

## Hey, King: Get Off Our Backs!

**Time Needed:** One to two class periods **Learning Objectives.** Students will be able to:

**Materials Needed:**

Student worksheets

**Copy Instructions:**

Reading (2 pages; class set)

Cutouts (1 page; cut sets in advance)

Half Sheet Activity (2-sided; class set)

Review Worksheet (1 page; class set)

Extension Activity (3 pages; class set)

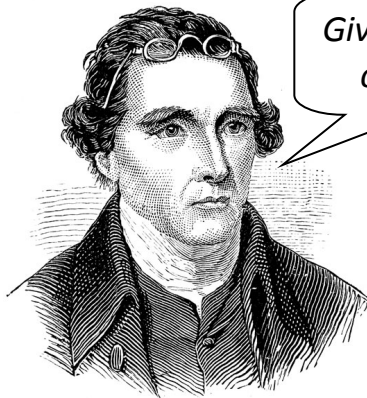
- Describe how English policies and responses to colonial concerns led to the writing of the Declaration of Independence
- Analyze the ideas (natural rights, role of the government) and complaints set forth in the Declaration of Independence
- Analyze the impact of the Stamp Act, Declaratory Act, Townshend Revenue Act, Quartering Act, and Intolerable Acts
- Outline the Declaration of Independence and its parts
- Evaluate the colonists' reaction to the Stamp Act using primary sources

## STEP BY STEP

- ☐ **ANTICIPATE** by asking students if they like to make their own decisions. Ask students how they would feel if they knew that someone else (parents, guardians) would make decisions for them the rest of their lives. Tell students they will be learning how Great Britain's control got so out of hand that the American colonists finally decided to declare independence.
- ☐ **DISTRIBUTE** one "Get Off Our Backs" reading page to each student.
- ☐ **READ** the pages with the class, pausing to discuss.
- ☐ **DISTRIBUTE** one cutout activity half sheet to each student.
- ☐ **DISTRIBUTE** a set of cutouts to students in pairs or small groups.
- ☐ **READ** the directions on the half sheets.
- ☐ **ALLOW** students to complete the half sheet activities. For Activity B, the pairs or groups should reconstruct the Declaration of Independence following the Activity B directions.
- ☐ **REVIEW** the answers to the activities.
- ☐ **DISTRIBUTE** one review worksheet to each student.
- ☐ **ALLOW** students to complete the worksheet.
- ☐ **DISTRIBUTE** one extension activity to each student
- ☐ **READ** the "London Magazine" excerpts with the class. Explain that these are real quotes from the magazine, and that the magazine readers would have been people in England. Pause to explain vocabulary words.
- ☐ **ALLOW** students to complete the extension activities.
- ☐ **REVIEW** the students' answers to the activities.
- ☐ **CLOSE** by asking students what they think is the one thing the British did to the colonists that they would have found the most upsetting. Call on students to share.

# Hey, King: Get Off Our Backs!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_



Patrick Henry

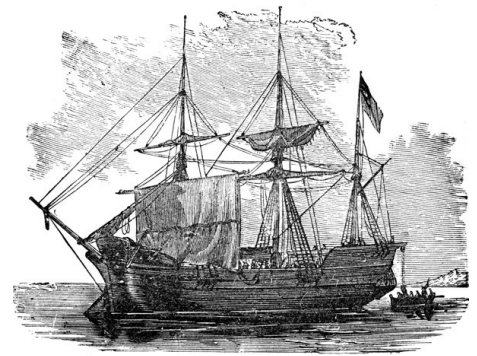
*Give me liberty,  
or give me death*

Really? Was it that bad? By 1776, the American colonists living under English rule thought so. In fact, things were so bad that they went to war to gain their independence. But why? What could have been so intolerable?

The first Englishmen came to America four hundred years ago looking for gold, silver, and a waterway to Asia. They were part of a trading company that convinced the king of England to grant them a **charter** giving them permission to set up a colony in America. But they did not find what they were looking for. Times got so hard those first settlers had to eat rats and even each other to keep from starving to death. Pretty soon, though, more people arrived and times got better. The English were here to stay.

