

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

- Define natural rights and identify examples, including the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.
- Explain the significance of the right to freedom of speech and how it allows people to express their ideas and opinions without fear of punishment.
- Describe how Paine's pamphlet *Common Sense* helped the colonists understand their natural rights and why they needed to fight for their independence from Great Britain.
- Explore how Paine's ideas about the importance of equal representation influenced the formation of a government where everyone has a say.
- Describe the connection between Paine's beliefs about fair representation and the natural right to freedom of speech in the context of the American Revolution.
- Understand how the concept of a written constitution, as envisioned by Paine, helps protect people's rights and ensures that everyone is treated equally under the law.
- Connect the principles in the United States Constitution, such as the right to freedom of speech and religion, with Paine's vision for a fair government that listens to the people.

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 **freedom of religion:** the freedom to worship however someone chooses.
- 0 7 **freedom of speech:** the freedom to express your thoughts and ideas openly and speak your mind without fear of punishment.
- 0 8 **government:** a system of rules and leaders that help keep people safe and make sure everyone is treated fairly.
- 0 9 **metaphor:** a type of figure of speech where two things are compared without using "like" or "as."
- 1 0 **natural rights:** special freedoms that belong to you just because you are a human being.
- 1 1 **pamphlet:** a small booklet or paper that has information about something important.
- 1 2 **Parliament:** Britain's government.
- 1 3 **privateer:** a ship owned by a private individual or group that was authorized by the government to attack enemy ships, especially during wartime.

Key Terms

- 1 4 **Quartering Act:** a law that forced the colonists to house, feed, and provide supplies for British soldiers who were stationed in their towns.
- 1 5 **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 6 **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 7 **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 8 **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. Remember, **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. Natural rights are so important that no one can take them away from you. Think about things in nature, like the sun rising or the trees growing tall. Just like these natural things, our natural rights are a part of who we are. Now, let's explore some of these 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 to play or what you want to be when you grow up. And 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.

ASK Students

Do you think it's important for people to be able to speak their minds and share their thoughts with others? How might this help us make better decisions or understand each other better?

TELL Students 🗣️

The freedom to share your thoughts is another natural right. This is called freedom of speech. **Freedom of speech** means you can express your thoughts and ideas openly and speak your mind without fear of punishment. It's important because it allows people to share their opinions and talk about what matters to them. These natural rights are gifts that help keep you free and ensure that everyone can live their life as they choose. They are part of who you are and cannot be taken away.

ASK Students

What are some examples of 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?

Introduction

TELL Students (continued)

Well, natural rights act like shields that defend our ability to make choices and speak up for what we believe. 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. Another important right that protects our freedom is the right to freedom of speech. This means we can express our thoughts and ideas openly, share what we believe, and speak up without fear of punishment. This right helps protect us by giving everyone the chance to be heard and ensuring that our voices matter. Natural rights are important because they protect our freedom and ensure everyone is treated fairly. 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 speak freely — it wouldn't be right, would it? That's why natural rights are so important. They protect who we are and how we live.

ASK Students

Why do you think it's important for everyone to have the right to speak freely and share their ideas? How does this help protect our freedom?

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, to speak freely, 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, where they dumped taxed tea into the harbor because they felt they shouldn't be taxed without having a say in the government that was taxing them.

Introduction

TELL Students (continued)

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, like the right to speak up and make choices, and why they would no longer accept being treated unfairly.

ASK Students ✍

Why do you think it was important for the colonists to have a say in the laws they had to follow? How did their natural rights help them stand up for their freedom? [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. They felt that their right to be safe, make their own choices, and pursue happiness was being violated, and this unfair treatment led them 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. Eventually, this revolution resulted in 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. And that's where Thomas Paine's ideas came in. **[Reference Thomas Paine Image]** He wrote a famous pamphlet called *Common Sense*, where he explained that the colonists had natural rights that couldn't be taken away by anyone — not even a king. A **pamphlet** is a small booklet or paper that shares information. Paine's pamphlet helped the colonists understand that they didn't have to accept unfair treatment. They had the right to stand up for their freedom and fight for it. Paine used his freedom of speech to express his views, inspiring many colonists to realize they deserved to be free and make their own choices. This belief, sparked by Paine's words, led the colonists to fight for their independence from Great Britain.

Introduction

ASK Students

Why do you think Thomas Paine's pamphlet *Common Sense* was so important to the colonists?
How did it help them understand their natural rights and the need to fight for their independence?

