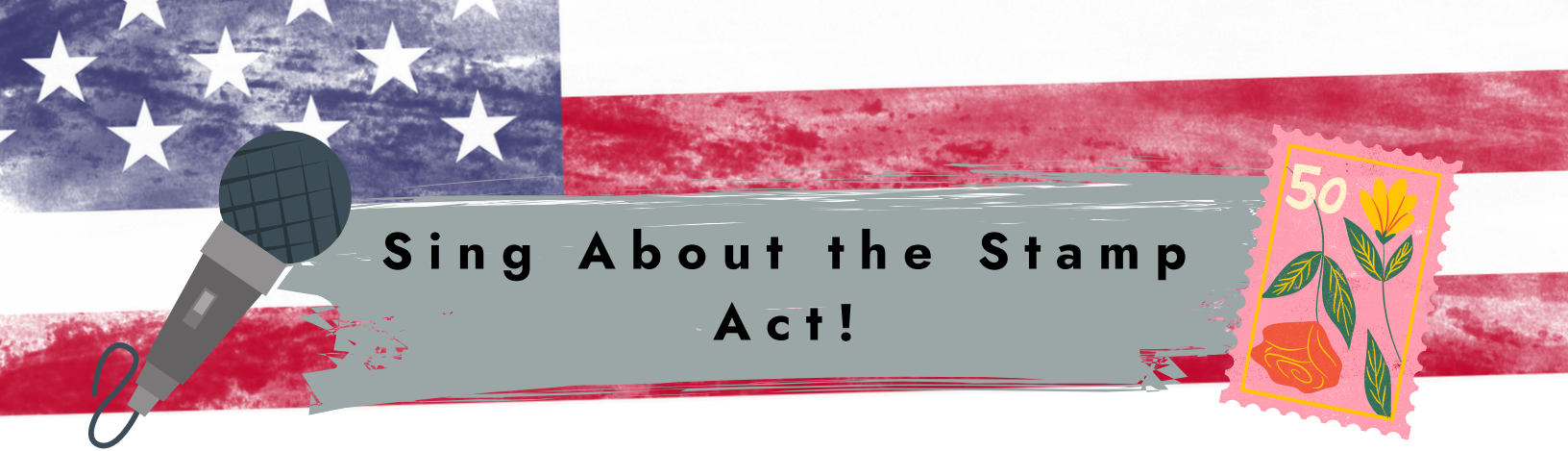
Part 3: Circle the Synonyms

Circle the words that are synonyms for "freedom."

- **Liberty** (Circle this!)
- Happiness
- **Independence** (Circle this!)
- Sadness
- **Choice** (Circle this!)
- Quick

Bonus Activity:

Answers will vary depending on each student's drawing and interpretation of "freedom" or "independence."



Objective

First graders will learn about the Stamp Act through a fun and interactive song set to the tune of "Old MacDonald Had a Farm."

Song Lyrics (to the tune of "Old MacDonald Had a Farm")

Verse 1:

Great Britain made a law,
The Stamp Act was its name!
With a tax-tax here, and a tax-tax there,
Here a tax, there a tax, everywhere a tax-tax!
The colonists said, "That's not fair!"
And unity was their aim!

Verse 2:

The colonists said, "We want a say,
No taxation without a voice!"
With a march-march here, and a march-march there,
Here a march, there a march, everywhere a march-march!
They started to stand up and fight,
Working as a team by choice!

Verse 3:

The Stamp Act didn't last too long,
The colonists took a stand!
With a cheer-cheer here, and a cheer-cheer there,
Here a cheer, there a cheer, everywhere a cheer-cheer!
Together they fought for freedom's song,
And dreamed of a free new land!



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Sing About the Stamp Act!

Sing About the Stamp Act!

1. Introduce the Song:

- Explain to students that the Stamp Act was an unfair tax on paper items that made the colonists upset. Share that they will sing a song to learn about it while having fun!