## Hail to the King

Back in England, the King probably figured he had a pretty good deal. Other people got seasick sailing across the ocean to settle an untamed land while he sat in his palace ruling England. Except that being king just wasn't what it used to be. Back in the 1200s, a king could really do what he wanted! But this was the 1600s, and now the English people had representatives in **Parliament** who made laws and stood up for peoples' rights. They even gave advice to the king. Bah!



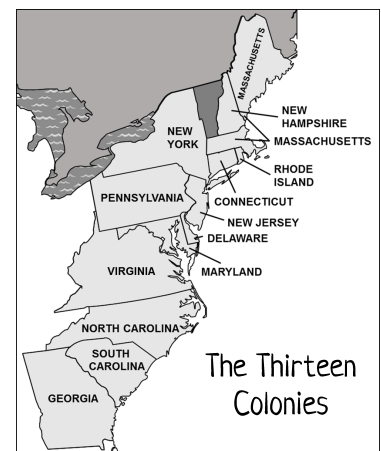
## You Don't Mind If We . . . Uh . . .

Govern ourselves, do you? In America, the colonists needed some kind of government to deal with everyday problems. After all, the king was on the other side of the ocean. And because of Parliament, the colonists were used to having a say in government. In Virginia Colony, the first settlers decided each community should have two representatives and that all the representatives would meet together. Farther north, in Plymouth, the colonists signed a **compact** agreeing to form a majority-rule government where all the men would vote on whatever issues came up. (Women didn't get to vote in 1620.) Even so, the king still controlled the colonies, and the colonists had to follow England's laws.

The House of Burgesses was the group of representatives in Virginia. The Mayflower Compact was the agreement the Plymouth colonists signed while they were still on board the Mayflower, before they set foot on dry land. Even then, they knew they would need a government!

## We're Doing Just Fine, Thanks

England had a lot of other colonies besides those in America and plenty of other problems to deal with. The king and Parliament didn't have much time to pay attention to the American colonists. By the mid-1700s there were 13 colonies, and each colony had its own government. These little governments grew stronger and more used to being in control. When problems came up, the colonial governments took care of things themselves. The colonists were out on their own, making their own decisions, governing things the way they wanted to without much interference.

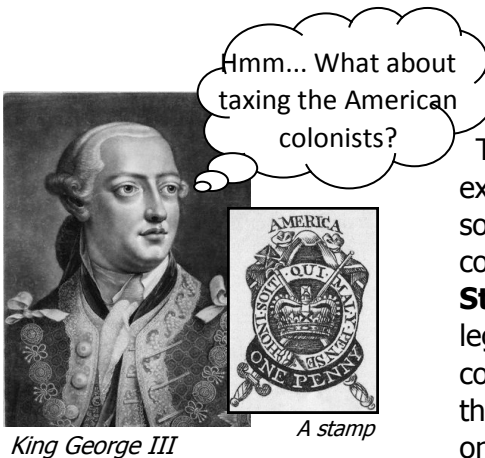
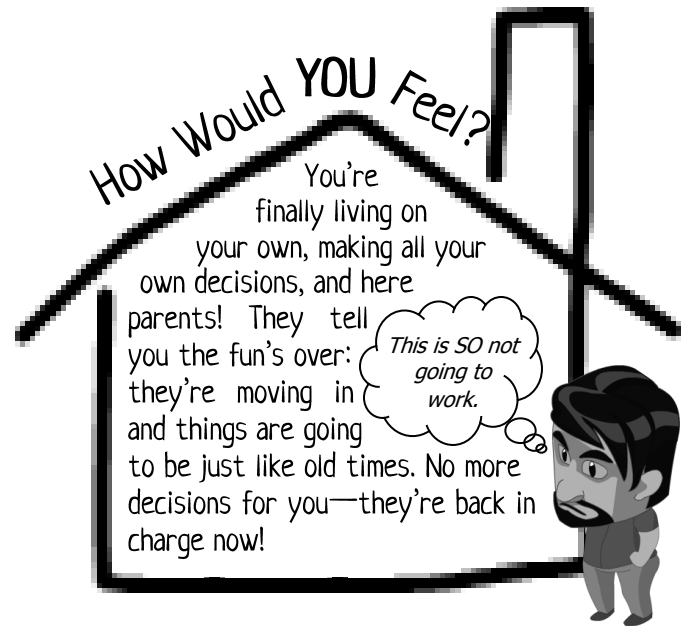


