

DISCOVER AMERICA

Teacher Guide



Seeds of Revolution: Exploring Natural Rights and Liberty

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Key Themes

- Creating a Fair Government
- Natural Rights and Freedom
- The American Revolution
- The Role of Government
- Unity and Determination for Independence

Core Values

- Community
- Life
- Faith
- Liberty



Learning Objectives

Students will be able to

- Identify natural rights as the basic freedoms everyone should have, such as the right to be safe, make choices, and be happy.
- Analyze what it means to be free, including the ability to make their own choices.
- Explain why it's important for everyone to be treated fairly and how natural rights help protect fairness.
- Determine that Thomas Paine wrote *Common Sense* to help the colonists understand why they needed to be free.
- Understand that Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* helped many colonists decide to fight for their freedom.
- Discuss that it is important for everyone to have a voice in decisions that affect them, just like the colonists wanted to have a say in their government.

Key Terms

- 0 1 **common sense:** using good judgment and thinking about what makes the most sense in a situation.
- 0 2 **constitution:** a set of rules that everyone in the country has to follow.
- 0 3 **freedom:** being able to make your own choices and having the power to do what's best for yourself, your family, and your community.
- 0 4 **government:** a system of rules and leaders that help keep people safe and make sure everyone is treated fairly.
- 0 5 **natural rights:** special freedoms that belong to you just because you are a human being.
- 0 6 **pamphlet:** a small booklet or paper that has information about something important.
- 0 7 **Parliament:** Britain's government.
- 0 8 **Quartering Act:** a law that forced the colonists to house, feed, and provide supplies for British soldiers who were stationed in their towns.
- 0 9 **Revolutionary War:** the fight between the colonies and Great Britain for the colonists' independence. It lasted from 1775 to 1783 and ended with the colonies winning their freedom and becoming the United States of America.
- 1 0 **Stamp Act:** a rule made by Great Britain that said the colonists had to pay extra money, called a tax, on things made from paper.
- 1 1 **unity:** working together and being strong as a group.

Introduction

TELL Students 🔑

Alright little patriots, imagine that inside each of you there is a special treasure chest. In this chest are some of the most valuable things you can think of — your natural rights. But what are natural rights? **Natural rights** are special rights that belong to you just because you are a human being. No one can take them away. Now, what kind of precious jewels, or natural rights, might be inside your treasure chest? Well, you have the right to life, which means the right to be safe and live your life. You also have the right to liberty, which means the freedom to make your own choices. And you have the right to pursue happiness, which means you can go after what makes you happy.

ASK Students

What special rights do everyone have? What does it mean to be free?

TELL Students 🔑

These natural rights are inside every one of us, just like treasures. When everyone has these rights, it helps protect our freedom and makes sure that we're all treated fairly. **Freedom** means being able to make your own choices and having the power to do what's best for yourself, your family, and your community. But how do natural rights protect freedom? Well, natural rights are like shields that protect our ability to make choices. For example, the right to life means we should be safe, and no one should hurt us. The right to liberty means we can choose what we want to do, like what games to play or what food to eat. The right to pursue happiness means we can try to do what makes us happy, like learning something new or helping others. Natural rights are important because they protect our freedom. They make sure everyone can be treated fairly and can live their life the way they choose. Imagine how it would feel if someone tried to take away your right to make choices or be safe — it wouldn't feel right, would it? That's why natural rights matter so much. They help protect who we are and how we live.

ASK Students

How would you feel if someone told you that you couldn't play the game that you and your friends picked to play on the playground? Would that be fair?

Introduction

TELL Students 🔑

Now, remember from our last class that the Stamp Act caused quite a stir in the colonies. Remember, the British government, or **Parliament**, created the **Stamp Act** to make the colonists pay taxes on things like newspapers and legal documents. But the colonists didn't have a say in the government. The colonists felt like their natural rights (remember, these are the rights to be safe and live your life, to make your own choices, and to go after what makes you happy) were being ignored and taken away, and that made them really upset. So, they started to speak up and demand their freedom. The Stamp Act, along with many other events like the Boston Tea Party and the Coercive Acts, led to the American Revolution. The **American Revolution** was a fight between the colonies and Great Britain for the colonists' independence. It lasted from 1775 to 1783 and ended with the colonies winning their freedom and becoming the United States of America.

