

NAME: _____

1.4

TAKE-HOME

DATE: _____

Excerpt from “Bills to Pay”

Read the following excerpt aloud to a family member and complete the activity that follows.

Taxes

The British government had borrowed a lot of money to fight this war. A lot of that money had been spent on protecting the colonists from the French and their Native American allies. All of the money had to be paid back, and the British government felt that the colonists should pay their share. In addition, more money was continually needed to protect the colonies as well as the newly acquired land.

To raise the needed funds, the British government **imposed** new **taxes**, including several that would have to be paid by the colonists. In 1765, King George III and his government proposed the Stamp Act.



Stamps were imprinted or embossed on paper.

The Stamp Act was a tax on printed materials. Colonists were required to buy stamps when they bought printed items such as newspapers, pamphlets, even playing cards. These were not gummed stamps, but rather impressions imprinted or embossed on paper. Many people were upset about the Stamp Act. They thought it was unfair that the king and his government in London were making decisions about taxes the colonists had to pay, while the colonists had no say in the matter.

The British government had generally allowed the colonies to raise taxes themselves. For example, if the government of Virginia needed money, an **assembly** of representatives from different parts of Virginia would meet. This assembly was called the House of Burgesses. Members of the House of Burgesses would determine the best way to raise money. They would propose taxes, and they would vote. If many representatives thought the taxes were unfair, they would not vote for them and, therefore, the taxes would not be approved. Because the House of Burgesses included representatives from different parts of Virginia, most everyone felt the process was fair.

5

Every colony had an assembly similar to the Virginia House of Burgesses. The assemblies weren't all called the House of Burgesses, but they did the same thing: a group of representatives met to discuss new laws and taxes.

Although the colonists continued to raise their own taxes even after 1765, they felt that, rather than imposing a new tax on the colonies, the king and his government should have asked these assemblies to find a



The Stamp Act was very unpopular.

way to raise the money that was needed. Instead, without even as much as a dialogue, the king and his government created the Stamp Act. They did not send it to the colonial assemblies, but directly to Parliament, part of the British government responsible for passing laws and raising taxes.

The colonists agreed that there were bills that had to be paid, and they wanted to contribute.

But they also wanted some say in how the money was raised. They were concerned that important decisions about taxes were being made thousands of miles away, by a parliament that had no colonial representatives. This process didn't seem fair to them.

Other regions outside of England, such as Scotland, had representatives in Parliament. Their job was to represent—and stand up for—the people of Scotland. But there were no representatives from the 13 colonies in Parliament. Not even one!

When the colonists became upset about the Stamp Act, they expressed their unhappiness in various ways. They held protest meetings. They wrote pamphlets. They sent **petitions** to London. They tried to explain why they thought the Stamp Act was unfair.



The Stamp Act was seen as an unfair tax.

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CONTINUED

TAKE-HOME

Complete the following sentences to summarize what you learned from the text in your own words.

1. The British government raised taxes because . . .

2. The Stamp Act required the colonists to . . .

3. Many colonists were upset about the Stamp Act because . . .
