

# 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

- Understand the concept of natural rights and be able to explain that they are rights that belong to all humans by virtue of being human.
- Identify and describe the three key natural rights: the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.
- Explain why natural rights are important and how they protect personal freedom and fairness.
- Describe how the colonists felt British Laws, such as the Stamp Act, violated their natural rights, and how this violation led to the American Revolution.
- Analyze the concept of a revolution and explain how the colonists fought to change their government in order to protect their natural rights.
- Describe how Thomas Paine's pamphlet *Common Sense* helped the colonists understand that they should fight for their rights and independence.
- Reflect on how the ideas from *Common Sense* shaped the country they live in today, including the right to participate in government and the protection of individual freedoms.

# Key Terms

- 0 1 **apprentice:** someone who works under someone else to learn a trade or skill.
- 0 2 **common sense:** using good judgment and thinking about what makes the most sense in a situation.
- 0 3 **constitution:** a set of rules that everyone in the country has to follow.
- 0 4 **Declaration of Independence:** a document that explained why the colonies wanted to break away from Great Britain.
- 0 5 **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 6 **government:** a system of rules and leaders that help keep people safe and make sure everyone is treated fairly.
- 0 7 **natural rights:** special freedoms that belong to you just because you are a human being.
- 0 8 **pamphlet:** a small booklet or paper that has information about something important.
- 0 9 **Parliament:** Britain's government.
- 1 0 **privateer:** a ship owned by a private individual or group that was authorized by the government to attack enemy ships, especially during wartime.
- 1 1 **Quartering Act:** a law that forced the colonists to house, feed, and provide supplies for British soldiers who were stationed in their towns.
- 1 2 **revolution:** when a group of people fights to change the way they are governed, or when their way of thinking changes to lead them to act differently.
- 1 3 **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.

# Key Terms

- 14 **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.
- 15 **unity:** working together and being strong as a group.

# Introduction

## TELL Students ↗

Alright, little patriots, let's talk about something very important — natural rights. But what exactly are natural rights? **Natural rights** are special freedoms that belong to you simply because you are a human being. **Freedom** means being able to make your own choices and do what's best for yourself, your family, and your community. These natural rights are so important that no one can take them away from you. Think about the things that are natural in the world, like the sun rising in the sky or the trees growing tall. Just like those natural things, our natural rights are a part of who we are. Now, let's explore some of these natural rights!

- You have the right to life, which means you should be safe and live your life free from harm.
- You have the right to liberty, which means you have the freedom to make your own choices — like what games you want to play or what you want to be when you grow up.
- You have the right to pursue happiness, which means you can chase after what makes you happy — like learning something new, helping others, or doing what you love.

These natural rights are gifts that help keep you free and ensure that everyone can live their life the way they choose. They're not things anyone can take away because they're natural to who we are — just like the world around us.

## ASK Students

What are natural rights? Why do you think they are important?

## TELL Students

These natural rights are inside each of us and are essential for keeping us free and safe. When everyone has these rights, it helps preserve our freedom and ensures that we are all treated fairly. But how exactly do natural rights protect freedom? Well, natural rights act like shields that defend our ability to make choices. For example, the right to life means we should be safe, and no one should harm us. The right to liberty means we can choose what we want to do, like picking what games to play or deciding what food to eat. The right to pursue happiness means we have the freedom to go after what makes us happy, whether that's learning something new or helping others. Natural rights are important. They make sure that everyone has the opportunity to live their life the way they choose. Imagine how it would feel if someone took away your right to make choices or to be safe — it wouldn't be right, would it? That's why natural rights are so important. They protect who we are and how we live.

# Introduction

## ASK Students

Why is it important for everyone to have the right to make their own choices and to be safe?

