The Seeds of Revolution: A Summary of Events

Directions: As you the article below, Seeds of Revolution: A Summary of Events, your task is to determine which colonial acts were the most unjust:

1. Read, highlight and annotate the article, Seeds of Revolution: A Summary of Events
2. Discuss the acts and determine the top 8 most “unjust”
3. Create your foldable: rank the acts in order of how unjust they were. You must have a label, description of the act and explanation of its ranking.

The American Revolution occurred as a result of a long string of events. Together, these events changed patterns of authority in the British Empire. This section provides an overview of the seeds of the conflict.

Before the French and Indian War...

The British Parliament enacted several laws to regulate trade within its empire. The acts were designed to put mercantilism into practice. Mercantilism was based on several ideas:

1. Empires should not depend on other countries
2. Colonies exist only to benefit their “mother” country
3. As much trading as possible should take place between colonies and their “mother” country

The Navigation Act of 1651: Required that all goods entering or leaving English colonies be in English ships with English crews. This action helped shippers in both England and the colonies.

The Enumerated Commodities Act of 1660: Said that only English merchants could ship and sell colonial goods. Parliament prepared a list of “Enumerated Goods” that could only be shipped to England or the colonies. This list included things like sugar, tobacco, cotton, indigo, dye, ginger and special wood products. As other commodities became available, (molasses, copper, tar) they were added to the list.

The Staple Act of 1663: Stated that European manufactured goods could not be shipped directly to the American colonies but first had to pass through England first (and thus were taxed). Then they were unloaded and reshipped to the colonies (producing profits for English merchants). This caused England to make more profits and the colonists to pay higher prices for goods.
After the French and Indian War...

England was in debt after the French and Indian War (over 137 million pounds compared with their peacetime debt of 8 million pounds). There was little prospect of paying off this debt because the newly acquired territory in America needed to be protected with 10,000 troops. English taxpayers did not want to pay for the troops and resented the colonists who paid very little taxes.

Starting in 1763, England adopted a new policy toward the colonies. This policy had 3 major goals:

1. To reassert control over the colonies
2. To restore colonial respect for British laws
3. To force the colonies to bear part of the cost of the French and Indian War

To achieve these goals, the British Government implemented the following:

**The Navigation Acts**: were strictly enforced. The government ordered the British navy to prevent illegal American trade, stopped tax collectors from taking bribes, allowed British officials to search private buildings and ships for smuggled goods and allowed people to be jailed without a trial.

**The Proclamation of 1763**: Made it illegal for colonial settlement west of the Allegheny Mountains. Designed to reduce the need for soldiers of the frontier and to protect the Native Americans. Settlers already west of this line had to move back east.

**The Sugar Act (1764)**: Raised taxes on molasses (sugar). Taxes on sugar were actually lowered but the British started actually collecting them.

**The Currency Act (1764)**: Made it illegal to pay debts with paper money so people had to use gold and silver instead. Since gold and silver were hard to find in the colonies, it made it extremely difficult to pay off debts.

**The Stamp Act (1765)**: Taxed legal documents, newspapers, pamphlets, cards, and anything else paper.

**The Quartering Act (1765)**: Forced the colonists to house and supply the British Army. This move made colonists fear the intentions of the British government.

**The Townshend Acts (1767)**: Imposed taxes on imports like paper, glass, lead, and tea. The revenue raised by these taxes were supposed to pay for the salaries of royal officials in the colonies.

**The Revenue Act (1767)**: Created a board of customs commissions in Boston and no-trial courts in Boston, Charleston, and Philadelphia.

**Tea Act (1773)**: Got rid of all the other acts but placed a tax on tea. It allowed the British East India Company to sell directly to colonists and surpass merchants. It would actually make tea cheaper than ever before. Its purpose was to help the struggling British East India Company.
Quebec Act (1774): Set up government for Canada; gave religious freedom to French Canadians; extended borders of Quebec in order to please French Canadians (England owned Canada after French & Indian War). Angered many of the colonists who claimed land in this area.