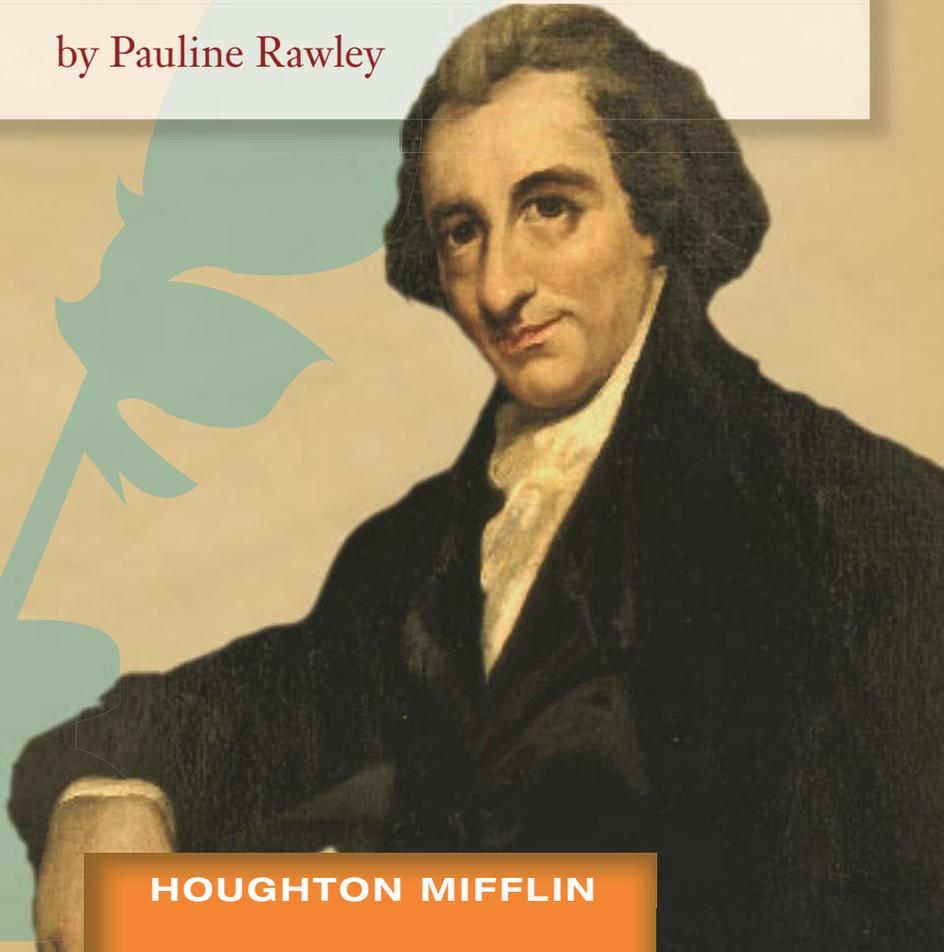




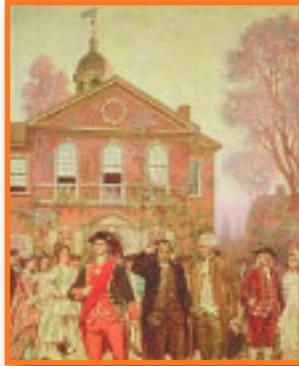
Printed Words of the Revolution

by Pauline Rawley



HOUGHTON MIFFLIN

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HOUGHTON MIFFLIN HARCOURT
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Table of Contents

Introduction	3
The Revolution in Print	4
Samuel Adams, Pamphleteer and Patriot	5
The Newspapers Respond	6
Letters in Newspapers and Pamphlets	9
Pamphlets Spread Resistance!	11
Letters Come to the Rescue	13
The First Continental Congress	13
Thomas Paine's <i>Common Sense</i>	15
Printing the Most Famous Words	17



Introduction

Long after the end of the Revolutionary War, John Adams wrote, “What do we mean by the American Revolution? Do we mean the American War?” Adams answered his own question with a “No.” He wrote that the real revolution happened *before* the war began.

 “The Revolution,” Adams wrote, “was in the minds and the hearts of the people.” The  Revolution was a huge change in the beliefs, opinions, and feelings of the American people. This, Adams wrote, was “the real American Revolution.”

How did this change happen? Why did American colonists become so unhappy with the British government? What made so many Americans want to fight the British army—one of the strongest in the world at that time?



John Adams became the second President of the United States.

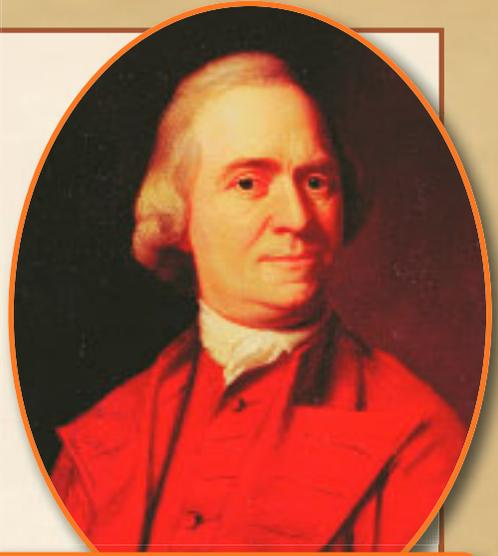
The Revolution in Print

The answer to these questions is *printed words*. Small newspapers started everywhere in the American colonies before 1776. The people who made these newspapers were among the smartest Americans. They were also among the people who disliked British rule. Samuel Adams, for example, started *The Public Advertiser* in Boston in 1748. Benjamin Franklin published a newspaper in Philadelphia. So did Stephen Hopkins in Providence and Mary Katherine Goddard in Baltimore. The writers wrote about the rights of ordinary people. They wrote about what type of government the colonies should have. Colonists read these articles eagerly. The colonists wrote letters about what they read. Essays and letters from one newspaper were printed in other newspapers.

 Some of the best essays appeared in pamphlets. The pamphlets were small booklets. They had no bindings or covers. Most of the pamphlets were 18 to 20 pages long. They didn't cost much to print or to buy. The pamphlets were passed from reader to reader. People discussed and argued about what they read. Pamphlets helped change the minds and hearts of Americans in the colonies.

Samuel Adams, Pamphleteer and Patriot

Samuel Adams of Boston was a cousin of John Adams. One year, the British placed new taxes on sugar and molasses. Samuel Adams was among the first to argue against these taxes. The tax on sugar actually *went down* after the American Revenue Act of 1764. Still, this and other taxes angered many colonists. Samuel Adams and other Patriots **objected** publicly. They wrote their opinions. In one report, they wrote, "If our trade be taxed, why not our lands? Why not the produce of our lands and everything we possess or make use of?" The Patriots' report went even further. It asked why the British government should tax the colonies at all.



Samuel Adams wrote his opinions. He asked if the British should be able to tax American colonists.



For the first time, Americans argued openly against British taxes. The British were worried. Their governor in Massachusetts even closed the Massachusetts General Assembly. This was the group of colonists that represented the colony. But the damage was done. The opinions in the report were reprinted in newspapers and pamphlets throughout the colonies. The fight against taxes had begun.



However, the British government still needed money. In order to raise money, the British government passed the Stamp Act in 1765. This act made American colonists pay a tax on almost all printed paper. People had to pay taxes on newspapers, pamphlets, and even playing cards. Printed paper had to have a stamp showing that the tax was paid.

The Newspapers Respond

For the colonists, the Stamp Act was a big change. Before, Britain used tax money to help British trading companies in the colonies. But the Stamp Act was meant to help the British government itself. The money from the Stamp Act would be sent to Britain. The money would not help the colonies.



People protested the taxes in American newspapers. They wrote, “No taxation without representation.” In Virginia, Patrick Henry argued against British taxes. In the House of Burgesses, Virginia’s colonial assembly, Henry led in the writing of several resolutions, or statements.

