

SS.7.C.1.3

Describe how English policies and responses to colonial concerns led to the writing of the Declaration of Independence.

SS.7.C.1.3 Benchmark Clarification 1: Students will trace the causal relationships between English/British policies, English responses to colonial grievances, and the writing of the Declaration of Independence.

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 raise money, but the colonists did not have representation in the English Parliament when this was decided.

King George and **Parliament** passed a variety of 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 all of the taxes went directly to the English government, not to 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 can tax colonists, and 2) that taxation without representation went against the colonists' rights.

Parliament cancelled the Stamp Act, but it passed other acts. For example, Parliament ordered colonial legislatures to force colonists to house and feed English soldiers. Parliament also 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.

Some of Parliament's acts went beyond taxation. For example, the Coercive Acts (also called the Intolerable Acts) closed the port of Boston, so that ships could not get into the port to deliver goods. The Acts also shut down some colonial legislatures.

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 was formally approved by the Continental Congress on July 4, 1776.

goods - merchandise or objects for sale or trade

Parliament – the English legislature

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

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