American Revolution Project: Stamp Act Dialogue

For this assignment, you will work in pairs to write a dialogue between two characters (one from the Colonies and one from Britain) who disagree on whether the Colonists should respect and pay the Stamp Tax. Make sure you understand that this is not a debate about independence but about the issues and arguments surrounding the Stamp Tax.

Directions:

**Part I:** Each of you should write an opening statement that should be around 100 words in which you lay out your overall case for supporting or opposing the Stamp Act. You don't have to respond to each other here but it should be written in character, in other words, your characters should be saying this.

**Part II:** After each of you has made your opening statements, you should engage in a back and forth of asking each other questions and defending your points of view. Decide for yourselves how this should go. This can be a quick back and forth or a question and somewhat long response (paragraph?). Ultimately you want to show, through your dialogue, the conflicting points of view about this question. An appropriate length would be around 8 lines each (not more than 12, not counting your opening and closing).

**Part III:** You should have a closing statement of 50-75 words in which you finalize your points.

Grading:

I will grade you based on the following criteria. The pair will receive different grades based on your different parts.

*Writing style and persuasiveness*

This is not an essay. You should write as if you are speaking to a group of people whom you are trying to convince. You can say words like, “I” and “you” and ask rhetorical questions.

After your opening statements, your conversation should be interactive. Make sure that comes out through your writing.

I will grade you on how effectively you communicate your ideas and interact with and respond to your opponents.

*Completeness of points*

There were many different reasons people supported and opposed the Stamp Act. Your goals are to effectively paint a complete picture and accurately and effectively defend your point of view.

What to turn in

You and your partner should turn in one typed up dialogue with both parts and both your names on it. In the dialogue, make sure it is clear who is speaking each line.

This is a dialogue not a debate. Work with each other to make good points, have a good conversation, and keep it moving. Think of it like a professional wrestling match. It is a scripted drama meant to entertain.
Performance:

We do not have time to allow each pair to perform their dialogues in front of the class so each pair will perform their dialogues to another pair who will then perform their dialogue to your group. I will then choose three groups at random to perform for the class.

What does a good job look like?

You should include ideas from the various documents (A-D) we've studied, pages 50-53 from our textbook, your own understanding of the time period, or create your own arguments and be creative with your responses to your partners.

If you simply repeat ideas from the documents you read, you will not receive a good grade. Internalize the ideas and the point of view and try to represent the point of view well.

Sample

This is just a short dialogue without the opening statement. It is intentionally shorter than what you should do. This is simply meant to give you an idea of what a dialogue could look like.

The topic here is whether a student should transfer after 8th grade from BSGE.

A: We have already been at BSGE for two years. We have friends here and the teachers know us. What better place to spend the next four years?

B: Just because you are comfortable here does not mean that it is the best place for you. You could be limiting your growth just to be comfortable.

A: Yes but there are other advantages as well! Do you not acknowledge that there is a rigorous academic program here?

B: There is indeed but is it the only school in the city with a good academic program? I think your views are too limited, good sir. The world is a great big ocean and you cannot limit yourself to the same small pond.

A: But this small pond was ranked the #1 high school in New York State in 2013! Does this mean nothing to you?

B: You and I both know that rankings are limited in what they measure and next year the school might not even be ranked. They certainly don’t take into account the size or presence of a gymnasium or auditorium. And they certainly don’t take into account the fact that the windows leak every time it rains. And don’t get me started about the heat in the science room...

A: It seems apparent to me that you simply do not like this school and you are a traitor. People of good conscience will not side with you. Good day sir!

B: Yes but...

A: I said good day!