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 located west of the colonies. The colonists supported the English and fought as part of their army. The English won the war, but the war left the English in debt and needing money. England looked to the colonies as a possible source of money, which led to a series of actions by King George III and the English Parliament (legislature) that upset the colonists. The king determined that one way to get rid of the debt was to tax the colonists. The colonists did not have representation in the English Parliament.

The king and Parliament passed a series of laws (acts) that impacted the colonists in a variety of ways. Some of the acts taxed the colonists on different goods and services and sent the money made from the taxes to the English government. One of these laws was the Stamp Act, which taxed all printed materials, such as newspapers, legal documents and playing cards. Colonists viewed this act as unfair because the taxes went directly to the English government, and not into the colonial governments. In response to the Stamp Act, the colonists began to organize and speak out with their complaints (grievances) against the king and Parliament for the tax. Colonists also sent a petition to King George III stating that only colonial legislatures can tax colonists and that taxation without representation went against the colonists' rights.

The Parliament’s response to this petition was to cancel the Stamp Act but it also passed other acts. Parliament ordered colonial legislatures to pay for English soldiers that were located in the colonies and they ordered colonists to house the soldiers and supply them with food. Parliament also began to tax other items, such as tea, glass, lead and paints. In response, the colonists decided to boycott, or refuse to purchase, many of the taxed items and continued to speak out against the actions of the Parliament. Some of the acts went beyond taxing goods and services and impacted colonists in other ways. One example of this was the Coercive Acts, known by colonists as the Intolerable Acts. The Acts closed the port of Boston and did not allow for ships to get into the port to deliver goods. The Acts also ended some of the colonial governments. The relationship between England and the colonies continued to worsen as the Parliament would pass and implement laws in the colonies and the colonists would continue to oppose the Parliament’s actions. The colonists continued to oppose the laws by organizing, writing petitions and speaking out against the laws, but over time they began to respond to English actions in a violent way. Colonists began to form militias and fight back against English troops in the colonies.

While fighting between English and colonial troops increased, in January of 1776 Thomas Paine published Common Sense. This 50-page pamphlet criticized King George III and argued for the colonies to be independent from England. A few months later, Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence, which was formally supported by the colonial Congress on July 4, 1776.

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

**Parliament** – the name of the English legislature

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

Sources:
