



*The Founding: From Colonies to  
the United States: SS.7.CG.1.5*  
**The Road to Independence**  
**READING #2**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



**SS.7.CG.1.5 Benchmark Clarification 2:** Students will recognize the underlying themes of British colonial policies concerning taxation, representation and individual rights that formed the basis of the American colonists' desire for independence.

The colonists' reasons for declaring independence can be summarized into three main themes: **individual rights**, taxation, and representation. Individual rights are rights guaranteed to a person. Colonists believed that King George III and the **Parliament** limited the colonists' individual rights by the laws that they passed and their reactions to colonial grievances. Colonists believed that their rights were limited by being taxed on various **goods** and services, while these **taxes** did not benefit the colonies. They also believed their rights were limited because their interests were not represented in the Parliament and their ability to govern in the colonies was taken away.

The English taxed goods and services the colonists used as a way to pay off the debt that resulted from the French and Indian War. Colonists believed this taxation was unfair because the tax money went directly to England, instead of returning to the colonies. The colonists also believed the taxes were unfair because the colonies were not represented in Parliament. Colonists believed that **taxation without representation** was wrong.

Representation was another main concern, specifically colonists' views and opinions being represented in Parliament and the colonists' ability to represent themselves in colonial governments. Colonists were not represented in Parliament; therefore their interests or opinions were not considered when laws were passed and other decisions made. Over time, the colonists' right to govern themselves was taken away when Parliament declared that the English had the highest authority to govern the colonies and when Parliament ended some colonial governments and put members of Parliament in charge.

**goods** - merchandise or objects for sale or trade

**individual rights** - rights guaranteed or belonging to a person

**Parliament** - the English legislature

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

**taxation without representation** - the idea that it is unfair to tax someone without giving them a voice in government

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