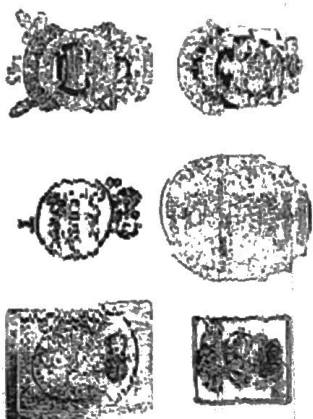


## Stamp Act

In March of 1765, Parliament (the English lawmakers) and the Prime Minister of England, George Grenville, passed the **Stamp Act**. This law required colonists to purchase a stamp to put on every paper product and legal document including wills, diplomas, newspapers, pamphlets and even included playing cards and dice. All items listed in the law had to carry a stamp showing that the tax had been paid. Stamp taxes had been used in England and other countries before, but never in the American colonies.



Colonists were outraged and protested everywhere. They rioted in cities and threw rocks at stamp agents. In October, delegates for the colonies met to form the **Stamp Act Congress** where the sent letters and petitions to the King and Parliament and eventually, in 1766, England repealed (cancelled) the Stamp Act.

1

## Townshend Acts

In 1767, Charles Townshend, the officer in charge of the British treasury, convinced Parliament (the English lawmakers) to pass the **Townshend Acts**. These laws taxed goods such as glass, paper, paint, and tea (the most popular drink in the colonies). The taxes were imposed to help pay for the war debt from the French and Indian War. They were very small taxes and yet the colonists still objected because the principle was the same: England can't tax the colonists without their consent.



Colonists responded swiftly and strongly to the Townshend Acts. They protested these taxes by **boycotting** (refusing to buy) all British products that were being taxed. They formed groups called the **Sons of Liberty** and the **Daughters of Liberty** to help protest British taxes. Eventually some of the taxes were repealed (cancelled) but not the tax on tea.

1

## Quartering Act

In March of 1765, Parliament (the English lawmakers) passed the **Quartering Act**. This law required the colonists to provide the British soldiers stationed in the colonies with housing. It also stated that the soldiers were to be given food and bedding, as well as candles, firewood, drink and other associated items at the cost of the colonist.



When this act was passed it outraged the colonists. They were already unhappy with the British soldiers being stationed in the colonies to "watch" over them, but now they had to pay for their room and board. Colonists felt like this was a violation of the basic rights.

1

## Writs of Assistance

In 1767, along with all the new taxes being imposed on the colonists, Parliament (English lawmakers) also set up a new way to collect and enforce the taxes. Customs officers were sent to American ports with orders to stop smuggling (trade illegally) and pay the taxes. These officers used legal documents called **writs of assistance** that allowed them to search a ships' cargo without a reason.



Colonists protested that the **writs of assistance** violated their basic rights as British citizens. They argued that the government could not search a person's property without a good reason for suspecting that the person committed a crime. The writs of assistance further infuriated the colonists.

1