

*This does not represent a single, correct answer. It represents the kind of essay a "4" would be.*

The currents of history brought the English colonists and their mother country into conflict. The reasons for this conflict were social and economic. In the category of social reasons, colonists were used to governing themselves and they wanted to move westward despite the British government's efforts to keep them out of the Native Americans' hair. The colonial population was doubling about every twenty years, which made them a force in British politics. In the category of economic reasons, the colonists resented British controls on their trade (which limited profits) and heavy taxes Parliament felt it deserved to pay for the French and Indian War.

The colonists were always pushing westward. This always caused conflicts with the people already living there: the native Americans. In Bacon's Rebellion in the late 1600s, colonists moved west despite the governor's warning not to. When they got into fights with the natives and the governor refused to help, they turned on the colonial government and burned Jamestown. After the French and Indian War in 1763, colonists came into conflict with natives in the Ohio valley. This was known as Pontiac's War. The British government was determined not to engage in any more costly wars, and with the Proclamation of 1763, they banned colonists from moving out past the Appalachian Mountains (an order many promptly ignored). This constant push westward not only caused conflict with natives, but with Britain because colonists ignored policies designed to respect native lands.

The colonists were used to governing themselves. In New England, towns held town meetings to decide business democratically. All colonial governments included a

lower house of elected colonists who controlled spending. Although the governor and upper houses were appointed by the Crown (or by the governor in the name of the Crown), the power of the purse exercised by colonists was an important way they got their way. Colonists were used to governing themselves and used to having been pretty much left alone for more than a century. When the British government started to exercise its rights, it caused a lot of bad feelings.

Economic reasons for the conflict are really focused on taxes and control of trade. The Navigation Acts restricted what the colonists could sell and to whom. Colonists could make more money competing for trade with Spain and France. They could save money by manufacturing their own products. The Tea Act was an example of Britain's trade policy of control. This act cut out the colonial Tea merchants in favor of allowing colonists to buy tea directly from the east India Tea company. This tea was taxed, but resulted in a net reduction in price for colonists. Colonists resented the tax. Colonial tea merchants encouraged resentment.

Taxes like the Stamp Act and Sugar Acts angered colonists. Parliament felt the colonists ought to help pay for the French and Indian War because it protected them. The taxes were lower than British subjects in England paid! Colonists objected on the grounds that they had no representation in Parliament. They expected this representation because the English Constitution (Bill of Rights and Magna Carta) implied this right. The fight over taxes was the "last straw" in the story of colonial conflict. When Britain imposed very harsh punishment on Boston for a protest on the tea issue, colonists started arming themselves in defense of their liberties. An armed battle was inevitable and Lexington and Concord were that beginning.

The conflict with Britain was about a lot of things. It was about the push westward (one historian in the 1800s joked that an American would not want to enter heaven unless he could move further west), it was about colonists being used to governing themselves and seeing themselves as British subjects, and it was about taxes and trade. These things came together to start the American Revolution.