## TELL Students

Now that we've talked about why it's important for everyone to be safe and make their own choices, let's look at how these natural rights played a big role in the history of the colonies. Remember, the colonists didn't have the right to make choices about the laws they had to follow. One example is the Stamp Act. 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 had no say in this decision, and they felt that their natural rights — the right to be safe, to make their own choices, and to pursue happiness — were being ignored. This made the colonists upset, and they began to speak out for their freedom. The Stamp Act was just one example of how the British government was treating the colonists unfairly. Later, the colonists protested during the Boston Tea Party by dumping taxed tea into the harbor because they felt they shouldn't be taxed without having a say in government. Then came the Coercive Acts (which the colonists called the "Intolerable Acts"), laws that closed the port of Boston and took away some of the colonists' rights. All of these actions — the Stamp Act, the Boston Tea Party, and the Coercive Acts — led to the **American Revolution**, a fight between the colonies and Great Britain. The Revolution lasted from 1775 to 1783, and it ended with the colonies winning their freedom and forming the United States of America. These events show how important it was for the colonists to protect their natural rights and why they would no longer accept being treated unfairly.

## ASK Students

Why do you think the colonists were so upset about the Stamp Act and the Coercive Acts, and how did these laws affect their natural rights? Please turn to your neighbor to discuss. [Give students three minutes to discuss with a neighbor and then discuss as a class.]

## TELL Students

After the Stamp Act and other unfair laws, the colonists realized their natural rights were being ignored. This feeling of unfairness led to what is called a revolution. A **revolution** happens when a group of people fights to change the way they are governed, or when their way of thinking changes, leading them to act differently. The American Revolution was a fight between the colonies and Great Britain.

# Introduction

## **TELL** Students (continued)

Eventually, this revolution led to the colonies becoming the United States of America. But there was more happening at this time than just fighting — it was also a revolution of thought. That's where Thomas Paine comes in. **[Reference Thomas Paine Image]** He wrote a famous pamphlet called *Common Sense*, in which he explained that the colonists had natural rights that shouldn't be violated by anyone — not even a king. A **pamphlet** is a small booklet or paper that shares important information. Paine's pamphlet helped the colonists understand that they didn't have to accept being treated unfairly. They had the right to stand up for their freedom and fight for it. Paine's ideas inspired many colonists to believe they deserved to be free and make their own choices. This belief led them to decide to fight for their independence from Great Britain.

## **ASK** Students

How do you think Thomas Paine's pamphlet, *Common Sense*, helped the colonists understand that they had the right to fight for their freedom?

## **TELL** Students

Paine didn't just talk about how unfair Britain's treatment was; he introduced a new idea that was very important. He believed that people should have the power to make decisions for themselves and govern their own lives. This shift in thinking was just as important as events like the Stamp Act because it helped the colonists understand that standing up for their natural rights wasn't just the right thing to do — it was their duty. By changing the way they thought about their rights and freedom, the colonists realized they had the right to protect those rights and create a fair government. This change in thinking, combined with events like the Stamp Act, sparked the fight for independence, leading to the American Revolution. 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 power to defend those rights and build a government that would respect them. The American Revolution wasn't just about fighting a war — it was about changing the way people thought about freedom and government. Now, let's watch a Star Spangled Adventures cartoon to learn more!

# Introduction

## WATCH ▶

Star Spangled Adventures Cartoon

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



# Lesson

## TELL Students

In our Star Spangled Adventures episode, we learned that British soldiers were occupying colonists' property because of the Quartering Act. The **Quartering Act** was a law that required the colonists to provide housing, food, and supplies for British soldiers stationed in their towns, even though the colonists did not want them there. This felt like a violation of the colonists' natural rights, and they were understandably upset. Remember, natural rights are the basic freedoms that belong to all people simply 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 British soldiers forced themselves into the colonists' property, the colonists felt that their rights to safety and personal freedom were being ignored. This feeling of injustice — of having their rights taken away — led the colonists to think about how they could protect their natural rights and preserve their freedom. And that's where Thomas Paine comes in.

## ASK Students

Why do you think the colonists felt their natural rights were being violated when British soldiers were forced onto their property?

## TELL Students

Remember that we discussed how the colonists were upset because their natural rights were being taken away. Around this time, Thomas Paine helped the colonists understand why they needed to stand up for their rights. In January 1776, Paine published *Common Sense* in Philadelphia.

**[Reference Common Sense Image]** He wrote in a way that was easy for everyone to understand, no matter their education or background. Paine used simple language and ideas that were familiar to the colonists, such as popular sayings and religious references. (If *Common Sense* were written today, it might include memes, hashtags, or even movie quotes to make the ideas easier to grasp!) Paine's clear writing helped the colonists realize they had the right to fight for their freedom and protect their natural rights.

## ASK Students

How do you think Thomas Paine's early life might have influenced the way he thought about freedom and fighting for rights?

# Lesson

## TELL Students

Thomas Paine was born in 1737 in Thetford, England. His family faced financial struggles, so Paine left school at the age of 13 to work as an **apprentice**, which means he worked under someone to learn a trade or skill, in his father's shop. As Paine grew older, he faced several challenges in his career. At 20, he worked briefly as a sailor on a privateer. A **privateer** was a ship owned by a private individual or group that was authorized by the government to attack enemy ships, especially during wartime. Afterward, Paine tried to start a business, but it failed. He then worked as a tax collector, but he was fired twice. The second time he was fired was because he attempted to get the government to pay him and his colleagues more money for their work, but his efforts failed. This experience made him feel frustrated with the British government.

## ASK Students

Why do you think Thomas Paine faced so many challenges in his early life? How might those experiences have shaped his ideas later on?

## TELL Students

In 1774, while in London, Thomas Paine met Benjamin Franklin. **[Reference Benjamin Franklin Image]** Then, at the age of 37, Paine moved to North America, where he found a job as a journalist in Philadelphia. When he arrived, the colonists were very unhappy with the British government. They were upset because the British government was making them pay taxes without letting them have a say in Parliament, and they felt their freedoms were being taken away. For nearly ten years, the colonists had tried to get the British government to listen to their concerns, but nothing changed. Paine saw the anger and frustration of the colonists firsthand. Encouraged by Benjamin Franklin and Dr. Benjamin Rush (a doctor and later a signer of the Declaration of Independence), Paine decided to write a pamphlet about the problems between the colonists and Great Britain. While other writers thought the colonies should try to fix their relationship with Britain, Paine argued that they should seek independence. At the time, this idea seemed impossible to many people, but Paine's message inspired many to fight for their freedom.

## ASK Students

Why did Thomas Paine want the colonies to become independent from Britain? How do you think his ideas helped the colonists?

# Lesson

## TELL Students ↗

Paine's writing was an invitation for all the colonists to think about independence. He believed they didn't need special education or political experience to decide whether they should break away from Britain. All they needed was common sense — something everyone has! **Common sense** means using good judgment and thinking about what makes the most sense in a situation. It's when you make decisions based on what seems fair and right, without needing complicated words or special knowledge. Paine wanted the colonists to know they didn't have to be experts to understand why they should fight for their freedom. They just needed to use their common sense to realize that standing up for their rights was the right thing to do! This simple but powerful message helped many colonists understand that they had the right to demand independence and fight for their freedom.

## ASK Students

Why do you think Thomas Paine believed that everyone, even without special education, could understand why the colonies needed to fight for their freedom?

## TELL Students ↗

That is right! Thomas Paine knew that everyone could use their common sense, even without special education, to understand why the colonies needed to fight for their freedom. So, what does common sense mean, and how did Thomas Paine want the colonists to use it? In his pamphlet *Common Sense*, Paine explained to 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. It's the group of people that makes decisions for the country, helps protect our rights, and makes sure things are fair for everyone. 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 protect their freedom. However, Paine believed that the government should be chosen by the people, not forced upon them by a king or anyone else. This idea led to the creation of the government we have today in the United States of America. In our country, we elect leaders to represent us, and they work to make sure our rights are protected.

# Lesson

## **TELL** Students (continued)

We get to help choose who leads us through voting, and everyone has the right to have a say in the rules we follow. This is very different from the way things were under a king, which is why Paine's ideas were so important in creating a fair system for everyone.

## **ASK** Students

What is a government? How is the government we have today in the United States different from the government under a king?

## **TELL** Students

Paine explained that monarchies, or governments led by kings and queens, were a bad idea. He said there is no natural or religious reason why kings should rule over everyone else. According to Paine, all people are equal, and no one should be above others just because of their birth. He believed this idea went against the rights of nature and even the teachings of God. Paine's ideas helped inspire the Declaration of Independence, which is an important document written in 1776.

The **Declaration of Independence** is a document that explained why the colonies wanted to break away from Great Britain. It said that all people have the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and no one should be ruled by a king who does not respect these rights. The Declaration of Independence also said that if a government is not treating people fairly, the people have the right to create a new government that will protect their rights. So, Paine's writing helped the colonists understand that they did not have to live under a king's rule anymore, and the Declaration of Independence declared this belief. The colonists had the right to create a government that was fair and that listened to the people, and that's exactly what they did when they declared independence and eventually formed the United States of America.

## **ASK** Students

Why did Paine believe that no one should be ruled by a king? How did his ideas help lead to the Declaration of Independence?

## **TELL** Students

Paine argued that the colonists' relationship with Great Britain had become so strained that it could no longer be repaired.

# Lesson

## **TELL** Students (continued)

He believed it was time for the colonies to completely separate from Britain. Paine stated, “Reconciliation is now a fallacious dream,” meaning that there was no hope of making peace with Britain anymore. He pointed out that the colonists had the resources and the people they needed to defend themselves, and the moment to declare independence had arrived. Paine also stressed that the strength of the colonists did not lie solely in their numbers, but in their unity. **Unity** means working together and being strong as a group. This idea of unity had been growing in the colonies, especially after events like the Great Awakening, which helped unite people around shared values, and the Stamp Act, which brought colonies together to protest. Their unity and determination to fight for freedom were the driving forces that gave the colonies the power to challenge British rule. Finally, Paine argued that it was time for the colonists to create their own government. Paine thought that people should govern themselves and not be ruled by a king. He believed the colonies deserved a fair government, one that would protect their rights and listen to the people.

## **ASK** Students

Why do you think Paine believed that the colonies needed to be united to fight for their independence? How did unity help the colonists?

## **TELL** Students

After discussing the importance of unity, Paine argued that the colonies needed a strong government where “the law is king.” This meant that the law should be the most important thing in the government, and everyone — whether they were rulers or citizens — had to follow it. In many countries at the time, rulers made laws on their own and forced the people to obey without giving them a voice in the process. Paine believed that this way of governing was unfair and that the colonists deserved better. Paine thought the colonies had a unique opportunity to do things differently. He believed that instead of a king making all the decisions, the colonies could create their own laws. These laws would be made to ensure that everyone, including the leaders, were treated fairly. Then, the leaders would be responsible for following and enforcing those laws, making sure they applied to everyone equally. Paine’s idea was that the government should be created by the people and for the people, not just for a king or ruler. This way, the government would work to protect people’s rights, and no one would be above the law.

# Lesson

## ASK Students

Why do you think Paine believed that the law should be the most important thing in the government? How would this make the government fair for everyone?

## TELL Students

Now that we've talked about why Paine thought the law should be the most important thing in government, let's look at the kind of law Paine had in mind. Paine wanted the colonies to have a written constitution. A **constitution** is a set of rules that everyone in the country has to follow, which ensures that the government treats everyone fairly and equally. Paine believed that this constitution would be a strong promise to protect each person's rights, such as the right to practice religion, work in any job, or own property. He thought it was important that everyone be treated equally under the law — not just some people. Paine also believed the government's job was to protect the people's freedom of religion so that everyone could worship in their own way. Paine's ideas are very similar to the principles in the United States Constitution today, which was created to protect people's rights and make sure everyone is treated fairly. Just like Paine wanted, the United States Constitution guarantees that we can choose our religion, express our opinions, and live freely—showing how Paine's vision helped shape the country we live in today.

## ASK Students

Why do you think Paine wanted everyone to be treated equally under the law? How does the United States Constitution help make sure that happens?

## TELL Students

Paine also believed that the people should have a say in their government through "large and equal representation." This meant that everyone should have a voice and be fairly represented when decisions are being made. This idea was very different from what the colonists had with Great Britain, where they had no say in the laws that affected them. Remember from our lesson on the Stamp Act that the colonists were upset because they were being taxed by Britain, but they didn't have a voice in the British government to help make those decisions. Paine thought this was very unfair. He believed that, just as the colonists deserved to have a say in the laws they had to follow, everyone should be able to have their voice heard in their government.