ASK Students

What did the British government, or Parliament, make the colonists pay taxes on in the Stamp Act?

TELL Students 📷 🔑

The Stamp Act was one event that led to the American Revolution. Remember, that was a fight between the colonies and Great Britain that eventually led to the colonies becoming the United States of America. But there was also something else happening during this time — a new way of thinking — and that's where Thomas Paine comes in. **[Reference Thomas Paine Image]** Paine wrote a famous pamphlet called *Common Sense*, in which he said that the colonists had natural rights that couldn't be taken away by anyone — not even by a king. A **pamphlet** is a small booklet or paper that has information about something important. Paine's pamphlet helped the colonists understand that they didn't have to just accept being treated unfairly; they had the right to stand up and fight for their freedom.

ASK Students

What is the name of the famous pamphlet that Thomas Paine wrote to help the colonists understand their rights and fight for their freedom?

Introduction

TELL Students 🔑

Paine didn't just talk about the unfair treatment by Britain. He shared a new idea: that people should have the power to make decisions for themselves and govern their lives. This new way of thinking was just as important as events like the Stamp Act because it helped the colonists believe that standing up for their natural rights was not only their right — it was their duty. And this way of thinking — along with events like the Stamp Act — sparked the fight for independence, which led to the American Revolution. So, in a way, the Stamp Act made the colonists realize their rights were being taken, but Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* helped them understand that they had the right to protect those rights and create a new, fair government. The American Revolution wasn't just about fighting a war — it was about changing the way people thought about freedom and government. Let's watch a Star Spangled Adventures cartoon to learn more!

WATCH 🎬

Star Spangled Adventures Cartoon

Ep. 39: Common Sense/Thomas Paine/Natural Rights



Lesson

TELL Students 🗣️

In our Star Spangled Adventures episode, we saw that British soldiers were using colonists' land because of the Quartering Act. The **Quartering Act** was a law that required the colonists to provide housing, food, and supplies to British soldiers stationed in their towns, even though they didn't want them there. This made the colonists feel like their natural rights were being taken away, and they didn't like it. Remember, natural rights are the important freedoms everyone has just because they are human. These include the right to be safe, the right to make your own choices, and the right to pursue happiness. When the British soldiers forced themselves into the colonists' homes, the colonists' rights were being ignored. This unfairness pushed the colonists to start thinking about how they could protect their natural rights and freedom. And that's where Thomas Paine comes in.

ASK Students

What was the Quartering Act, and how did it make the colonists feel?

TELL Students 🗣️

Remember we talked about how the colonists were upset because their natural rights were being taken away. Well, around that time, Thomas Paine helped the colonists understand why they needed to fight for their rights. In January 1776, Thomas Paine published *Common Sense* in Philadelphia. **[Reference Common Sense Image]** He wrote in a way that everyone, no matter their background, could understand. He used simple language and ideas that were common at the time, like popular sayings and religious references. (If *Common Sense* was written today, it might have memes, hashtags, and movie quotes to help explain things!)

ASK Students

What is the name of the pamphlet Thomas Paine published in 1776? What did the pamphlet do?

TELL Students 🗣️

Thomas Paine's writing was an invitation for all the colonists to think about independence. They didn't need a special school degree or experience in politics to have a valid opinion. All the colonists needed to make a decision about independence was common sense — something that everyone should have!

Lesson

TELL Students (continued)

Common sense means using good judgment and thinking about what makes the most sense in a situation. It's like when you make decisions based on what seems fair and right, without needing fancy words or special knowledge. Thomas Paine wanted to show the colonists that they didn't need to be experts to understand why they should fight for their freedom — they just needed to use their common sense!

ASK Students

What did Thomas Paine want the colonists to use?

TELL Students 🦋

In his pamphlet *Common Sense*, Thomas Paine told the colonists why they needed to break away from Great Britain. He argued that people should have their own government and not be ruled by kings. But what is a government? A **government** is a system of rules and leaders that help keep people safe and make sure everyone is treated fairly. Leaders like the President of the United States are part of the government in our country. But Parliament was very different from the government we have today. Let's take a closer look at some of the key ideas Thomas Paine wrote about: First, he said that a government is a "necessary evil," meaning people need a government to keep them safe and to protect their freedom. But Paine believed that the government should be chosen by the people, not forced upon them.