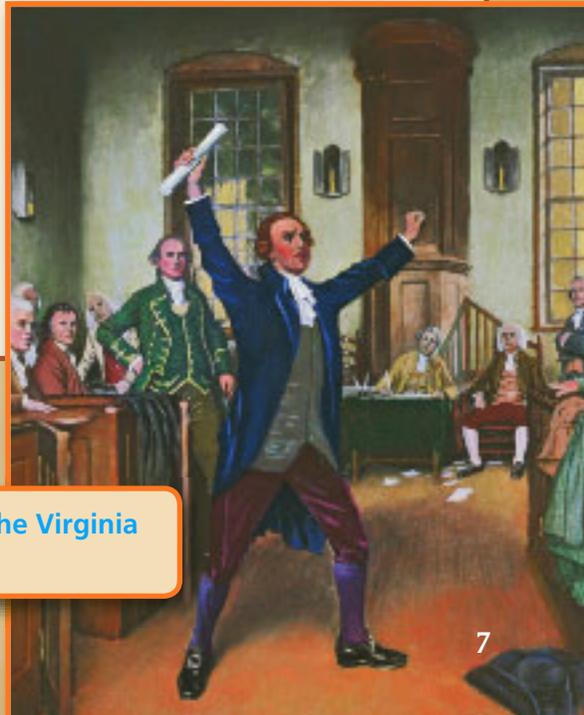
▶ The resolutions said that *only* the House of Burgesses had the right to tax Virginians. The resolutions also said that Virginians did not have to obey the Stamp Act—or pay any other British tax. The House of Burgesses also said that anyone who disagreed was an “enemy.”

To question a tax was one thing. To write that the king was an enemy was another. The British governor of Virginia soon closed the House of Burgesses.

▶ The Virginia resolutions were reprinted in newspapers throughout the colonies. In Massachusetts, people grew very angry. Some of them tore down the stamp office. They attacked the home of the stamp official. He quit his job the next day. Samuel Adams organized other colonists from Boston into a secret group. They called the group the Sons of Liberty. These Patriots broke into the house of the Massachusetts lieutenant governor. The Patriots destroyed the house.



Patrick Henry spoke to the Virginia House of Burgesses.

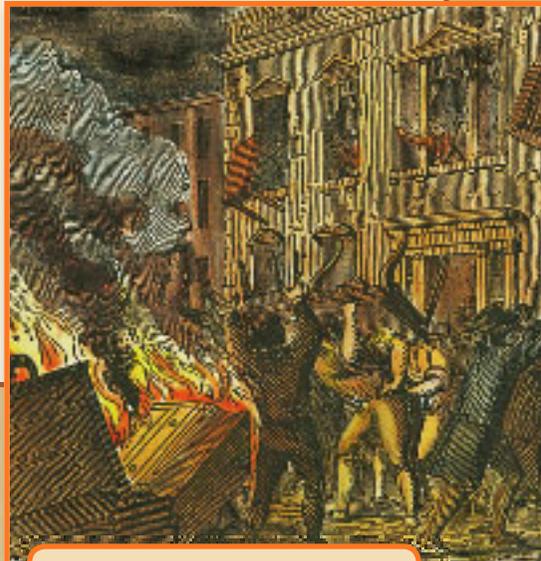




Other colonies organized their own Sons of Liberty. These groups started riots. They forced stamp officials in New York, New Jersey, Rhode Island, and Connecticut to quit their jobs. The rioting became very violent. In March 1766, the British **repealed** the Stamp Act.

The colonists celebrated. But the victory was **temporary**. A new act was passed in Britain. This was called the Declaratory Act. It said that the British government could still make laws to “bind the people of America.”

In 1767, the British government did just that. It passed the Townshend Acts. These acts taxed paint, lead, paper, glass, and tea shipped to America. Americans tried to avoid these taxes. They began trading with other countries, such as France. But the British navy stopped many smugglers from bringing goods into the colonies. This made trade with other nations very difficult for the colonists.



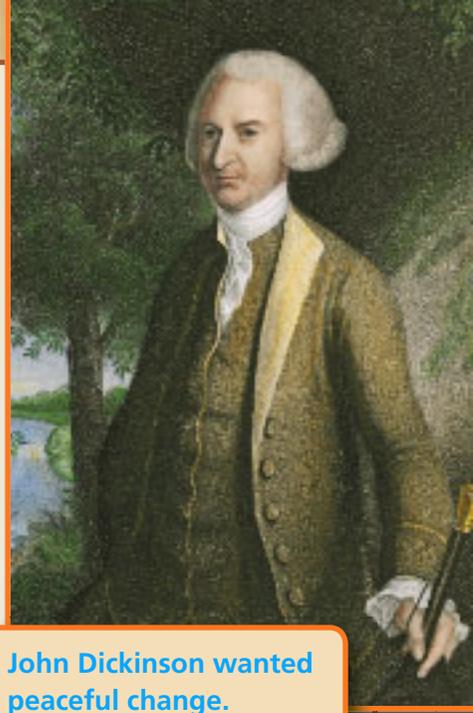
The Sons of Liberty rioted over the Stamp Act.

Letters in Newspapers and Pamphlets

Once again, people used printed words to protest British actions. John Dickinson was a lawyer. He served in both the Delaware and Pennsylvania assemblies. The Townshend Acts angered him. He began to write letters of protest. At first, his letters appeared in newspapers. Then the letters were printed in a pamphlet.

The pamphlet was called *Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania*. This pamphlet affected thousands of Americans.

Unlike Samuel Adams, Dickinson was cautious. He wanted the colonists to act peacefully. He made it clear, though, that he opposed the taxes. “We are taxed without our consent,” he wrote. “We are therefore SLAVES.” This was an argument that other writers would use. They all thought that the British government treated the colonists as if they were slaves.



John Dickinson wanted peaceful change.

 Josiah Quincy, a Boston lawyer, summed it up this way, “I speak with grief—I speak with anguish—Britons are our oppressors: I speak with shame... We are slaves.”

 Like most Americans, Dickinson thought that freedom was a natural right. Freedom was “born with us.” For Dickinson and many others, the British government was trying to take away American freedom. Taxes were an example of this effort. Even so, Dickinson argued against violence. He wrote that the greatest **benefit** would not come through violence. Freedom would come from working together. People should petition, or ask, the British government to repeal the taxes.

 Not many people wanted to use this peaceful approach. Colonial assemblies voted to stop importing British goods. Many colonists would not buy *any* goods that were taxed. Smugglers secretly brought goods into the colonies—without the hated taxes. British officials decided to stop the buying and selling of smuggled goods.

Vengeance

Pamphlets Spread Resistance!

 In 1768, thousands of British soldiers—known as “redcoats”—arrived in Boston. These soldiers tried to force the colonists to obey British laws. The colonists thought that this was awful. Samuel Adams wrote to the *Boston Gazette* in 1769. He said that the colonists had a choice. They could either “resist this tyranny, or submit to chains!” Everyone knew what he meant. Colonists must fight back or lose their freedom. The colonists fought back. In March 1770, the British government repealed most of the hated Townshend Acts. They kept only the tax on tea.

 In Boston, though, there were still redcoats. The colonists became angrier. A crowd attacked a small group of redcoats. The redcoats fought back.

They fired shots into the crowd. Five people from Boston were killed. Several more were wounded. Samuel Adams called this event the “Boston Massacre.”



 Paul Revere created a picture of the Boston Massacre.

 Paul Revere's picture of the Boston Massacre showed British soldiers shooting helpless Americans. James Bowdoin of Massachusetts made a pamphlet. It was called *A Short Narrative of the Horrid Massacre in Boston*. The pamphlet was reprinted several times in Boston and in London.

Paul Revere's picture made colonists angrier with the British. Some details in the picture were exaggerated. This means that the details were made to look more dramatic or extreme than they really were. Revere's picture was a powerful way to turn colonists against the British.

 To calm matters, the British took their troops out of Boston. In 1773, however, the British passed the Tea Act. This act lowered the price of tea, but it kept the hated tax. Ships carrying British tea floated in Boston Harbor. The British expected the colonists to buy the tea at the lower price. They were wrong. Patriots dressed as Indians boarded the ships. The Patriots dumped the tea into the harbor. This event became known as the Boston Tea Party.

Again, people used printed words to express their opinions. Samuel Adams wrote in the *Boston Gazette*. He said that an "ARMY of FREEMEN" in America held a "SWORD OF VENGEANCE." Vengeance is punishment for a wrong.

Letters Come to the Rescue

The British decided that the **contrary** people of Boston should be punished for the Boston Tea Party. A British general, Thomas Gage, was sent to control Boston. He made harsh new rules. Colonists could not have meetings without his permission. Colonists would have to provide British soldiers with food and housing. There was an even more damaging rule. Boston Harbor was closed to all shipping. The city was all alone.

 Angry colonists called these new laws the Intolerable Acts. Earlier, the colonists had formed groups called Committees of Correspondence. These groups were an important way for the colonies to communicate. Now, the group in Massachusetts wrote to tell the other colonies about the new laws. The other colonies promised to help Boston. They shipped food and supplies to nearby ports. Then the goods were carried to Boston by land. The letters also persuaded colonial leaders to form a Congress. Representatives, or delegates, from all 13 colonies were invited.