# Lesson

## **TELL** Students (continued)

Paine's idea of fair representation is very important in our government today, where people can vote for leaders who listen to their needs and protect their rights.

## **ASK** Students

Why do you think it's important for everyone to have a voice in the government? How does the United States Constitution help make sure that happens?

## **TELL** Students

Thomas Paine believed it was important for everyone to have a say in the government because he thought that people should have the power to make decisions about the laws that affect their lives. Paine argued that it wasn't fair for one person, like a king, to make decisions without listening to the people. He believed that everyone should be able to have their voice heard and be represented fairly in government. Paine's ideas in *Common Sense* spread quickly throughout the colonies and became very popular. Important leaders, like George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, read it.

## **ASK** Students

Imagine if everyone had to follow laws made by just one person, like a king, without having a say in them. What do you think life would be like if we didn't have the ideas in *Common Sense* and the right to have our voices heard in government?

## **TELL** Students

Without *Common Sense*, the colonists might not have come together to fight for their freedom. Paine's ideas 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. Today, just like Paine believed, we continue to have the right to vote and choose leaders who represent us and protect our freedoms. Paine's vision for fair representation and the importance of everyone having a voice in government is still at the heart of how our country is run.



# Paine's Pamphlet Creation



## Objective

Second-grade students will create their own pamphlet, similar to Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*, to explain the importance of natural rights to their friends in a simple and clear way.

## Materials Needed

- Paper
- Crayons, Markers, and Pencils
- Examples of simple rights (e.g., "The right to be safe," "The right to make your own choices," "The right to pursue happiness.")

## Introduction

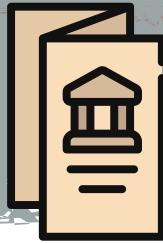
Start by explaining that Thomas Paine wrote a pamphlet called *Common Sense* to explain to the colonists why they should fight for their freedom and protect their rights. Paine wanted everyone to understand that they have special rights just because they are human, like the right to be safe, to make their own choices, and to be happy. Tell the students they will be creating their own pamphlet, just like Paine's, to explain why natural rights are important to them and their friends.

## Pamphlet Creation

- Have each student take a piece of paper and fold it into thirds to make a simple pamphlet.
- Ask the students to draw pictures and write simple sentences inside their pamphlet about the natural rights everyone has. For example, they can draw pictures of people being safe, making choices, and being happy. Below each picture, they can write sentences like:
  - "Everyone has the right to be safe."
  - "We all can make our own choices."
  - "It's important to make good choices."
- Encourage students to think of their own rights or important things they want others to understand about freedom and fairness.



# Paine's Pamphlet Creation



## Sharing

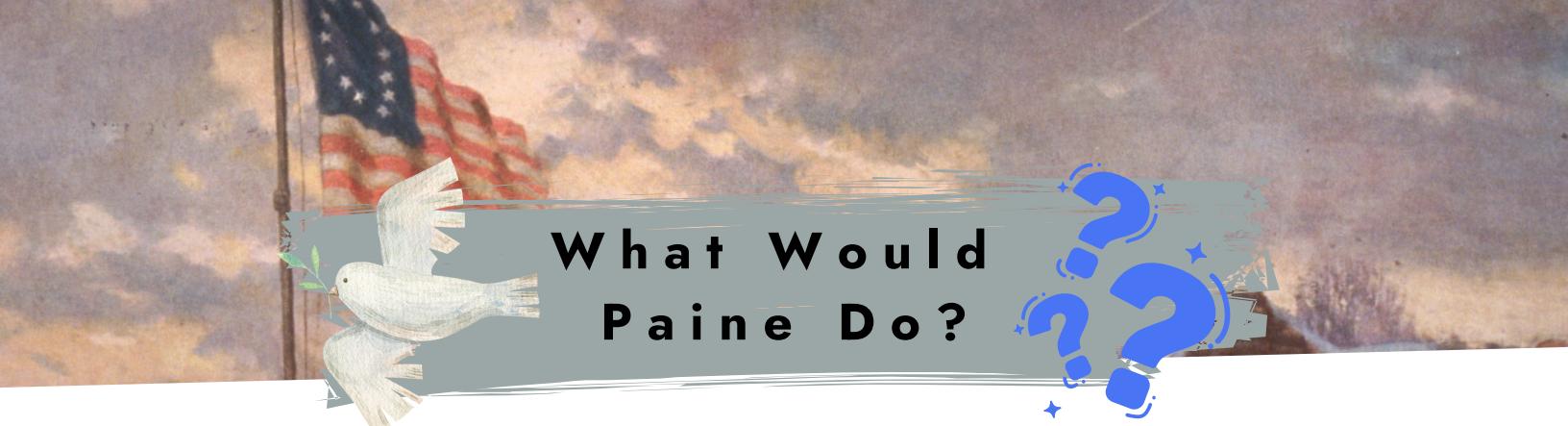
Once the students finish their pamphlets, have them pair up with a classmate. Each student can share their pamphlet and explain why these natural rights are important. Encourage them to talk about what makes each right special and why everyone should have the ability to make choices, be safe, and pursue happiness. This will help the students practice explaining their ideas in a clear and simple way, just like Paine did in *Common Sense*.