2. Teach the Lyrics:

- Teach the song one verse at a time, singing slowly and encouraging students to repeat after you.

3. Add Movements:

- Verse 1: Pretend to stamp papers while saying "tax-tax."
- Verse 2: March in place during the "march-march" part.
- Verse 3: Cheer and clap during the "cheer-cheer" part.

4. Perform Together:

- Sing the full song as a class, with all the movements. Repeat it a few times to make sure everyone is confident and having fun!

5. "Sign" the Song:

- Create a large poster titled "Our Stamp Act Song" with the lyrics written out. Have each student sign their name on the poster after they've learned the song, symbolizing their participation and unity—just like the colonists worked together to resist unfair treatment.

Extension

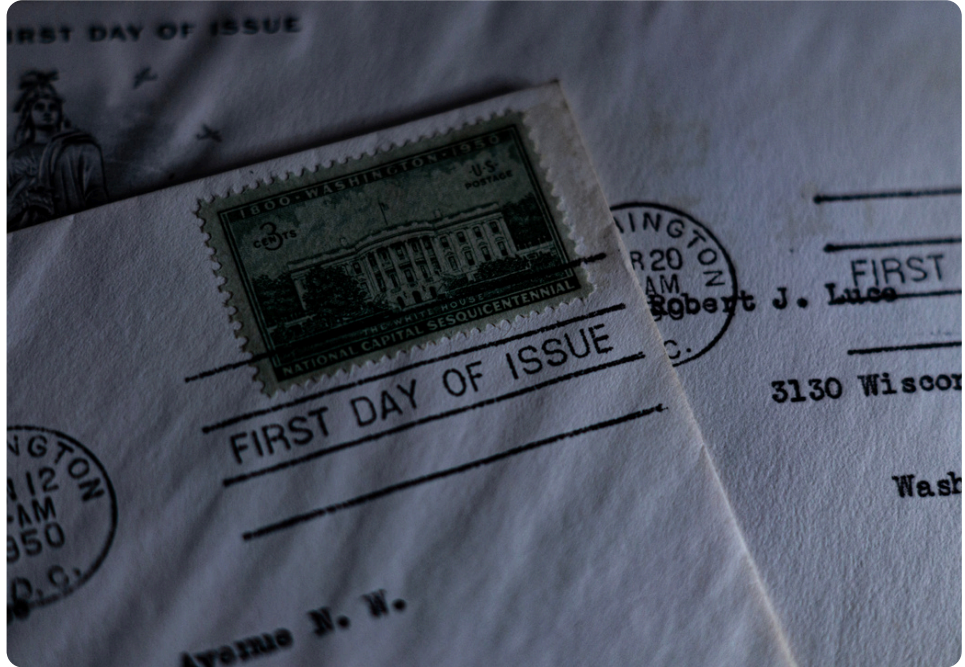
- Ask students to share what they learned from the song about the Stamp Act and why the colonists thought it was unfair.
- Perform the song for another class or parents to celebrate their learning.

Resources

- <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/1658hpr-9260362296ba000/>
- https://northcarolinagenealogy.org/statewide/stamp_act.htm
- https://www.si.edu/object/1p-stamp-act-1765-proof%3Anpm_0.022044.1
- <https://www.loc.gov/resource/rbpe.34604500/>
- <https://constitutioncenter.org/blog/no-taxation-without-representation>
- https://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/patrick.asp
- <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/revolutionary-war/battles/lexington-and-concord>
- <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-transcript>

Images

Stamp



Credit: Canva Pro.