# Hey, King: Get Off Our Backs!

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## A Raw Deal

But then times got tough, and the British government went looking for money. Great Britain, which now included both England and Scotland, saw its colonies around the world as a source of profit. Colonies were places to cut timber, grow crops such as cotton and coffee, and mine for valuable minerals. The king forced the colonists to sell these raw materials back to England at really cheap prices. People in England would use the materials to make finished products. But did the colonists get a bargain on these items because they provided the materials? No way! The king forced the colonists to buy the finished products at extra high prices.

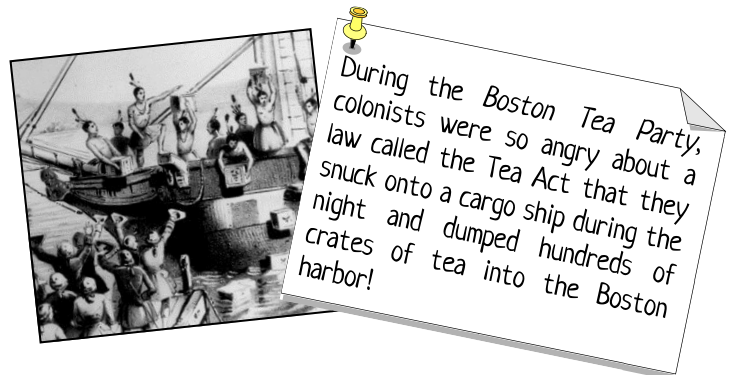


## Looking for a Fast Buck?

That was only the beginning. In the mid-1700's, Britain fought two expensive wars. Britain had taken out a lot of debt to pay for the war, so it went looking for a way to make money fast. Taxing the American colonists seemed like the perfect idea. So in 1765, Britain passed the **Stamp Act**, which forced colonists to put expensive tax stamps on all legal documents, as well as newspapers, calendars, and almanacs. The colonists had an answer for that: They quit buying British goods! But this *boycott* didn't work for long. Britain repealed the Stamp Act after one year, but things did not get better.

## From Bad to Worse

As soon as the Stamp Act was gone, the British passed the **Declaratory Act** saying that the colonies were dependent on the king and declaring that all laws passed in the colonies had no effect. As if that weren't bad enough, Britain also passed the **Townshend Revenue Act**, taxing things it knew the colonists couldn't make for themselves: paint, glass, paper, lead, and tea. This Act also allowed British government workers to search peoples' houses and even break down doors to seize items the homeowner hadn't paid taxes for. On top of that, the **Quartering Acts** of 1765 and 1774 forced certain colonists to let British troops live in their houses. The soldiers didn't even have to pay rent! Then, in the 1770s, a series of laws cracked down on rebellious activity in Massachusetts colony. Colonists called these the **Intolerable Acts**.



## Enough is Enough!

The colonists finally decided there was only one solution: self-government! On July 4, 1776, the colonies adopted the **Declaration of Independence**, announcing that the United States was free from Great Britain. It wasn't that easy, though. There was the small matter of fighting a war against Britain to make that freedom real. When the Americans won the Revolutionary War, Britain lost all control of the colonies. The United States of America was born.

# Hey, King: Get Off Our Backs!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**A. Phrases to Know.** Learn these phrases from the Declaration of Independence by matching each one with its definition.

- \_\_\_\_ 1. Unalienable rights
- \_\_\_\_ 2. Pursuit of happiness
- \_\_\_\_ 3. Natural rights
- \_\_\_\_ 4. Consent of the governed
- \_\_\_\_ 5. Just powers
- \_\_\_\_ 6. Self-evident

- A. Rights people are born with
- B. Can be seen just by looking at it
- C. Permission of those under the government's rule
- D. Rights that cannot be taken away
- E. Trying to find joy and contentment
- F. Powers that are fair

**B. Reconstruct the Declaration.** The outline below shows the 4 parts of the Declaration of Independence and what each part is for. You will get a set of cutouts with statements that are in the Declaration. Decide which section each statement belongs in and piece the Declaration back together!