ASK Students

What did Thomas Paine think people should have instead of being ruled by kings?

TELL Students 📷

Paine also explained why monarchies (governments led by kings and queens) were a bad idea.

[Reference Monarchy Image] He said that there is no natural or religious reason why kings should rule over everyone else. According to Paine, all people are equal, and one person shouldn't be above others just because of their birth. He believed this idea went against the rights of nature and the teachings of God.

Lesson

ASK Students

What did Thomas Paine say about why kings and queens should not rule over everyone?

TELL Students

Next, Paine argued that the colonists' relationship with Great Britain was so bad that it could never be fixed. He believed it was time for the colonies to separate from Great Britain. Thomas Paine said the colonists had everything they needed to defend themselves, like materials and people. He also said that the time to declare independence was now. He explained that the strength of the colonists didn't just come from how many people there were, but from their unity. **Unity** means working together and being strong as a group, even if the group doesn't have the largest numbers. Finally, Paine said that the time had come for the colonists to create a government of their own. He believed that having their own government was a natural right, meaning it was something everyone deserves. Paine thought people should govern themselves and not be ruled by a king, and he believed the colonies deserved a fair system of government.

ASK Students

What did Thomas Paine say about the colonies' relationship with Great Britain?

TELL Students

So, what did Thomas Paine suggest for the type of government the colonies should have after they became independent? He argued that the colonies needed a strong government where "the law is king." This meant that the law should be the most important thing, and everyone, even rulers, had to follow it. In other countries, rulers often made laws and forced them on people. But Thomas Paine believed the colonies had a chance to do it differently — by creating laws first, and then having leaders who made sure the laws were followed.

ASK Students

What did Thomas Paine think the colonies needed after they became independent?

TELL Students

The law Thomas Paine had in mind was a written constitution. A **constitution** is a set of rules that everyone in the country has to follow.

Lesson

TELL Students (continued)

Paine thought a constitution would be a strong promise to protect each person's rights, including their right to practice religion, work in any job, or own property. **[Reference United States Constitution Image]** He believed that everyone should be treated equally under the law, not just some people.

ASK Students

What did Thomas Paine believe a constitution would do for the people?

TELL Students

Paine also wanted the people to have a say in their government through "large and equal representation." This meant that everyone should be able to have a voice and be fairly represented in government. This was very different from what the colonists had with Great Britain, where they had no say in the laws. Remember from our course on the Stamp Act that the colonists were upset because they were being taxed, and they had no voice in the British government to help make those decisions. Paine believed that, just like the colonists deserved to have a say in what laws they had to follow, everyone should be able to have their voice heard in the government.

ASK Students

What did Thomas Paine believe the people should have in their government that was different from what the colonists had with Great Britain?

TELL Students 📷

Thomas Paine's ideas in *Common Sense* spread quickly through the colonies and became very popular among important leaders like George Washington. Paine's pamphlet helped unite the colonists around the idea of independence and was a very important part of the journey to the American Revolution. Without *Common Sense*, the colonists might not have come together to fight for their freedom and create the country we live in today. **[Reference American Flag Image]** The ideas Paine shared helped lead to the founding of the United States of America, where we have the freedom to make choices, practice our religion, and live in a government where we can have a say in the laws that affect us.



Rights and Rhythm: The Natural Rights Song

Objective

Kindergarten students will learn a fun song about natural rights to help them understand the basic freedoms everyone has, like the right to be safe, make choices, and be happy.

Materials Needed

- Space for students to move around
- Simple visuals or flashcards with images representing each right (life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness)

Song Lyrics (to the tune of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star")

Verse 1: Natural rights are gifts we own,

Safety, freedom, all our own.

The right to live and make our choice,

To speak and act, we have a voice.

Natural rights are gifts we own,

Safety, freedom, all our own.

Verse 2: Liberty is the right to choose,

What we wear, what we use.

Happiness is what we seek,

To laugh and play, to feel unique.

Liberty is the right to choose,

What we wear, what we use.

Verse 3: Natural rights, they make us strong,

They help us live where we belong.

We all deserve to be so free,

Living happily, you and me!

Natural rights, they make us strong,

They help us live where we belong.



