Q77 – Name one reason why the Americans declared independence from Britain.

DOUGLAS GINSBURG, Federal Judge, U.S. Court of Appeals, D.C. Circuit:
The colonists fought the British – the American Revolution – for a number of reasons but, mainly, “taxation without representation” and the lack of self-government.

Britain’s victory in the French and Indian War left it with vast new lands to oversee. The British Parliament then passed the Quartering Act, which required the colonies to pay for housing British troops in America. British soldier: “To the mistress of the house here, open the door in the name of the King.” The Parliament also imposed a series of taxes: First the Sugar Act. Then the Stamp Act, which required a stamp on newspapers, broadsheets, legal documents – just about any piece of paper.
The colonists protested by boycotting British goods and even attacking stamp distributors. Because the colonists had no representatives in Parliament, they argued Parliament couldn’t tax them: No taxation without representation.
Parliament replaced the Stamp Act with the Townshend Acts, which levied duties on everyday imports, such as paper, glass, and tea. To enforce the law, Britain sent troops to Boston – the hotbed of resistance.
When a mob surrounded a British soldier one night, insults turned to assault, soldiers fired on the mob, and five civilians were killed in the so-called Boston Massacre. Another group in Boston protested the tax on tea by dumping chests of tea into Boston Harbor – an event known as the Boston Tea Party.
Parliament responded with the Coercive Acts – or, as the colonists called them, the Intolerable Acts. Among them: Requiring that Boston pay the cost of the Tea Party. Events continued to snowball, until finally, British troops were sent out one night to capture the ringleaders of this rebellion.
A local militia – they called themselves the Minutemen – were waiting at Lexington. And there began the Revolutionary War.