The First Continental Congress

The First Continental Congress met in Philadelphia in September 1774. The delegates decided to tell all colonies to form militias, or independent armies. These citizen armies would be ready to fight in an emergency.



The First Continental Congress met at Carpenter's Hall in Philadelphia.

The delegates also voted to **prohibit** the buying of British goods. They asked the British government to repeal the Intolerable Acts. If the British refused, the delegates would meet again the following year. Then they would decide on a plan.

The British refused to repeal the Acts. General Gage was angered by the protests. In April 1775, he sent troops to the towns of Lexington and Concord. Gage wanted to capture two **rebellious** Boston leaders, Samuel Adams and John Hancock. These men were hiding in Lexington.

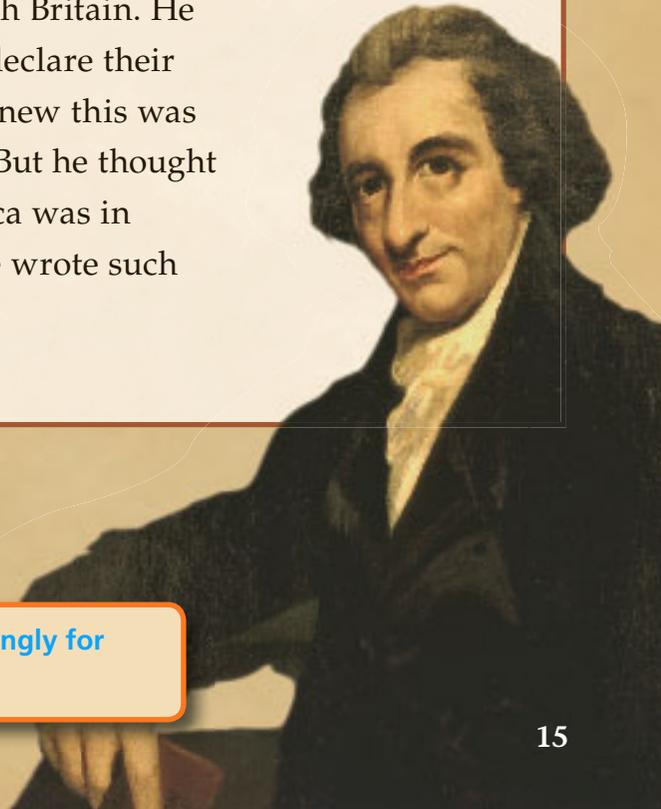
The redcoats expected an easy victory. But they were met by a fierce defense. At Lexington, there were more redcoats than Patriots. The British **advantages** forced the colonists to retreat. But at Concord, the Americans chased the British away. The redcoats fled all the way back to Boston. Newspapers printed reports of the Patriots' victory. Soon, delegates began to gather for the Second Continental Congress.

Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*

After Lexington and Concord, Americans were in the **midst** of open warfare. Still, many people at the Second Continental Congress hoped to make an agreement with the British. Few colonists wanted war.

One important pamphlet soon changed many people's minds. In January 1776, Thomas Paine published a pamphlet called *Common Sense*. Paine was an Englishman who lived in Philadelphia. **Previously**, he was the editor of the *Pennsylvania Magazine*. He wrote essays strongly in favor of independence.

 In *Common Sense*, Paine attacked the idea of agreements with Britain. He urged the colonies to declare their independence. Paine knew this was a dangerous position. But he thought the very *idea* of America was in danger. That is why he wrote such a rebellious document.