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Rights and Rhythm: The Natural Rights Song

Movements

To help students understand the concept of natural rights, incorporate the following movements while singing

- For "Natural rights are gifts we own": Students can place their hands over their hearts, as if protecting something precious.
- For "Safety, freedom, all our own": Students can spread their arms wide, showing they are free and safe in the world.
- For "The right to live and make our choice": Students can point to their heads, then make a gesture as if choosing between two objects in front of them (showing they have the right to make choices).
- For "To speak and act, we have a voice": Students can mime holding a microphone to their mouth, symbolizing the right to speak.
- For "Liberty is the right to choose": Students can place their hands on their hips and act as if they are confidently making a choice.
- For "Happiness is what we seek": Students can clap their hands or twirl around to represent the joy of pursuing happiness.
- For "Natural rights, they make us strong": Students can flex their muscles or stand tall and strong, showing how natural rights help people stand firm and live confidently.

Activity Steps

1. **Introduction:** Briefly explain to students that they have three important rights: the right to be safe, the right to make choices, and the right to pursue happiness.
2. **Song:** Teach students the song lyrics, singing one line at a time, and encourage them to follow along with the hand movements.
3. **Practice:** Once they've learned the song, practice singing and performing it with the movements, emphasizing the meaning of each natural right.
4. **Interactive Follow-up:** Ask students to share examples of times when they felt safe, made choices, or were happy, reinforcing how these are all part of their natural rights.

Conclusion

This interactive activity helps kindergartners learn about natural rights in a fun and memorable way through song and movement, making the concepts easy to understand.



Objective

Kindergarten students will learn about Thomas Paine and his pamphlet *Common Sense* in a fun, interactive way, focusing on how Paine helped the colonists understand their natural rights and why they needed to fight for freedom.

Materials Needed

- Flashcards with images representing natural rights (safety, liberty, happiness) provided below
- Simple props or costumes (optional) for acting out the roles of colonists and King George or British Parliament
- A space for students to move around

Introduction

Start by explaining to students that Thomas Paine was a very important man who helped the colonists understand why they should fight for their rights. Paine wrote a pamphlet called *Common Sense*, and it helped people understand that they didn't have to accept being treated unfairly anymore — they had the right to stand up and fight for their freedom. Show them flashcards with images of natural rights:

- A picture of a house or a shield (representing safety)
- A picture of a person voting (representing liberty or freedom of choice)
- A picture of a happy face (representing the pursuit of happiness)

Ask the students

Can you tell me what these pictures show? These are your natural rights!

Paine's Message Through Acting

To help students understand Paine's message, set up a skit. You can ask for volunteers or have the whole class join in.

- Act 1: The King's Unfair Rule
 - Show a flashcard of King George or Parliament and say, "Imagine you're living in a country where a king tells you what to do and doesn't let you make your own choices. He even takes away your right to be safe in your own home!"



- Have one student pretend to be King George or Parliament, and another pretend to be a colonist who is upset because their natural rights are being taken away. Have the colonist say, "That's not fair! I have the right to be safe, to choose what I do, and to be happy!"
- Act 2: Paine's *Common Sense*
 - Now, bring in a "Paine" character (this could be another volunteer or a teacher) holding a "pamphlet" (a rolled-up piece of paper).
 - Paine can say, "I wrote *Common Sense*! I want everyone to know that they don't have to live like this anymore! We can be free and make our own choices!" Have Paine encourage the other colonists (students) to say together: "We want to be free! We have the right to make our own choices!" Let the students act out cheering and showing their excitement to stand up for their rights.

Understanding *Common Sense*

After the skit, gather the students in a circle and tell them, "Thomas Paine wanted everyone to know that they can stand up for their rights! He didn't want them to be afraid or feel powerless!"

- Give each student a flashcard with one of the natural rights (safety, liberty, or happiness). Ask them to act out one thing they would do to stand up for that right.
- Example: A student with a "liberty" flashcard could pretend to choose what game to play, or a student with a "happiness" card could pretend to be playing with their favorite toy.

Conclusion

This activity helps kindergarten students engage with Thomas Paine's ideas and the importance of natural rights through a combination of skits and movement. By actively participating, they will better understand how Paine's *Common Sense* inspired the colonists to fight for their rights and freedom.