## Reflection

Gather the class together and discuss how Paine's pamphlet helped the colonists understand their natural rights and why they should fight for their freedom. Ask the students how their pamphlets could help others understand their rights. Discuss how, just like the colonists needed to know about their rights, we can share important ideas today to help everyone understand how to be fair and free.

## Extension (optional)

Have students take their pamphlets home to share with their family members, explaining what they learned about natural rights and why they are important.



# What Would Paine Do?

## Objective

Second-grade students will role-play different situations where they can practice using their natural rights, helping them understand how to make fair and responsible decisions.

## Materials Needed

- Scenario cards with simple situations related to natural rights
- Props for role-playing (optional, such as toy items or simple props to act out scenarios)

## Introduction

1. Begin by explaining to the students that Thomas Paine believed everyone should have the freedom to make decisions about their lives.
2. Let the students know that today they will practice making decisions based on their natural rights, just like Paine thought people should do.
3. Remind students that natural rights are important freedoms we all have, like the right to be safe, the right to make our own choices, and the right to pursue happiness.

## Role-Playing

1. Read a scenario card aloud to the class. For example:
  - “You and your friend both want to play with the same toy.”
  - “You feel unsafe at recess.”
  - “You want to help someone who is sad.”
2. Choose a student to act out the scenario based on their natural rights. For example, in the scenario “You and your friend both want to play with the same toy,” the student might act out sharing the toy or taking turns.
3. After each role-play, ask the class questions to reflect on the situation:
  - “How did you use your natural rights to make this decision?”
  - “What would happen if we didn’t respect other people’s rights?”
  - “Why is it important that everyone has the right to make their own choices?”
4. Allow other students to have a chance to act out the different scenarios and make their own decisions.



# What Would Paine Do?

## Reflection

1. After all the role-play scenarios, gather the students together for a class discussion:
  - o Ask, "How did you feel when you used your natural rights in these situations?"
  - o "What does it mean to be fair and treat everyone's rights equally?"
2. Discuss how using their natural rights helps create a fair and safe environment for everyone, just as Paine believed.

# Flashcards: What Would Paine Do?

## Scenario 1

"You and your friend both want to play with the same toy."

How could you solve this problem while respecting each other's rights?

## Scenario 2

"You feel unsafe at recess because someone is bothering you."

What would you do to protect your natural right to be safe?

## Scenario 3

"You want to choose what game to play, but others want to play something else."

How could you respect everyone's right to make choices?

## Scenario 4

"Your teacher asks everyone to pick a group to work with. You want to choose your best friend, but their group is already full."

What would be a fair way to respect everyone's rights in this situation?



# Flashcards: What Would Paine Do?

## Scenario 5

"Your teacher asks everyone to pick a group to work with. You want to choose your best friend, but their group is already full."

What would be a fair way to respect everyone's rights in this situation?

## Scenario 6

"You see a classmate sitting alone at lunch. They look sad."

