**Writs of Assistance (early 1760s)**

The Writs of Assistance were designed to crack down on colonial smuggling of goods. It gave British government officials new powers to search people’s homes for smuggled goods without a search warrant at any time. Colonists charged with smuggling goods transported to England for trials that were frequently delayed. The merchants of Boston were outraged by this act!

**Proclamation of 1763**

The Proclamation of 1763 was passed after the French and Indian War and stopped colonial expansion west of the Appalachian Mountains. This was done to appease (make happy) the Native Americans by preventing the colonists from expanding westward. It angered colonists who were eager to search for new opportunities in territories gained from their victory over the French.

**Sugar Act (1764)**

To pay off debt from the French and Indian War, the British government passed a new tax called the Sugar Act. The Sugar Act cut the tax on Molasses, but raised the tax on other goods such as textiles (cloth), wine, coffee, indigo (die for clothing), and sugar. The colonists were very angry because this was the first time a tax had been passed to make money rather than regulate trade. Colonial merchants protested the increased duties.

**Quartering Act (1765)**

Another unpopular law passed by Parliament was the Quartering Act. Under this act, colonists were required to provide temporary housing and food to British soldiers. The colonists considered this an unwanted intrusion into their privacy.

**Stamp Act (1765)**

The English Parliament passed taxes as a way to pay off the debt they had accumulated from the French and Indian War. The most unpopular tax passed by Parliament was the Stamp Act. It was passed by Parliament without input from the colonial governments (“No Taxation without Representation”). The Stamp Act placed taxes on all materials printed on paper including newspapers, pamphlets, and playing cards. All printed material had to have a special stamp on it to show that the tax had been paid. The Sons of Liberty were formed to protest the tax. They harassed stamp distributors and boycotted (refused to buy) English goods.

**Townshend Act (1767)**

A tax passed by Parliament that taxed a number of items the colonies imported including paper, glass, paint and tea. The money made from the tax would be used to pay salaries of British officials in the colonies. Colonists responded by boycotting British goods and used the slogan, “No Taxation without Representation.” Colonists also formed protests and clashed with British soldiers.

**Boston Massacre (1770)**

In the 1760s, the British government sent regiments of soldiers to the colonies to keep order. In 1770, after a group of Boston citizens taunted British soldiers with snowballs, the British troops fired on and killed 5 colonists. John Adams defended the British soldiers in court and they were found not guilty. Colonists’’ anger towards the British increased. The Townshend acts, except for a tax on tea, were repealed due to the boycotts after the Boston Massacre.

**Tea Act and Boston Tea Party (1773)**

Parliament repealed the Townshend Acts except for the tax on tea. The British allowed the East India Tea Company to sell tea without the tax to make it cheaper (and for more people to buy their tea). This hurt the tea merchants in Boston who still had to pay a tax on tea. Colonists responded by staging the Boston Tea Party, dumping crates of British tea into the Boston harbor.

The Boston Tea Party was a result of the tax on Tea imposed by the Townshend Acts. American merchants protested that the lower prices charged by the British for tea would hurt their businesses. Members of the Sons of Liberty, led by Samuel Adams, disguised as American Indians boarded British ships in Boston by night and dumped the tea into the harbor.

**Intolerable Acts (1774)**

As a result of the Boston Tea Party, England tried to reassert control over the Colonies by passing a series of harsh laws which included: closing the Port of Boston to all trade until Colonists paid for the tea they destroyed; placing a royal governor in Massachusetts to oversee the colony and revoking their colony charter; stopping Town Hall meetings in Massachusetts; weakening the court system; and arrangement for housing British troops in American houses. The Intolerable Acts unified the colonies and led the colonists even closer to rebellion against the British.

**First Continental Congress (1774)**

In the fall of 1774, twelve of the thirteen colonies (no Georgia) sent representatives to a meeting in Philadelphia to decide on the best response to the actions of the British government. The meeting was the First Continental Congress. Its members agreed to impose their own ban on trade with Great Britain in an attempt to force the British government to change its policies toward the colonies. The delegates were divided on the issue of declaring independence. Instead they sent the Declaration of Rights and Grievances to King George III. It defended the colonies’ right to run their own affairs and supported the protests in Massachusetts.

**Battle of Lexington and Concord (1775)**

On April 19, 1775 British troops tried to march to Concord, Massachusetts, where they had heard that the Minutemen (colonial troops) had hidden arms and ammunition. The colonists were alerted by Paul Revere and William Dawes who rode through the countryside warning people that the British were about to attack. On that day, at the towns of Lexington and Concord, war broke out between the colonies and Great Britain – the “shot heard around the world” had been fired.

**Declaration of Independence (1776)**

With Americans fighting the British, Richard Henry Lee of Virginia introduced a resolution in the Continental Congress on June 7, 1776, that called for a declaration of independence. The Declaration of Independence was drafted by Thomas Jefferson. The Declaration announced the final, momentous step in the colonies’ resistance to the British government. It listed the many abuses the colonies had suffered under the King George III of England. Jefferson also argued that the colonists had a right to revolt because the treatment they had received under British rule contradicted the purpose of government (as stated by John Locke).