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Professor Lori Huth

Preparation for Rhetoric Writing

Week 17 (Spring) Assignment

May 12, 2026

Main Topos: Explanation by Cause and Effect (the events causing the Boston Tea Party and the effects of the Boston Tea Party)

Secondary Topoi: Descriptive Chronological Narrative of a Past Event (Descriptive Narrative of the Boston Tea Party), Explanation by Definition of a Historical Event (the Boston Tea Party), and Description of a Place (the Boston Harbor, where the Boston Tea Party took place).

With an Introduction by Summary

With a Conclusion by Question

In the process of revising this essay, I made edits on smaller aspects of my essay rather than making huge structural changes, as the structure of my essay was sound. I adjusted my grammar in parts of my essay where a word did not make sense in the context, changed sentence structure to make a more varied and interesting paragraph, and clarified a couple of details that needed more explanation so that the reader could understand what I was trying to say. I also did a lot of proofreading and adjusted a small aspect of my Works Cited page so that it was formatted correctly.

The Boston Tea Party: The Causes and Effects of This Momentous Event in American History

The Boston Tea Party is one event in a much larger scheme of events: the events of the American Revolution. This historical event involved much tea, a certain British King, and many stubborn yet cunning American colonists. These colonists took a unique and daring stand in late 1773 in the form of the Boston Tea Party. The Boston Tea Party is an especially significant moment in American history, and the main causes and effects of the occasion provide a clear, summarized picture of what the American Revolution was.

The Boston Tea Party was mainly caused by the aggravation of American colonists due to the actions of King George III, the King of England during the American Revolution. His actions that angered the colonists stemmed from repercussions of the French Indian War of 1763. After this war, Britain was low on funds because they spent so much money on supplies. To overcome this debt, King George III taxed the colonists. He “strictly enforced”¹ these taxation laws by not only firmly establishing them, but also ensuring payment. The taxation laws that were passed before the Boston Tea Party include the Molasses Act of 1733, the Sugar and Currency Acts of 1764, the Stamp and Quartering Acts of 1765, the Townshend Act of 1767, and the Tea Act of 1773. The Molasses Act taxed molasses, sugar, and rum that was imported from countries other than Britain.² The Sugar Act, which “reduced the Molasses Act but offered better enforcement”³ taxed foreign goods like coffee, wines, and cloth, and the Currency Act stated that the colonies of

¹ Linda Gondosch, *How did Tea and Taxes Spark Revolution? And Other Questions About the Boston Tea Party* (Lerner Publishing Group, Inc., 2011), p. 8.

² Kate Messner, *The American Revolution* (Random House Children’s Books, 2021), p. 191.

³ Messner, p. 9.

America could not produce new bills. ⁴ The Stamp Act stated that everything made of paper had to be taxed, from letters to playing cards, and the Quartering Act proclaimed that colonists must house and feed any British troops stationed in their area. ⁵ The Townshend Act passed taxes on paint, oil, lead, paper, and tea. ⁶ Finally, there was the Tea Act, but this act established no new taxes; it was just the repealed version of the Townshend Act, where the taxes on paint, oil, lead, and paper had been removed, leaving just the tax on tea. ⁷

After these tax laws were passed one by one, some Americans, who strongly disagreed with England's actions and called themselves Patriots, were enraged. Other colonists, called Loyalists, did not rebel against these acts, as they felt loyal to England. Many complications presented themselves at this point in the buildup to the American Revolution and the Boston Tea Party, a lot of which were sparked by the tension between the Loyalists and the Patriots. The Patriots felt that they should not be taxed without representation; they had no voice in how their colonies were governed. Tensions continued to build between the two sides, starting in Boston. The men who caused some of these tensions, by standing up for Patriotic beliefs after the Stamp Act, were part of a "secret society of rebels." ⁸ They were Bostonian workers and men of trade, and they called themselves the Sons of Liberty. ⁹ The idea of the Sons of Liberty soon spread outside of Boston as well. ¹⁰

Members of the Sons of Liberty often performed bold acts of rebellion and encouraged others to follow their lead. ¹¹ They hung dummy versions of tax collectors from a tree in Boston

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Messner, p. 10.

⁶ Messner, p. 12.

⁷ Messner, p. 32.

⁸ Kathleen Krull, *What Was the Boston Tea Party?* (Penguin Group, 2013), p. 27.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Krull, pp. 27- 29.

called the Liberty Tree, they covered tax collectors in hot tar and feathers, and they encouraged and performed protests and boycotted products imported from Britain.¹² The Sons of Liberty encouraged women to make their own clothes instead of buying British ones, and, influenced by their elders, young boys sometimes wrecked shops that carried British goods, even spreading human waste on the walls of the shops.¹³ This was all done to rebel against the Patriot-felt oppression of King George III's taxes.

A huge complication of the events that caused the Boston Tea Party was that King George grew tired of the rebels. To ease his worries, in 1768 he sent 4,000 of his British soldiers to Boston, where many key members of the Sons of Liberty lived and where much rebellion stemmed from.¹⁴ The troops were to "patrol the streets, put down protests, and protect loyalists."¹⁵ However, tension only ensued between the Loyalist soldiers and the Patriots, and physical harm came to people.¹⁶ One day a fight broke out between Loyalists and Patriots, and the Loyalists harmed two young Bostonians: a 19-year-old was hurt, and an 11-year-old boy was killed.¹⁷ The loss was deeply felt by the Patriots and the boy, Christopher Seider, was considered a hero.¹⁸ Not long after, another fight broke out when colonists insulted British officers, and this fight was later named the Boston Massacre. "Nobody in the crowd was armed, but a jumpy soldier fired his gun."¹⁹ Crispus Attucks, a runaway slave who became a sailor, was killed, as

¹² Krull, pp. 27-28.