How could you use your right to help others and make them feel happy?

## Scenario 7

"You and your friend both want the last piece of candy."

How can you solve this problem while respecting both of your rights?

## Scenario 8

"You are playing outside and someone takes your ball without asking."

What would you do to protect your right to be safe and have fun?



# Flashcards: What Would Paine Do?

## Scenario 9

"Your class is deciding on what game to play, but not everyone agrees."

How can you make a fair decision that lets everyone make their own choice?

## Scenario 10

"You want to join a group activity, but the group says it's full."

How could you respectfully ask to join?



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# Common Sense Word Wall



## Objective

Second-grade students will build a "Common Sense" word wall to help reinforce key vocabulary and concepts related to Thomas Paine, *Common Sense*, and natural rights. They will then use the word wall for a writing activity to demonstrate their understanding.

## Materials Needed

- Large paper or bulletin board to create the word wall
- Index cards or construction paper for each word
- Markers, crayons, or colored pencils for students to decorate and write
- Tape or magnets to attach the cards to the wall
- Writing paper or worksheets

## Step 1: Introduction to the Word Wall

1. Begin by reviewing key terms related to *Common Sense*, Thomas Paine, and natural rights. Write each word on the board as you introduce them. Some important words might include:

- **Independence**
- **Freedom**
- **Rights**
- **Liberty**
- **Equality**
- **Revolution**
- **Government**
- **Monarchy**
- **Fairness**
- **Choice**

2. Discuss the meaning of each word with the students. Use simple definitions that are easy for second graders to understand. For example:

- **Independence:** The ability to make decisions for yourself without anyone telling you what to do.
- **Freedom:** Being able to do what you want, as long as it's fair to others.
- **Rights:** Special freedoms that everyone has, like being safe and making choices.



## Common Sense Word Wall



### Step 2: Building the Word Wall

1. Give each student a word card (index card or construction paper). Assign them one of the words from the list.
2. Ask students to write the word on their card and then illustrate or decorate it with a picture or symbols that relate to its meaning.
3. Once students have finished, they will come up to the wall to tape or attach their word card. As they place their word, ask them to explain the meaning of the word and share their drawing with the class.
4. Once all the cards are up, review the words with the class and invite students to make connections between the words and Paine's *Common Sense*. Discuss how these words helped the colonists understand their rights and why they wanted to be independent.

### Step 3: Writing Activity Using the Word Wall

1. Writing Prompt: Now that we have our word wall, let's use it to help us write about what we learned. Have students write a short story or paragraph using at least five words from the word wall. The writing prompt could be:
  - "Imagine you are living in 1776, and you are reading *Common Sense* for the first time. Write about why you think it is important for people to have natural rights like freedom, the right to make choices, and the right to be treated equally. What do you think would happen if we didn't have these rights?"
2. Encourage students to use the words from the word wall to help them explain their ideas clearly. Remind them to refer to the wall if they need help with the meanings of the words.
3. After they finish writing, ask students to share their stories or paragraphs with a classmate or the whole class. As they share, encourage them to point out which words from the word wall they used in their writing.

### Step 4: Reflection

1. Once everyone has had a chance to share their writing, lead a discussion about how Paine's *Common Sense* changed the way colonists thought about their rights and government.
2. Ask questions like:
  - "How do natural rights protect us?"
  - "Why do you think Paine thought it was important to explain these rights?"
  - "What can we do today to make sure everyone's rights are respected?"



## Common Sense Word Wall



This activity will help second graders engage with the vocabulary and concepts from *Common Sense* and Thomas Paine's ideas. The word wall acts as both a visual and interactive tool to reinforce learning, and the writing activity encourages students to think critically and creatively about the importance of natural rights and independence.

