

## Document Analysis: Lyrics from “Hamilton- An American Musical”

DIRECTIONS: Use the information below in order to complete the document analysis of the song lyrics of “You’ll Be Back” from *Hamilton: An American Musical*. Be sure to include information about each event in your summary on the analysis document.

### Dominion of New England (1686-1689)

The Dominion of New England was the merging of British colonies in New England in 1686. Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Rhode Island merged together into one large colony, followed by New York and New Jersey in 1688. Before the merger, each colony operated under individual charters that allowed them to organize and run their colonies as they pleased. Unable to get the Massachusetts Bay Colony to obey his commands, Charles II revoked its charter in 1684. In 1686, King James II created the Dominion of New England in order to tighten control over administrative affairs of the New England colonies and strengthen colonial defenses in the event of a war with the local Native American population. Most importantly, King James II used the Dominion of New England to enforce the Navigation Acts, which prohibited the colonists from trading with countries not ruled by the British crown, particularly with the Dutch.



### Quartering Act (1765)



Once the Seven Years’ (or French & Indian) War had ended, the king’s advisors decided that some British troops should remain in North America, in theory to defend the colonies. Since the war had left Britain with a large national debt, Parliament levied heavier taxes on British subjects, especially the colonists. In 1765, Parliament passed the Quartering Act, which required the colonies to provide food and housing for the British soldiers serving in America; it was considered especially important that the colonies should pay their share of the costs of keeping these men in America. The act outraged colonists, who believed the taxes and regulations were unfair. Many also questioned why the British army needed to remain in North America when the French and the Pontiac Indians had already been defeated. Not only did the colonists feel that

the troop presence was no longer necessary, they also feared that the troops were there to control them. In Massachusetts, the closest barracks were built on an island from which soldiers had no hope of keeping the peace in a city riled by the acts, British officers followed the Quartering Act’s injunction to quarter their soldiers in public places, not in private homes; in order to follow the rules of the Act, their only option was to pitch tents on Boston Common. The soldiers and colonists were soon involved in street brawls, culminating in the Boston Massacre of 1770; any trust remaining between Boston colonists and the resident Redcoats was destroyed.

### The Stamp Act (1765)

Though the colonists disliked all of these acts, they particularly took offense to the 1765 Stamp Act. Britain’s economy during the 1700s was based on mercantilist theories that taught that money was power: the more money a nation had in its reserves, the more powerful it was. Colonies provided cheap natural resources such as gold, cotton, timber, tobacco, sugarcane, and furs. These materials could be shipped back home to the mother country and converted into manufactured goods, which were resold to the colonists at high prices. In addition, any European goods bound for the colonies had to be taxed in Britain. This tax required certain goods to bear an official stamp showing that the owner had paid his or her tax. Many of these items were paper goods, such as legal documents and licenses, newspapers, leaflets, and even playing cards. Furthermore, the Stamp Act declared that those who failed to pay the tax would be punished by the courts without a trial by jury.



### Boston Tea Party (1773)



In 1773, Parliament passed the Tea Act, granting the financially troubled British East India Company an exclusive monopoly on tea exported to the American colonies. This act agitated colonists even further: although the new monopoly meant cheaper tea, many Americans believed that Britain was trying to dupe them into accepting the hated tax. In response to the unpopular act, tea agents in many American cities canceled orders while merchants and store owners refused to sell tea. Despite the growing resentment towards tea that resulted from the tax, Governor Thomas Hutchinson resolved to uphold the law and ordered that three ships arriving in Boston Harbor be allowed to deposit their cargoes and that appropriate payment be made for the goods. This policy prompted about sixty men, including Samuel Adams and some members of the Sons of Liberty, to board the ships on the night of December 16, 1773 (disguised as Native Americans) and dump the tea chests into the water.

### American Revolutionary War (1776-1783)

As punishment for the Boston Tea Party, the British government passed the Intolerable Acts (called the Coercive Acts in Great Britain), consisting of five laws the British thought would help to maintain control in America but instead caused many people to firmly join the side of the rebels. The meeting of the First Continental Congress was called to in response to the Intolerable Acts. The First Continental Congress met in September 1774 and took major actions, including sending a letter to King George III explaining the issues the colonies had with the way they were being treated. They demanded that the King stop the Intolerable Acts or they would boycott English goods. However, the King chose to ignore them and the Americans began the boycott. The Second Continental Congress first met on May 10, 1775, and acted much more like a government sending ambassadors to foreign countries, printing its own money, getting loans, and raising an army. On June 14, 1775 they established the Continental Army. They made George Washington General of the Army. On July 4, 1776 they issued the Declaration of Independence declaring the United States as an independent country from Britain. The Battle of Lexington and Concord in 1775 were the first battles of the Revolutionary War, which would continue until the Battle of Yorktown in 1781 ended with the British surrender. On September 3, 1783, the Americans and the British signed the Treaty of Paris, which officially ended the war and forced Great Britain to recognize the Thirteen Colonies as an independent nation.



### Regency Act (1811)



King George III suffered from bouts of mental illness many times throughout his life, likely due to a diagnosis of porphyria. In 1810, the King was incapacitated *de facto*, meaning that he was no longer competent enough to complete his royal duties or sign away his rights as king. Resolutions by both Houses of Parliament appointed a regent as part of a bill titled "Care of King During his Illness, Act of 1811". Under this Act, the King was suspended from royal functions, and his son George, Prince of Wales completed those functions on his behalf from 1811 until 1820. When King George III died in January 1820, the Prince Regent (as the Prince of Wales became known) succeeded to the throne as George IV and assumed full powers of the Crown, since Parliament placed restrictions on his power during his Regency. The period from 1811–1820 became known as the Regency era.