



Sample answer IV

How did the *Sugar Act* contribute to a Revolutionary situation by 1776?

The Sugar Act 1764 was the first example of taxation following the Treaty of Paris (1763), with the responses to it creating tension between Britain and the colonies and developing the beginnings of the revolutionary ideology that provided the basis for further rebellion.

Following the 150 years of 'salutary neglect' prior to 1763, the colonies had developed 'internal sovereignty' that gave the colonists constituent representation. The Colonial Assemblies, that provided this governance, controlled the right to representative and consensual taxation, which was undermined by the Sugar Act. New England merchants were the most affected group and campaigned for rebellion. Though no major rebellion was ignited by a tax, because it was too specific to offend enough of the population, it saw the beginnings of the revolutionary ideology that formed the basis for further rebellion. James Otis' 'Rights of the Colonists Asserted and Proved' argued that 'taxation without representation' was against the 'natural right' to property and therefore illegal.

This small-scale resistance established the anti-British sentiment and foundation ideology that was necessary for the true rebellions to the Stamp Act 1765, the Townshend Duties of 1767 and the Tea Act 1773, that ultimately fractured trans-Atlantic relations and led to the Declaration of Independence in 1776.
