



## John Hancock

John Hancock was raised by his uncle in Boston, Massachusetts. His uncle sent him to Harvard University and made him a partner in his shipping company. When his uncle died in 1764, John became one of Boston's most wealthy citizens.

In 1765, John was elected to the office of Boston Selectman. He quickly joined Samuel Adams and the Sons of Liberty and became a strong opponent of the Stamp Act, a tax levied against the colonists by Great Britain. In 1768, John was appointed as a representative of the Massachusetts Legislature. He soon gained the reputation as a strong advocate of American independence. In fact, it was John's shipping company that enabled the financing and smuggling of goods that supported the region's resistance to the British. In 1774, one year after Great Britain levied the Intolerable (Coercive) Acts against the colonists, John was elected president of the Massachusetts Provincial Congress, a new Massachusetts legislature which had the authority to call for troops in the wake of a British threat. The British subsequently charged Hancock with treason. In 1775, British troops would march to Lexington with the orders to capture John Hancock. It was during this march that the first shots of the American Revolution were fired. John, along with Samuel Adams, ultimately escaped.

Later in 1775, John was appointed president of the Second Continental Congress. It was John Hancock who commissioned George Washington as commander-in-chief of the Continental Army. On July 4, 1776, John Hancock became the first American to sign the Declaration of Independence. His large, flamboyant signature was by far the most visible of all signatures. According to legend, Hancock signed the document in such a way so that King George II of England could see the signature without his eyeglasses.

Throughout the Revolution, the Americans relied on John's ability to raise funds and supplies for the Continental Army. In 1780, he was elected governor of Massachusetts, a post he held for nine terms. John died in 1793. Today, counties in ten different states are named in his honor. In addition, the tallest building in Boston is named The John Hancock Building.

**1.) How does the passage imply that John Hancock became wealthy?**

- A. He made good investments.
- B. He inherited his uncle's shipping company.
- C. He owned a lot of land.
- D. He went to Harvard University.

**2.) Which of the following was not true about John Hancock?**

- A. He used his shipping company to smuggle goods to help the Rebels.
- B. He supported the Stamp Act.
- C. He was a member of the Sons of Liberty.
- D. He supported independence.

**3.) What happened in 1768?**

- A. John's uncle died.
- B. John was elected as Boston Selectman.
- C. John was elected president of the Massachusetts Provincial Congress.
- D. John was elected as a representative in the Massachusetts Legislature.

**4.) Why was John Hancock charged with treason?**

- A. Because he spoke out against the Intolerable Acts.
- B. Because he was elected President of the Massachusetts Provincial Congress.
- C. Because he was elected as Boston Selectman.
- D. Because he supported the Stamp Act.

**5.) John Hancock was charged with treason by the British. Treason can be defined as an act of disloyalty toward the government. Which of the following is an act of treason?**

- A. Fighting in a war against another country.
- B. Making laws that aren't popular with the people.
- C. Charging someone with a crime they didn't commit.
- D. Taking steps to disrupt the functioning of the government.

**6.) If John Hancock were to write a list of his life accomplishments, which of the following would NOT be on the list?**

- A. President of the United States.
- B. President of the Second Continental Congress.
- C. President of the Massachusetts Provincial Congress.
- D. Representative of the Massachusetts of Legislature.

**7.) Why is John Hancock's signature so large on the Declaration of Independence?**

- A. Because he had poor eyesight.
- B. Because he had poor handwriting.
- C. Because he wanted the King of England to see his signature clearly.
- D. He was in a hurry.

**8.) What does the word 'subsequent' mean in the following sentence:**

The British subsequently charged Hancock with treason.

- A. Unfairly.
- B. Next or then
- C. Surely
- D. Quietly

**9.) Why was John Hancock important to the American cause?**

- A. He was a great general who won many battles.
- B. He signed the Declaration of Independence.
- C. He escaped from the British after the Battles of Lexington and Concord.
- D. He helped raise funds for Continental Army and used his shipping business as a way to get supplies.

**10.) Which of the following statements could NOT be applied to John Hancock?**

- A. ... a man dedicated to the Patriot cause
- B. ... a man who served in the governments of the state of Massachusetts and the United States.
- C. ... a man who has buildings, cities, and states named in his honor.
- D. ... a man who signed the Declaration of Independence with a signature larger than anyone else.