Flashcards: Paine's Path to Common Sense

Safety



Liberty



Pursuit of
Happiness



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Common Sense in Action!



Objective

Kindergarten students will practice using "common sense" in situations that are relevant to their everyday lives. They will understand that common sense helps us make fair and thoughtful decisions, just like Thomas Paine encouraged the colonists to do in *Common Sense*.

Materials Needed

- Flashcards with simple scenarios (provided below)
- A "Common Sense" badge or sticker for each student (optional)
- Space for students to move around and role-play

Introduction

Start by explaining what common sense means: "Common sense is using your good judgment to make decisions that are fair and right." Let students know that, just like Thomas Paine wanted the colonists to use common sense when deciding about their freedom, we can use common sense every day to make decisions that are fair for everyone.

- Ask the students: "Can you think of a time when you used your common sense to solve a problem?"
- Guide them to understand that common sense helps them make decisions that keep them safe and happy.

Scenario Practice

Show the students flashcards with simple, relatable scenarios. Each card will present a situation where they need to use common sense to decide what's fair or right. After you read the scenario, ask the class to discuss what would be the fair or sensible thing to do. Here are some example scenarios:

- **Scenario 1: "You and your friend both want to play with the same toy. What should you do?"**
 - Ask: "What would be the fair way to share the toy?" (Encourage ideas like taking turns or playing together.)
- **Scenario 2: "Your friend is feeling sad. What can you do to make them feel better?"**
 - Ask: "How can you show kindness using common sense?" (Encourage students to give a hug, say something kind, or offer to play with them.)
- **Scenario 3: "You see a piece of trash on the playground. What should you do?"**
 - Ask: "What's the right thing to do with the trash?" (Encourage picking it up and throwing it away to keep the area clean.)



Common Sense in Action!



- **Scenario 4: "Your classmate is talking while the teacher is giving instructions. What can you do?"**
 - Ask: "What's the fair and respectful way to act in this situation?" (Encourage raising hands or waiting for their turn to talk.)
- **Scenario 5: "Someone is holding the door open for you, but you're too far away. What should you do?"**
 - Ask: "Should you run to the door quickly, or should you wait and thank the person when you get there?" (Encourage waiting and saying thank you.)
- **Scenario 6: "You see a friend playing by themselves and looking lonely. What can you do?"**
 - Ask: "How can you use common sense to make them feel included?" (Encourage inviting them to play or asking if they want company.)
- **Scenario 7: "You're in line to get lunch, and someone cuts in front of you. What should you do?"**
 - Ask: "How can you solve this problem fairly?" (Encourage students to kindly ask the person to go to the back of the line or to tell a teacher if needed.)
- **Scenario 8: "You have a big box of crayons, and your friend only has one crayon. What should you do?"**
 - Ask: "What would be a fair thing to do?" (Encourage students to share some crayons with their friend.)

Role-Playing with Common Sense

Have the students act out different scenarios in pairs or small groups. After reading each scenario, ask students to take turns role-playing the situation, demonstrating how they would use common sense. For example, if the scenario is about sharing a toy, one student can act as the person who wants the toy, and another can act as the friend sharing it. Encourage students to use simple phrases like:

- "Let's take turns!"
- "How can I help?"
- "Let's keep things fair and clean!"

"Common Sense" Badge/Sticker

After each student participates in a scenario, give them a "Common Sense" badge or sticker as a reward for making thoughtful, fair decisions. This will help them feel proud of their actions and encourage them to continue using common sense in real-life situations.



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Common Sense in Action!



Reflection

At the end of the activity, gather the students and ask them:

- "How did using common sense help you in these situations?"
- "How can we use common sense to make sure everyone is treated fairly at school?"

Conclusion

This activity helps kindergarten students understand and practice the idea of common sense through relatable situations. By using common sense, they can make decisions that are fair and kind, just like Thomas Paine encouraged the colonists to do in their fight for freedom. The activity helps students connect the concept of common sense to their daily lives, empowering them to use it in ways that promote fairness and kindness.



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Scenario Cards: Common Sense In Action

Scenario 1

"You and your friend both want to play with the same toy. What should you do?"

Ask: "What would be the fair way to share the toy?" (Encourage ideas like taking turns or playing together.)

Scenario 2

"Your friend is feeling sad. What can you do to make them feel better?"