## ***Part 1: Preamble***

An introduction explaining why the Declaration is being written.

## ***Part 2: Natural Rights***

The colonists explain the rights of people and the role of government power.

## ***Part 3: Grievances***

A list of the colonists' complaints.

## ***Part 4: Resolution of Independence***

The colonists declare their independence from Britain.



Cutout Activity p.1

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**C. Fill In the Blank.** One of the most famous parts of the Declaration of Independence is written below. Use words from the word bank to complete it. HINT: Look for phrases from the matching activity!

consent	life	evident	happiness	people
powers	abolish	liberty	equal	rights

*We hold these truths to be self-\_\_\_\_\_, that all men are created \_\_\_\_\_, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable \_\_\_\_\_, that among these are \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and the pursuit of \_\_\_\_\_.*

*That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just \_\_\_\_\_ from the \_\_\_\_\_ of the governed,*

*That whenever any form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the \_\_\_\_\_ to alter or \_\_\_\_\_ it . . . .*

**D. Find Those Rights!** The Declaration lists three (3) rights. Circle them!



Cutout Activity p.2

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A 3. Natural rights  
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F 5. Just powers  
B 6. Self-evident

- A. Rights people are born with  
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consent      life      evident      happiness      people  
powers      abolish      liberty      equal      rights

*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.*

*That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed,*

*That whenever any form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the people to alter or abolish it . . .*

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Cutout Activity p.2

## PREAMBLE

## NATURAL RIGHTS

## GRIEVANCES

## RESOLUTION OF INDEPENDENCE

The king has refused to agree to laws that would benefit the people.

Our own governments have been abolished.

All men are created equal.

The king has caused fighting among the colonists.

Our trade with the rest of the world has been cut off.

We pledge our lives, fortunes, and honor in support of this Declaration of Independence.

Sometimes it becomes necessary for one group of people to cut ties with another group of people.

The king gets to decide whether the judges keep their jobs and how much they get paid.

New laws have taken away our right to a jury trial in many cases.

When government threatens peoples' natural rights, the people have the right to abolish it and make a new government.

We now cut all political connection with Great Britain.

The king has opened new government offices and sent "swarms of officers to harass our people."

The king has housed large numbers of troops in our communities.

Government must get its power from the consent of the governed.

When one group of people decides to separate from another, they should explain why.

We declare that the colonies are and should be free and independent states.

Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are "unalienable rights."

The king has tried to keep people from coming to the colonies to live.



# Hey, King: Get Off Our Backs!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**A. Fill In the Blank.** Look in the reading to find the missing piece of each sentence.

1. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a signed agreement.
2. The \_\_\_\_\_ Acts forced colonists to house British troops.
3. Britain saw its colonies as a source of \_\_\_\_\_.
4. If you sold a newspaper in 1765, you would have to put a \_\_\_\_\_ on it.
5. We celebrate the 4th of July because that's when the \_\_\_\_\_ was signed.
6. The Townshend Revenue Act allowed the government to \_\_\_\_\_ peoples' homes.
7. Virginia Colony's first government was called the \_\_\_\_\_.
8. The colonists had to follow the laws of \_\_\_\_\_.



**B. Odd One Out.** In each set, cross out the word that doesn't belong. In the oval, explain what the three remaining words have in common.

Glass  
Cotton  
Lead  
Tea

9.

Mayflower Compact  
Stamp Act  
Declaratory Act  
Quartering Act

10.

Minerals  
Timber  
Crops  
Paint

11.

Legal documents  
Newspapers  
Troops  
Calendars

12.

Boycott goods  
Search houses  
Fight a war  
Destroy tea

13.

