

Student Resource Page 4-3
Original Documents
Stamp Act Pro and Con

Directions: Read the five selections below and then answer the questions.

1. William Pitt's speech against the Stamp Act: "I rejoice that America has resisted."

....[M]y opinion... is that the Stamp Act be repealed absolutely, totally, and immediately.... At the same time, let the sovereign authority of this country over the colonies be asserted in as strong terms as can be devised... - except that of taking money out of their pockets without their consent.

Source: *From Revolution to Reconstruction*. University of Groningen, Netherlands:
<http://odur.let.rug.nl/~usa/D/1751-1775/stampact/sapitt.htm>

2. George Grenville: "Ungrateful People of America!"

The British Secretary of the Treasury spoke in Parliament against Pitt's position on the Stamp Act. His argument appeared in an American newspaper, *The Boston Gazette and Country Journal* in 1766.

Protection and Obedience are reciprocal; *Great-Britain* protects *America*, *America* is bound to yield Obedience; if not, tell me when the *Americans* were emancipated....[Great-Britain] has run itself into an immediate Debt to give them that protection; and now [that] they are called upon to contribute a small Share toward the Public Expençe, an Expençe arising from themselves, they ...break out, I might almost say, into Acts of *open Rebellion*....Ungrateful people of *America*!

Source: David Copeland. *Debating the Issues in Colonial Newspapers: Primary Documents on Events of the Period*. Greenwood Press, 2000, p. 214.

3. Daniel Leonard: Letters...to the Inhabitants of the Province of Massachusetts Bay published in the *Massachusetts Gazette*, January 9, 1775.

Our patriots have been so intent upon building up American rights, that they have overlooked the rights of Great-Britain, and our own interest....Allegiance and protection are reciprocal. It is our highest interest to continue a part of the British empire; and equally our duty to remain subject to the authority of parliament....

Source: *From Revolution to Reconstruction*. University of Groningen, Netherlands:
<http://odur.let.rug.nl/~usa/D/1751-1775/libertydebate/leon.htm>

4. From: Resolutions of the Stamp Act Congress, October 19, 1765

....IV. That the people of these colonies are not, and from their local circumstances cannot be, represented in the House of Commons in Great-Britain.

V. That the only representatives of the people of these colonies, are persons chosen therein by themselves, and that no taxes ever have been, or can be constitutionally imposed on them, but by their respective legislatures....

Source: *From Revolution to Reconstruction*. University of Groningen, Netherlands:
<http://www.let.rug.nl/~usa/D/1751-1775/stampact/sa.htm>

1. Briefly summarize the points of view expressed in these letters, articles, and resolutions.
2. Which selection echoes the sentiments of Grenville, British Secretary of the Treasury?
3. How would you answer Grenville and his imitator, Daniel Leonard?