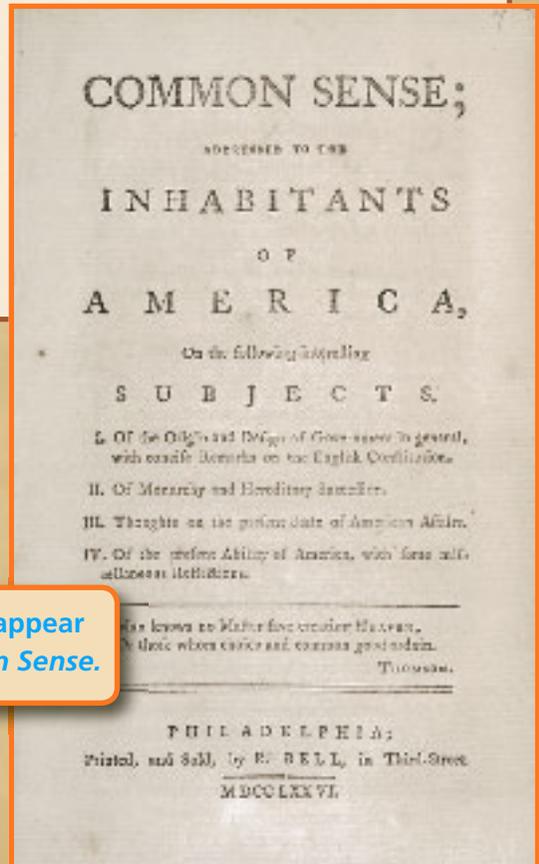


 Thomas Paine argued strongly for American independence.

🔊 One thousand copies of *Common Sense* appeared in January 1776. They spread through the 13 colonies like a wildfire. More than 120,000 copies were sold in three months. Paine's pamphlet had more influence than Dickinson's *Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania*. In fact, *Common Sense* was probably the most important pamphlet of the time.

🔊 In his pamphlet, Paine also attacked the idea of being ruled by a king. He wrote that there was no reason for people to be divided into kings and subjects. "Nature disapproves of it," he wrote. He also wrote his ideas about how the first king came to rule. At first, the king was probably the leader of a gang of lawbreakers.

Paine also stated that one honest man was worth more than all the kings who ever lived.



🔊 Thomas Paine's name did not appear on the first edition of *Common Sense*.

 Paine also compared Britain to a parent who treats a child unfairly. If “Britain is the parent country [of America], then the more shame on her conduct,” he wrote.

Paine wrote about how an independent American government might work. The people would choose the members of its congress or assembly. “But where, [say] some, is the king of America?” Paine asked. Then he answered, “[I]n America THE LAW IS KING.”

 Paine encouraged the colonies to “break off all connection” with Britain. “We have every opportunity and every encouragement before us to form the noblest, purest constitution on the face of the earth.”

By the end of 1776, more than 150,000 copies of *Common Sense* had been sold. Paine’s pamphlet changed the way people thought about independence. One colonist said, “[I]ndependence a year ago could not have been publicly mentioned... Nothing else is now talked of.”

Printing the Most Famous Words

The Second Continental Congress decided to write a Declaration of Independence. They asked Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, and John Adams to write it. After the Declaration was finished, all 56 delegates signed it.

 The Declaration of Independence was first printed on July 4, 1776. But this printing had only the signatures of John Hancock and Charles Thomson. On January 18, 1777, Congress ordered a second printing. This one included all the signers' names.

Mary Katherine Goddard was a printer and postmaster in Baltimore. She was also the publisher of Baltimore's first newspaper, *The Baltimore Journal*. The Congress asked her to print the official copy of the Declaration of Independence. This document was sent to all 13 colonies. Mary Katherine Goddard had printed the most famous words in American history.

 There weren't many newspapers in the American colonies. Letters traveled slowly. Printing methods were crude by today's standards. But the printed word was very powerful. In fact, the printed word was as powerful then as it is today—maybe even more powerful. Thanks to writers like Samuel Adams and Thomas Paine, Americans' desire for independence spread. In newspapers, letters, and pamphlets, revolutionary writers “changed the minds and hearts of the people.” It was just as John Adams had written.



 Mary Katherine Goddard also used the printed word to argue for independence.

Responding

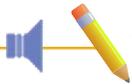


TARGET SKILL

Fact and Opinion

Think about the facts and opinions the author gives about Thomas Paine's pamphlet *Common Sense*. Then copy the chart below. Add more facts and opinions to the chart.

Fact	Opinion
More than 120,000 copies were sold in three months.	?



Write About It

Text to World The Boston Tea Party was a very important event in America's early history. Think of another important event in American history. Write two paragraphs telling what happened and why it was important.

**TARGET VOCABULARY**

advantages
benefit
contrary
midst
objected

previously
prohibit
rebellious
repeal
temporary

**TARGET SKILL** **Fact and Opinion** Decide whether an idea can be proved or is a feeling or belief.**TARGET STRATEGY** **Question** Ask questions about a selection before you read, as you read, and after you read.**GENRE** **Narrative Nonfiction** gives factual information by telling a true story.

Level: V

DRA: 50

Genre:

Narrative Nonfiction

Strategy:

Question

Skill:

Fact and Opinion

Word Count: 2,645

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