**C. Cause and Effect.** Match each effect with its cause listed below.

## EFFECTS

- \_\_\_\_ 14. In the 1600s, the king could not just do what he wanted.
- \_\_\_\_ 15. The first colonists started their own governments.
- \_\_\_\_ 16. Colonists were used to having a say in government.
- \_\_\_\_ 17. Britain needed a way to make money.
- \_\_\_\_ 18. The colonists boycotted British goods.
- \_\_\_\_ 19. The British taxed paint, glass, and lead.
- \_\_\_\_ 20. The colonists declared independence.
- \_\_\_\_ 21. Britain lost control of the colonies.

## BECAUSE...

- A. They were angry about the Stamp Act taxes.
- B. The British government was too far away to deal with daily problems.
- C. They were tired of the way the British were treating them.
- D. He shared power with Parliament.
- E. The colonists won the Revolutionary War.
- F. They knew the colonists could not make those products themselves.
- G. In England, the Parliament represented people in government.
- H. It was in debt after fighting expensive wars.



## PREAMBLE

Sometimes it becomes necessary for one group of people to cut ties with another group of people.

When one group of people decides to separate from another, they should explain why.

## NATURAL RIGHTS

All men are created equal.

Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are “unalienable rights.”

Government must get its power from the consent of the governed.

When government threatens peoples’ natural rights, the people have the right to abolish it and make a new government.

## RESOLUTION OF INDEPENDENCE

We pledge our lives, fortunes, and honor in support of this Declaration of Independence.

We now cut all political connection with Great Britain.

We declare that the colonies are and should be free and independent states.

## GRIEVANCES

The king has refused to agree to laws that would benefit the people.

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The king gets to decide whether the judges keep their jobs and how much they get paid.

New laws have taken away our right to a jury trial in many cases.

The king has opened new government offices and sent “swarms of officers to harass our people.”

The king has tried to keep people from coming to the colonies to live.

The king has housed large numbers of troops in our communities.

# Hey, King: Get Off Our Backs!

Name: \*\* *TEACHER GUIDE* \*\*

**A. Fill In the Blank.** Look in the reading to find the missing piece of each sentence.

1. A compact is a signed agreement.
2. The Quartering Acts forced colonists to house British troops.
3. Britain saw its colonies as a source of profit.
4. If you sold a newspaper in 1765, you would have to put a tax stamp on it.
5. We celebrate the 4th of July because that's when the Declaration of Independence was signed.
6. The Townshend Revenue Act allowed the government to search peoples' homes.
7. Virginia Colony's first government was called the House of Burgesses.
8. The colonists had to follow the laws of England.



**B. Odd One Out.** In each set, cross out the word that doesn't belong. In the oval, explain what the three remaining words have in common.

*(Answers will vary)*

Glass  
~~Cotton~~  
Lead  
Tea

9.

*Things the colonists could not make for themselves.*

~~Mayflower Compact~~  
Stamp Act  
Declaratory Act  
Quartering Act

10.

*British laws the colonists were unhappy about*

Minerals  
Timber  
Crops  
~~Paint~~

11.

*Raw materials Britain wanted to get from its colonies.*

Legal documents  
Newspapers  
~~Troops~~  
Calendars

12.

*The Stamp Act required tax stamps on these things.*

Boycott goods  
~~Search houses~~  
Fight a war  
Destroy tea

13.

*Actions the colonists took to protest Britain's unfair treatment.*

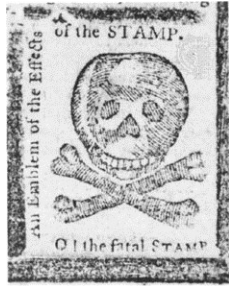
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*magistracy* = office of the local government official

*gaol* = jail

*comptroller* = public official who manages government finances

*900l. sterling* = £900, or about \$162,000 (based on how much things used to cost)

