

## **For Crown or Colony?** History to Know Before You Play

*Before the class begins playing MISSION US: “For Crown or Colony?” your students should be familiar with five important pieces of historical context. If you have not already taught this material in your class, introduce it to your students before they make their way through life in colonial Boston!*

- 1. By the 18th century, the British Empire had become one of the most far-reaching, wealthy, and powerful empires in the world.** But fierce competition from other European imperial powers, including France and Spain, meant England was engaged in almost constant conflict to protect its territories and trade routes.
- 2. Some of the more vital territories of the British Empire were the thirteen American colonies.** Since the early 17th century, American colonists had enjoyed the benefits of membership in this empire, which included military protection on the frontier and the sea, lucrative trading possibilities, and an overall pride in English culture and traditions.
- 3. In 1763, at the end of a long and costly global war with France known as the Seven Years’ War, England had accrued a national debt of 123 million pounds. In order to pay this debt, Parliament passed a series of acts to collect revenue from the American colonies.** These acts included:
  - The 1764 Sugar Act, which enforced existing taxes on sugar and molasses imports.
  - The 1765 Stamp Act, which taxed colonists for legal and commercial documents. The act was met with widespread resentment in the colonies, and led to the Stamp Act Riots.
  - The 1767 Townshend Acts, which taxed tea, glass, paper, and other necessary daily items.
- 4. Due to a growing resistance movement in the colonies, British troops arrived in Boston in 1768 to keep the peace and enforce the Townshend Acts.** Many colonists felt as though they were being punished, and viewed the British troops as an occupying force.
- 5. The philosopher John Locke, writing in 1690, had articulated the idea that rulers (like the King of England) had a duty to protect the rights of their subjects, and if rulers did not do that, the subjects should form a new government.** Locke’s theory influenced the American Patriots’ response to what they considered overreaches of English authority in the colonies.