TELL Students

Paine didn't just focus on the unfair treatment the colonists faced from Britain; he introduced a powerful new idea. He believed that individuals should have the power to make decisions for themselves and govern their own lives. This shift in thinking was as important as the events like the Stamp Act because it helped the colonists realize that standing up for their natural rights wasn't just a choice — it was a responsibility. They had the right, and even the duty, to defend those rights and demand a government that would respect and protect them. This change in mindset, combined with events like the Stamp Act, fueled the desire for independence and played an important role in sparking the American Revolution. While the Stamp Act made the colonists realize their rights were being taken away, Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* helped them understand that they had the power, through freedom of speech and collective action, to defend those rights and create a new, fair government. The Revolution wasn't just a war; it was a transformation in how people thought about freedom. Now, let's watch a Star Spangled Adventures cartoon to dive deeper into this important chapter in history!

WATCH

Star Spangled Adventures Cartoon

[Ep. 39: Common Sense/Thomas Paine/Natural Rights](#)



Lesson

TELL Students

In our Star Spangled Adventures episode, we learned about how 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 direct violation of the colonists' natural rights, and it understandably upset them. Remember, natural rights are basic freedoms that all people have simply because they are human. These rights include the right to be safe, the right to make your own choices, and the right to pursue happiness. When British soldiers were forced into the colonists' homes, the colonists felt that their rights to safety and personal freedom were being ignored. This sense of injustice — having their rights taken away — led them to question how they could protect their natural rights and preserve their freedom. It was during this time that Thomas Paine's ideas began to take root, encouraging the colonists to not only stand up for their rights but also to use their freedom of speech to demand change.

ASK Students

Why do you think the colonists were upset about the Quartering Act? How did it make them feel about their natural rights?

TELL Students

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 and persuasive writing helped the colonists realize that they had the right to speak up, to protect their freedom, and to defend their natural rights. Paine's message encouraged the colonists to believe they could make choices for themselves and govern their own lives.

ASK Students

Why do you think Thomas Paine used simple language and ideas that everyone could understand in *Common Sense*? How do you think this helped the colonists understand that they had the right to stand up for their freedom?

Lesson

TELL Students 🔑

Thomas Paine's early life experiences played a significant role in shaping his ideas, which he later shared in *Common Sense*. Born in 1737 in Thetford, England, Paine's family faced financial difficulties, prompting him to leave school at age 13 and work as an apprentice. An **apprentice** is someone who works under a skilled person to learn a trade, and in Paine's case, he worked in his father's corset shop, where corsets — tight-fitting garments — were made and sold. As he grew older, Paine faced several challenges in his career. At the age of 20, he worked briefly as a sailor on a privateer ship. A **privateer** is a ship that is authorized by the government to attack enemy ships. Paine then tried to start a business, but it failed. He also worked as a tax collector. However, he was fired twice. The second time he was fired came after he attempted to get the government to pay him and his colleagues more money for their work, but his efforts were unsuccessful. These frustrations with the British government influenced Paine's later ideas and contributed to his desire for change, which he expressed in *Common Sense*.

ASK Students

Why do you think Thomas Paine's struggles in his early life, like his challenges with work and the British government, might have influenced his ideas about fairness and freedom?

TELL Students 📷

After his struggles in England, Thomas Paine moved to America in 1774. Here, he was introduced to Benjamin Franklin, who helped him by writing a letter of recommendation. **[Reference Benjamin Franklin Image]** At 37, Paine arrived in Philadelphia and quickly found work as a journalist. When he arrived, the colonists were growing increasingly frustrated with the British government. They were being taxed without representation in Parliament, and they felt their freedoms were being unfairly taken away. For nearly ten years, the colonists had been trying to get the British government to listen to their concerns, but nothing changed. Paine, witnessing this anger firsthand, was encouraged by Franklin and Dr. Benjamin Rush, a future signer of the Declaration of Independence, to write a pamphlet explaining the colonists' struggles. While many others hoped for a peaceful resolution with Britain, Paine took a bold stand, arguing that the colonies needed to seek independence. Though it seemed impossible at the time, Paine's message inspired the colonists to take action and fight for their freedom.

Lesson

ASK Students

Why do you think Thomas Paine's pamphlet, *Common Sense*, was so important to the colonists? How do you think it helped them decide to fight for their freedom?

TELL Students 🦋

Paine's writing encouraged all the colonists to think about independence. He believed that anyone could make a decision about whether they should break away from Britain — no special education or political experience needed. All they needed was common sense — something everyone should have! **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 realize they had the right to demand independence and fight for their freedom. Common sense made it clear to them that they could choose to live in a way that respected their natural rights.

ASK Students

Paine wanted to show that you didn't need fancy words or complicated knowledge to realize your freedoms were being taken away. Instead, you just needed to trust your judgment and understand that the right thing to do was to fight for freedom and independence. Why do you think he thought common sense was so important in helping the colonists understand this?

TELL Students 🦋

That's right! Thomas Paine believed that everyone, even without special education, could use their common sense 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 why the colonists 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, make decisions for the country, and make sure everyone is treated fairly. It protects our rights and helps maintain fairness in society.