Ask: "How can you show kindness using common sense?" (Encourage students to give a hug, say something kind, or offer to play with them.)

Scenario 3

"You see a piece of trash on the playground. What should you do?"

Ask: "What's the right thing to do with the trash?" (Encourage picking it up and throwing it away to keep the area clean.)

Scenario 4

"Your classmate is talking while the teacher is giving instructions. What can you do?"

Ask: "What's the fair and respectful way to act in this situation?" (Encourage raising hands or waiting for their turn to talk.)



Scenario Cards: Common Sense In Action

Scenario 5

"Someone is holding the door open for you, but you're too far away. What should you do?"

Ask: "Should you run to the door quickly, or should you wait and thank the person when you get there?" (Encourage waiting and saying thank you.)

Scenario 6

"You see a friend playing by themselves and looking lonely. What can you do?"

Ask: "How can you use common sense to make them feel included?" (Encourage inviting them to play or asking if they want company.)

Scenario 7

"You're in line to get lunch, and someone cuts in front of you. What should you do?"

Ask: "How can you solve this problem fairly?" (Encourage students to kindly ask the person to go to the back of the line or to tell a teacher if needed.)

Scenario 8

"You have a big box of crayons, and your friend only has one crayon. What should you do?"

Ask: "What would be a fair thing to do?" (Encourage students to share some crayons with their friend.)



Resources

- <https://www.mountvernon.org/library/digitalhistory/digital-encyclopedia/article/thomas-paine>
- <https://constitutioncenter.org/the-constitution/historic-document-library/detail/thomas-paine-common-sense-1776>
- <https://www.history.com/news/thomas-paine-common-sense-revolution>
- <https://oll.libertyfund.org/pages/1776-paine-common-sense-pamphlet>
- <https://oll.libertyfund.org/pages/1776-paine-common-sense-pamphlet>
- <https://www.history.com/news/thomas-paine-common-sense-revolution>

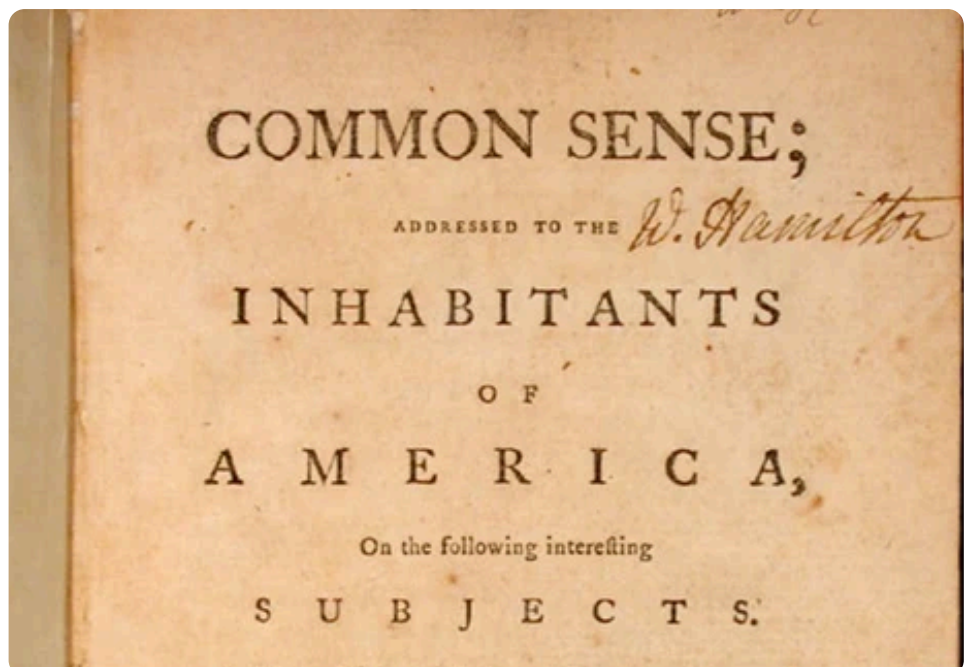
Images

Thomas Paine



Credit: Wikipedia

Common Sense



Credit: Wikipedia

Images

Monarchy



Credit: Canva Pro

United States Constitution



Credit: Canva Pro

Images

American Flag



Credit: Canva Pro

Notes

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