¹³ Krull, p. 29.

¹⁴ Krull, p. 30.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Krull, p. 31.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Krull, p. 33.

well as four additional people.²⁰ Although the fight was hardly a massacre, the leaders of the rebellion would forever remind the colonists of that day's deaths.²¹

These events caused the grand occasion of the Boston Tea Party, which occurred in Boston during the hours of midnight on December 16, 1773. This incident was a bold and unique protest performed by the Patriot colonists that greatly angered the king, and resulted in the events of the Revolutionary War. The Boston Tea Party was first sparked when the Tea Act of 1773 was established to help the British East India Company get rid of 18,000,000 pounds of tea, and the act stated that the colonists could only buy tea from the British East India Company.²² This annoyed the Patriots, but three ships full of British East India tea were docked in Boston Harbor, ready to unload, as tea was a huge part of the colonists' lives at the time. The act of rebellion against this law and the ships in the harbor created a more dramatic turning point than ever before.

The Boston Tea Party took place on the dark and drizzly night of December 16, 1773.²³ On that very morning, the Patriots of Boston had tried to appeal one final time to the Loyalist governor of Massachusetts, Thomas Hutchinson, to get him to send one of the ships full of tea in Boston Harbor back to England because the Patriots did not want the English taxed tea.²⁴ They did not succeed, but the Bostonian Patriots gained a sense of closure from this final meeting, as they knew they had to take matters into their own hands.²⁵ At the end of that day, the Bostonian Patriots, some disguised as Native Americans to show that they were loyal to America, headed

²⁰ Krull, p. 34.

²¹ Krull, pp. 34-35.

²² Rebecca Paley, *The Boston Tea Party* (Scholastic Inc., 2018), pp. 53-54.

²³ Paley, p. 65.

²⁴ Paley, pp. 64-66.

²⁵ Paley, pp. 65-66.

towards the ships full of tea in Boston Harbor.²⁶ The men, full of excitement and resolution, shouted things like, ““Boston Harbor is a teapot tonight!”” as they planned to dump pound after pound of tea into the dark, salty waters of Boston Harbor.²⁷ Men from ages 14 through 40 took part in the Boston Tea Party, and they carried tomahawks and axes that they would use to chop open the boxes of tea aboard the ships.²⁸ They split up to cover the ground of the three ships, and worked together to haul 320-pound chests of tea onto the decks before tearing them open and ridding the ships of all signs of tea.²⁹ The Patriots worked so hard that night and swept the deck so clean that not even a single leaf of tea could be seen anywhere except in huge piles in the waters of Boston Harbor.³⁰ Their task was complete, and the Patriots, tired but energized by their accomplishment, made their way back to their homes in Boston.³¹

The Boston Tea Party took place in Boston Harbor, a renowned port which still exists today. Boston Harbor is a “famously complicated navigational harbor with shallow channels, many of the Boston Harbor Islands, submerged bars, and strong currents.”³² This historical waterfront connects to the Atlantic Ocean and has served as a rest stop for ships traveling down the coast for many years.³³ The waters of the Boston Harbor are quite shallow, reaching an average of less than 20 feet of depth.³⁴ No wonder the tea piled up in the water at low tide during the Boston Tea Party!³⁵ Before the Boston Tea Party took place, the three ships full of tea

²⁶ Paley, p. 67.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Paley, pp. 67-69.

²⁹ Paley, pp. 69-70.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Paley, pp. 70-71.

³² “Boston Harbor,” Places, National Park Service, last modified February 20, 2026, <https://www.nps.gov/places/boston-harbor.htm>.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ “Massachusetts Bay and Boston Harbor,” Boston Harbor, National Park Service, last modified November 3, 2021, <https://www.nps.gov/boha/learn/nature/ma-bay-and-boston-harbor.htm>.

³⁵ Paley, p. 69.

were docked at a place called Griffin's Wharf in Boston Harbor. However, "the original location of the Boston Tea Party no longer exists because of extensive landfills that destroyed the location."³⁶

The effects of the Boston Tea Party are not simple, as many more years packed with complicated events followed the grand party. After the Boston Tea Party, King George was furious, and laws were passed by Britain called the Coercive Acts, or the Intolerable Acts, which took power away from Boston to try and put the Tea Party rebels in their place.³⁷ Another effect of the Boston Tea Party was that the colonists from all of the colonies came together and fought the war as a whole; they fought battles together such as the Battle of Lexington and the Battle of Concord. The formation of the first Continental Congress was another effect of the Boston Tea Party. As most people know, the Americans won the American Revolution after years and years of battles and arguments. In 1776 the Declaration of Independence was published, and a treaty was signed in 1783. There were many effects of the Boston Tea Party, all of which helped to shape the American Revolution into the history that we know today.

The Boston Tea Party is a key event in the history of the American Revolution, and it is difficult to think about how history would have unfolded if the Boston Tea Party had not commenced. If the Boston Tea Party had never occurred, would the American Revolution have been resolved earlier in time? Would the Intolerable Acts have been set in place even if the Boston Tea Party had never happened, or would the Patriots have found a novel way to irritate King George III? No one will ever know what would have happened if the Boston Tea Party had

³⁶ "Boston Tea Party Location," Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum, accessed May 3, 2026, <https://www.bostontepartyship.com/griffins-wharf>.

³⁷ Messner, pp. 38-39.

never transpired, but American history will forever remember the incredible night of December 16, 1773.

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