Lesson

TELL Students (continued)

Now, let's think about how we govern ourselves today. In the United States, we have a democracy, which means that the people, like you and me, get to make decisions about how the country is run. In a democracy, we vote to choose our leaders, and these leaders are supposed to work for the people and protect our rights. This idea is very different from how things were when kings ruled, and it's why Paine's ideas were so important. He believed that people should not be ruled by a king or anyone who didn't listen to them, but by leaders chosen by the people, making sure everyone has a voice in the government.

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 argued that there is no natural or religious reason why kings should rule over everyone else. Paine believed that all people are equal, and no one should be above others just because of their birth. This idea went against what he believed were the natural rights of people and even the teachings of God. Paine's ideas about equality and the right to freedom helped inspire the Declaration of Independence, a very important document written in 1776. The **Declaration of Independence** explains why the colonies wanted to break away from Great Britain. It states that all people have the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. This means that everyone has the right to live safely, make their own choices, and seek what makes them happy. No one should be ruled by a king who does not respect these rights. The Declaration of Independence also says that if a government is not treating people fairly, the people have the right to create a new government that will protect their rights. Paine's writing helped the colonists understand that they didn't have to live under a king's rule anymore, and the Declaration of Independence declared this belief. The colonists eventually created a government that was fair and listened to the people. Paine's ideas directly influenced the creation of the rights and freedoms we have today.

Lesson

ASK Students

Why do you think Thomas Paine believed that people should not be ruled by kings? How do you think his ideas influenced the Declaration of Independence?

TELL Students 🗣️

After Paine argued that it was time for the colonies to separate from Britain, he also explained why unity was so important. He believed the strength of the colonists didn't come from having a large number of people, but from working together as a group. **Unity** means coming together and being strong as one. This idea of unity was especially strong after events like the Great Awakening, which helped unite people with common beliefs, and the Stamp Act, which brought the colonists together in protest. Their unity and shared determination to fight for their rights were what gave them the power to challenge British rule. Paine also believed that it was the colonists' natural right to create their own government — one that listened to the people and respected their rights. He argued that a fair government would allow people to govern themselves and not be ruled by a king. This belief was a big part of why the colonists fought for independence, and why they believed they deserved a government that would work for them.

ASK Students

Why do you think it was important for the colonists to work together and stay united when they decided to fight for their freedom?

TELL Students 🗣️

After discussing the importance of unity, Paine argued that the colonies needed a strong government where "the law is king." This phrase is an example of a **metaphor**, where two things are compared without using "like" or "as." In this case, Paine is saying that the law should be the most important and powerful force in the government, much like a king would be, but the law should apply to everyone equally, including the rulers. Paine thought this idea was important because in many countries at the time, rulers made laws on their own and forced people to obey without giving them a voice in the process. Paine believed this was unfair, and that the colonists deserved better. He 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 laws first.

Lesson

TELL Students (continued)

These laws would 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 (meaning, everyone had to obey the law).

ASK Students

Why do you think Paine believed it was important for everyone, including leaders, to follow the law? How does this help ensure fairness?

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 helps make sure that the government treats everyone fairly and equally. Paine believed that this constitution would be a strong promise to protect the rights of every person. These rights include the freedom to practice your religion, work in any job, and own property. Paine also thought it was important that everyone, no matter who they are, should be treated equally under the law — not just some people. He believed that the government's job was to protect **freedom of religion**, meaning everyone could worship however they choose. Paine also believed that people should have the freedom to express their opinions, or freedom of speech, so that they could share their thoughts and ideas without fear. Paine's ideas are very similar to the principles in the United States Constitution today. The United States Constitution 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. These freedoms are a big part of why we can speak up, share ideas, and live the way we choose, and they show how Paine's vision helped shape the country we live in today.

ASK Students

Why do you think Paine believed that a written constitution was so important? How does freedom of speech today help us share our ideas, just like Paine wanted?

Lesson

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. Paine’s idea of fair representation also connects to another important right we discussed above: freedom of speech. Remember, freedom of speech means that everyone has the right to express their thoughts and opinions without fear of punishment. Paine believed that for a government to be fair, people must be able to speak up and share their opinions about the laws, just like they should be able to help decide what those laws should be. In our government today, freedom of speech allows us to express our ideas, whether we’re voting for leaders or talking about what we think should change in our society. **[Reference Voting Image]** 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. This connection between representation and the right to express ourselves shows how Paine’s vision for a government where people have a say continues to shape the way our country works today.

ASK Students

Why do you think it’s important for people to be able to speak out and share their opinions, especially when it comes to the laws that affect them?

TELL Students

Thomas Paine believed it was important for everyone to have a say in government because he thought 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 belief in equal representation was a key idea that influenced the way our government works today, where citizens have the right to vote and speak out on laws that affect them.

