



*The Founding: From Colonies to
the United States: SS.7.CG.1.5*
The Road to Independence
READING #1

Name: _____

Date: _____



SS.7.CG.1.5 Benchmark Clarification 1: Students will trace the causal relationships between British policies, British responses to colonial grievances and the writing of the Declaration of Independence (e.g., Stamp Act, Quartering Act, Declaratory Act, Townshend Acts, Tea Act, Intolerable Acts).

During the French and Indian War, the English and the French fought over land west of the colonies. The colonists supported the English and fought in their army. The English won the war, but the war left the English in heavy debt. England used the colonies to raise money to pay their debts. King George III and Parliament decided that **taxing** the colonists was the best way to raise money. When this was decided, the colonists did not have representation in the English Parliament.

King George and **Parliament** passed various acts (laws) that taxed the colonists on **goods** and services. One was the Stamp Act, which taxed all printed materials, such as newspapers, legal documents, and playing cards. Colonists saw this as unfair because the taxes went directly to the English government, not the colonial governments. They began to organize and speak out with their complaints (grievances) against the king and Parliament. Colonists also sent a petition to the king stating that: 1) only colonial legislatures could tax colonists and 2) that taxation without representation went against the colonists' rights.

Parliament **repealed** the Stamp Act, but it passed the **Declaratory Act**, which stated that the British Parliament's authority extended to the colonies, and it had the power to make laws that applied to the colonists since they were British subjects. The next tax that was passed was the **Quartering Act**. Parliament ordered colonial legislatures to force colonists to house and feed English soldiers. Parliament also passed the **Townshend Acts**, which taxed other items, such as tea, glass, lead, and paints. The colonists then decided to boycott, or refuse to buy, many of the taxed items. They also continued to speak out against the actions of Parliament. Tensions continued to grow until protests in Boston turned violent when British soldiers panicked, shot and killed several people in what would become known as the **Boston Massacre**.

Some of Parliament's acts went beyond taxation, such as the **Tea Act**, which allowed the British East India Company to place a **monopoly** on the tea trade in the colonies; this led to the **Boston Tea Party**, an event where some colonists dressed as Native Americans, boarded three trade ships in the Boston Harbor and dumped 342 barrels of tea overboard into Boston Harbor. Another act beyond taxation was the **Coercive Acts** (also called the **Intolerable Acts**). In response to the Tea Act, this act closed the port of Boston so that ships could not get into the port to deliver goods and shut down some colonial legislatures. The colonists called the act "intolerable" because they could not continue to endure the injustice of the British monarch.

The relationship between England and the colonies grew worse as the Parliament passed such acts in the colonies and the colonists continued to oppose Parliament. The colonists organized, wrote petitions, and spoke out against the laws, but over time some of their actions grew violent. They began to form militias to fight the English troops in the colonies.

In January 1776, Thomas Paine published *Common Sense*. This pamphlet (booklet) criticized King George III and argued that the colonies should be independent from England. A few months later, Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence, which the Continental Congress formally approved on July 4, 1776.

goods - merchandise or objects for sale or trade

monopoly - complete control over a service or product

Parliament – the English legislature

repeal – to cancel or rescind

tax - money charged by a government for specific facilities or services

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