

Restrictive British Policies

Year	Legislative Restraints	Restraints on Expansion	Restraints on Trade	New Taxes
1759	Virginia legislature restricted by crown from enacting timely legislation			
1762			Writs of assistance (blanket search warrants)	
1763		Proclamation Line keeps settlers hemmed in	Enforcement of Navigation Acts increased by navy and customs officials	
1764	Currency Act prevented colonial legislatures from issuing paper currency		Sugar Acts strengthened by Admiralty Courts	Sugar Act--revenue-producing tax
1765				Quartering Act required colonists to pay to house British soldiers. Stamp Act sets internal taxes on legal documents, newspapers, etc.
1767	Colonial assemblies limited in size		Townshend Duties strengthen Admiralty Courts	Townshend Duties imposed on imported goods to pay colonial officials
1773				Tea Act reduces duty but leads to Boston Tea Party
1774 (Intolerable Acts)	Town meetings limited, Massachusetts charter violated	Quebec Act enlarges Quebec, reducing claims of Ohio River Valley colonists	Boston Port Act closes harbor until tea is paid for	New Quartering Act broadly expands British Army's right to quarter troops in homes, buildings

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Navigation Acts (1650s - 1770s)

The Navigation Acts were an attempt by Great Britain to regulate and control trade within the British empire.

The Proclamation of 1763

The Proclamation of 1763 forbade colonists from settling west of the Appalachian Mountains and ordered any settlers already west of the Proclamation line, "to remove themselves."

The Sugar Act of 1764

British Parliament passed this law, with the urging of Prime Minister George Grenville. First, it cut the duty (tax) on foreign made molasses in half. However, it placed taxes on other goods such as coffee and wine. The law stated that violators of the act would be tried in new vice-admiralty courts, which had no juries. No longer would colonists be able to count on friendly juries to acquit them. Finally, the Sugar act expanded the number of customs agents and allowed vice-admiralty courts to prosecute customs officers who accepted bribes.

The Stamp Act of 1765

This law required colonists to pay a tax on all legal documents (wills, licenses, deeds, etc.). In addition, all newspapers, pamphlets, handbills, posters and even playing cards had to be printed on special taxed paper. Violators of the act were to be tried in British vice-admiralty courts.

The Townshend Acts (1767)

Townshend was an English official who passed a series of taxes on imported glass, paint, lead and tea in the American colonies. The revenue from the taxes was intended to pay the salaries of royal governors in the colonies, who had been paid by colonial assemblies up to this time. The Sons of Liberty organized a boycott of all English goods addressed by the Townshend Acts. Parliament finally repealed the Townshend Acts in 1770, but kept the tax on tea.

Quartering Acts

British Parliament passed this law, which required any colony where British troops (Redcoats) were stationed to provide living quarters and certain supplies.

The Boston Massacre of 1770

The cause of friction was competition for jobs between local laborers and poorly paid British soldiers who were looking for work during off-duty hours. According to varying accounts, an angry crowd taunted soldiers, calling them "Lobster Backs". Colonists also threw firewood, stones, snow balls, chunks of ice and oyster shells at the British soldiers. In a panic, the British fired upon the crowd and killed five men. Six of the soldiers involved in the incident were acquitted (found innocent), while two others were branded on the hand with the letter "M".

Tea Act of 1773

British Parliament passed this law, with the urging of Prime Minister Lord North, that gave the East India Company a monopoly on the sale of tea in the colonies. The East India Company was in danger of going bankrupt. The King relied on this company to handle many government responsibilities in another British colony, India. The Tea act actually lowered the cost of tea and made it cheaper than teas smuggled into the colonies by the Dutch. However, it still required colonists to pay a 3 penny tax per pound of tea, established under the Townshend Act.

The Intolerable Acts (Coercive Acts)

In response to the Boston Tea Party, British Parliament passed a series of measures, with the urging of Lord North, designed to punish all of Boston and the entire colony of Massachusetts. One of these laws closed Boston's harbor until the East India Company and customs service were paid for their losses. Elected officials were replaced by officials appointed by the King. Town meetings could only be held when called by the governor. A new Quartering act authorized military commanders to house their soldiers in private homes when taverns & vacant buildings were filled to capacity. General Thomas Gage, commander of all British troops in the colonies, was appointed the new governor of Massachusetts. Boston was placed under martial (military) law. In Virginia, the governor disbanded the House of Burgesses for protesting the Intolerable Acts.