

# Grade 8 Benchmark Writing Prompt

January 2012

Department of History and Social Sciences



Use the following primary source document and then based on your knowledge of US History and an analysis of the document, respond to the following prompt.

*"The Americans have not acted in all things with prudence and [good] temper. They have been driven to madness by injustice. Will you punish them for the madness you have [caused]...My opinion...is that the Stamp Act be repealed absolutely, totally, and immediately."*

William Pitt, "Patriots" by A.J. Langguth

In 1765, the British government, by an act of Parliament, issued the *Stamp Act*. Based on your knowledge of United States History and the passage above, describe the reaction of the colonists to this piece of legislation and explain why William Pitt would describe their reaction as *madness*. Support your answer with relevant and specific information from the passage.

In your response, include reference to the following:

- Explain whether the author is for or against the Stamp Act and provide evidence from the text to support your position.
- Explain what Pitt means by "the madness you have caused".
- Explain to whom Pitt is addressing his comments to and why he feels the need to do so.

## Rubric for Scoring this Question

SCORE	DESCRIPTION
4	The response is clear, complete, and accurate with a detailed explanation of the colonists' reaction to passage of the Stamp Act, and is supported with relevant and specific information from the passage and knowledge of the period.
3	The response is a mostly clear, complete, and accurate explanation of the colonists' reaction to the passage of the Stamp Act, and is supported with some relevant information from the passage and knowledge of the period.
2	The response is partial explanation with basic information about the colonists' reaction to the passage of the Stamp Act, with a basic and sometimes irrelevant use of information from the passage and/or knowledge of the period.
1	The response has minimal description with limited information about the colonists' reaction to the Stamp Act, with a minimal or no use of information from the passage; and/or knowledge of the period.
0	The response is totally incorrect or irrelevant, or contains insufficient evidence to demonstrate comprehension.