*repugnant* = repulsive

*obliged* = forced

*countenance* = face

*man of war* = British naval ship

*populace* = people

*countermand* = send back

*vend* = sell

*coach* = carriage

*effigy* = a doll made to look like someone

*abettor* = supporter or helper

*his excellency* = the governor

## The LONDON MAGAZINE: *Or, GENTLEMAN's Monthly Intelligencer.*

### For OCTOBER 1765.

By letters received from Boston in New-England, there is an account of a dangerous mob, which arose in the middle of August, on account of the stamp duty, and did considerable mischief; but on the 16<sup>th</sup> of August they were more violent than before, which continued till Sunday the 1<sup>st</sup> of September, by which time the magistracy had raised and armed five-hundred men, and had committed several of the rioters to gaol,--but not till they had destroyed all the goods and papers of the comptroller, judge of the admiralty, distributor of the stamps, as well as every individual article in the house of the lieutenant governor ... even to the uncovering his house, burning all his books and papers, carrying off even his clothes, as well as those of his sister and daughter, putting them on by way of masquerade, [taking] 900l. sterling in cash, scarce leaving him any more than the shirt he had on.

### For NOVEMBER 1765.

The stamp-duty is so repugnant to the ideas of the people of America, that in most of the northern colonies they have obliged the stamp-officers to resign their places. . . . When the stamped papers arrived at Philadelphia, the vessels in the harbour hoisted their colours half mast high, the bells rung, being muffled, and every countenance betrayed dejection. Finally, they obliged the stamp distributor to promise not to exercise his office, and the stamped papers were obliged to be taken on board a man of war, to secure them from the rage of the populace. The lawyers in New Jersey, &c. have resolved not to use the stamped papers.

### For DECEMBER 1765.

Upon the arrival of the stamps at New-York, every sign of mourning appeared. The merchants soon after met and resolved to have no more goods shipped from Great Britain unless the stamp act be repealed; to countermand all orders already sent, and not to vend any goods sent from Great Britain after Jan. 1 next. The governor having secured the stamp paper in Fort George, a great assembly of persons, preceded by lights, went to the fort, took from the stables the governor's coach, which with his effigy they burnt, with every mark of contempt and exasperation, under the guns of the fort. After this they went to the house of major James (a supposed abettor of the stamp act) whose goods they likewise seized and consumed. The next day they forced from his excellency a declaration, that he would have nothing to do with the stamps.

# Hey, King: Get Off Our Backs!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**A. Protest!** The colonists expressed their outrage in many ways. But which kinds of protest would be most effective at convincing Great Britain to repeal the Stamp Act? (It did repeal the Act in 1766.)

FORM OF PROTEST	EFFECTIVE?	THIS WOULD/WOULD NOT BE EFFECTIVE BECAUSE...
Don't order any more goods from Great Britain and cancel existing orders	<input type="checkbox"/> Effective <input type="checkbox"/> Not effective	
Force the stamp officer to resign	<input type="checkbox"/> Effective <input type="checkbox"/> Not effective	
Destroy the property of government officials who support the Stamp Act	<input type="checkbox"/> Effective <input type="checkbox"/> Not effective	
Force the governor to promise he won't have anything to do with the stamps	<input type="checkbox"/> Effective <input type="checkbox"/> Not effective	
Refuse to sell anything sent from Great Britain	<input type="checkbox"/> Effective <input type="checkbox"/> Not effective	
Burn the governor in effigy	<input type="checkbox"/> Effective <input type="checkbox"/> Not effective	
Refuse to use the stamps	<input type="checkbox"/> Effective <input type="checkbox"/> Not effective	
Riot in the streets	<input type="checkbox"/> Effective <input type="checkbox"/> Not effective	

**B. Spread the News.** It is October 1765, the morning after the attack on the lieutenant governor's house. You can't wait to tell your Aunt Martha what happened. But not only that, you can't wait to tell her exactly what you think about the attack.

Was it right? Wrong? Was it a victory? A horrible thing? Will the attack help or hurt the cause? Tell your Aunt Martha what you think and why.

Dear Aunt Martha,  
You'll never believe it! Last night, a mob went to the lieutenant governor's house. They burned his books and papers, stole his money, and even took his sister and daughter's clothes and put them on for fun! I think this is ...

Sincerely,

# Hey, King: Get Off Our Backs!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**C. Illustrate.** The London Magazine stories did not include any pictures. But what if they did? For each month, make an illustration that would help the reader understand what was happening in the American colonies. Include as many details from the reading as possible.

For OCTOBER 1765.

For NOVEMBER 1765.

For DECEMBER 1765.