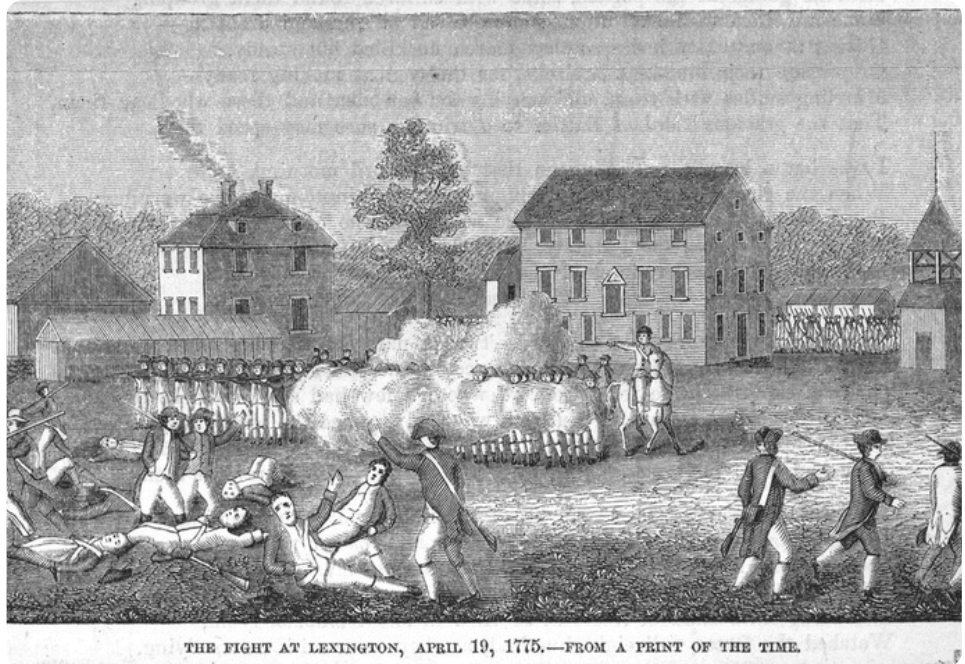
Patrick Henry



Credit: Wikipedia.

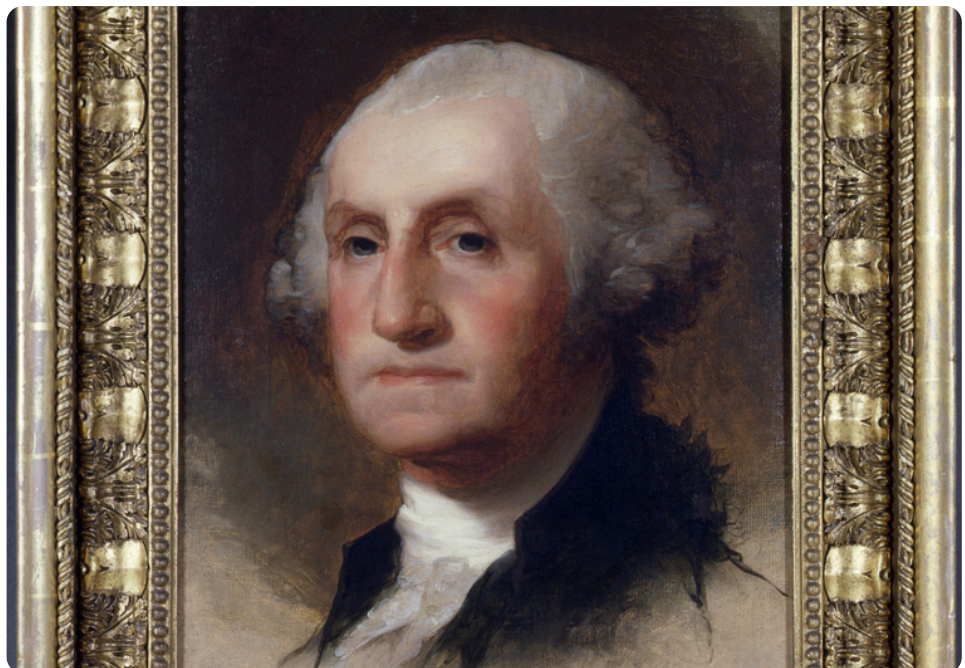
Images

**Lexington
Green**



Credit: Canva Pro.

**George
Washington**



Credit: Canva Pro.

Notes

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