# 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>

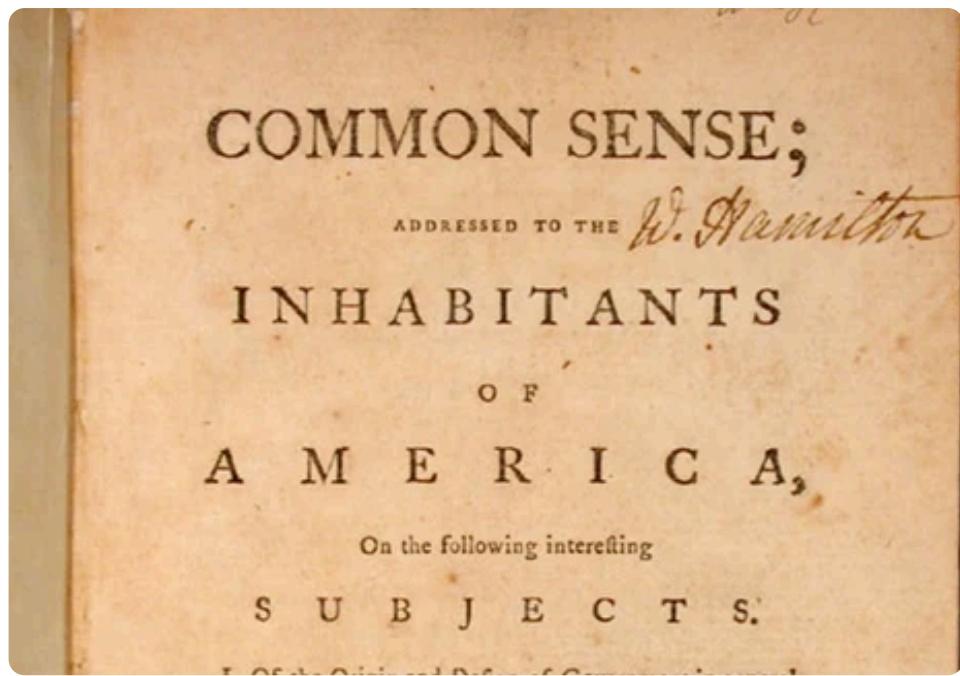
# Images

Thomas Paine



Credit: Wikipedia

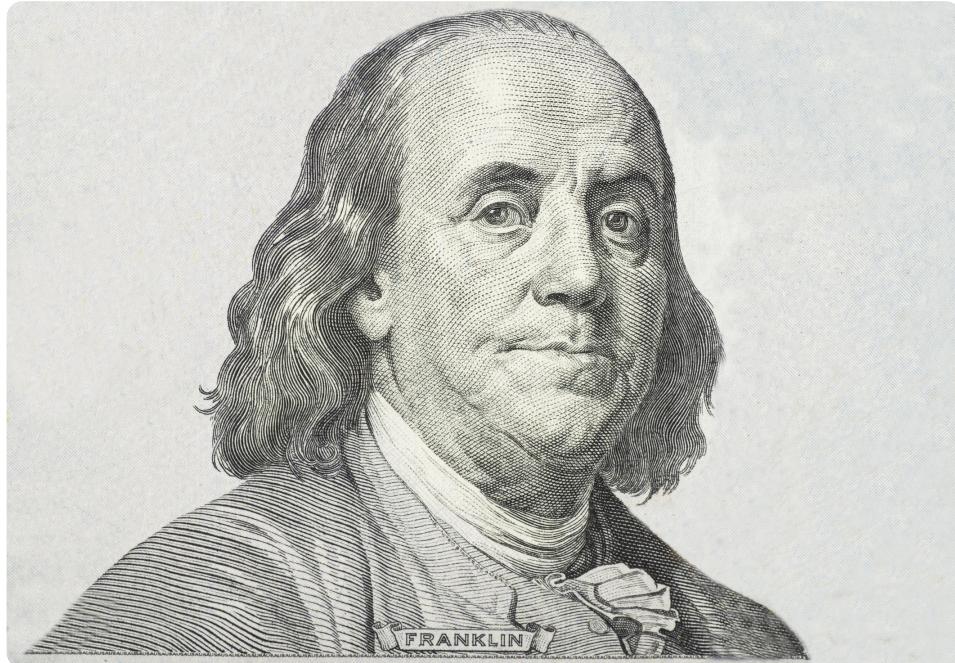
Common Sense



Credit: Wikipedia

# Images

**Benjamin  
Franklin**



Credit: Canva Pro

# Notes