Lesson

TELL Students(continued)

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 and were inspired by its powerful message. **[Reference John Adams Image]** John Adams even wrote to his wife Abigail in April 1776, saying, "*Common Sense*, like a ray of revelation, has come in seasonably to clear our doubts, and to fix our choice." This meant that Paine's pamphlet helped the colonists understand why they needed to fight for their independence. Paine's words resonated deeply with the colonists, inspiring them to take action and stand together for the cause of freedom. His writing helped unite the colonists around the idea of independence, which played a crucial role in sparking the American Revolution. Paine's influence extended far beyond his pamphlet, and his message continues to shape how we think about government and freedom today.

ASK Students

Why do you think Thomas Paine's idea that everyone should have a say in the government was so important to the colonists? How did it help them decide to fight for their independence?

TELL Students

Paine's *Common Sense* was a turning point for the colonists. Without it, they might not have come together to fight for their freedom. Paine's words helped shape the founding of the United States of America, a country where people are free to make their own choices, practice their religion, and speak freely about what they believe. This is why freedom of speech and freedom of religion are so important — they help ensure that everyone has the right to express their thoughts and worship in their own way. Today, just as Paine envisioned, we still have the right to vote and choose leaders who represent us and protect our freedoms. Paine's ideas of fair representation and the importance of everyone having a voice in government are still at the heart of how our country functions. Our ability to speak freely, choose our leaders, and practice our religion is part of what makes our country special and reflects the values Paine championed in *Common Sense*.

Common Sense Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down Assessment

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

Instructions: Circle the thumbs up or thumbs down to show your understanding of the statements below.

1. Natural rights are freedoms that all people have just because they are human.



2. Freedom of speech means you cannot express your thoughts and ideas.



3. The colonists were upset by the Stamp Act because they had to pay taxes without being able to have a say in the government.



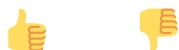
4. Paine believed that everyone should have a say in their government, regardless of their background or education.



5. Paine's pamphlet, *Common Sense*, encouraged the colonists to fight for their independence from Britain.



6. Thomas Paine's idea of "the law is king" meant that the king should rule over all the people.



7. The colonists did not believe they should have their own government and wanted to stay under British rule.



Common Sense Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down Assessment

8. Paine wanted the colonies to have a constitution that would ensure everyone's rights were protected and treated equally.



9. Unity means everyone working together to be strong as a group.



10. Paine's ideas about fair representation and freedom of speech still influence the way our government works today.



Answer Key: Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down

1. Natural rights are freedoms that all people have just because they are human.
 - Answer: 👍 (True)
2. Freedom of speech means you cannot express your thoughts and ideas.
 - Answer: 👎 (False, freedom of speech means you can express your thoughts and ideas)
3. The colonists were upset by the Stamp Act because they had to pay taxes without being able to have a say in the government.
 - Answer: 👍 (True)
4. Paine believed that everyone should have a say in their government, regardless of their background or education.
 - Answer: 👍 (True)
5. Paine's pamphlet, *Common Sense*, encouraged the colonists to fight for their independence from Britain.
 - Answer: 👍 (True)
6. Thomas Paine's idea of "the law is king" meant that the king should rule over all the people.
 - Answer: 👎 (False, "the law is king" means that the law should be the most important thing, applying to everyone equally, not the king)
7. The colonists did not believe they should have their own government and wanted to stay under British rule.
 - Answer: 👎 (False, the colonists wanted their own government and to break free from British rule)
8. Paine wanted the colonies to have a constitution that would ensure everyone's rights were protected and treated equally.
 - Answer: 👍 (True)
9. Unity means everyone working together to be strong as a group.
 - Answer: 👍 (True)
10. Paine's ideas about fair representation and freedom of speech still influence the way our government works today.
 - Answer: 👍 (True)



Paine's Pamphlet Challenge



Objective

Help third-grade students understand the concepts of *Common Sense*, natural rights, and Paine's influence on the American Revolution by working in groups to create their own pamphlet that defends one of the natural rights.

Materials Needed

- Paper and colored markers/pens
- Large poster board (optional)
- Printed "Natural Rights Cards" (included below)
- Sticky notes or index cards

Instructions

Introduction to the Task

Begin by reviewing natural rights with the students:

- Right to Life
- Right to Liberty
- Right to Pursue Happiness
- Freedom of Speech
- Equality Before the Law

Divide the Class into Groups

Split students into 5 groups, with each group focusing on one of the natural rights listed above.

Activity Preparation

- Give each group a "Natural Rights Card" that describes one of the rights. Briefly explain what the right is, why it's important, and how it was part of Paine's argument in *Common Sense*.
- Provide each group with paper, colored markers, and pens to create a pamphlet that explains why their assigned natural right is so important. The pamphlet should include:
 - A definition of their right.
 - A persuasive argument about why it should be protected (using Paine's ideas).
 - A call to action, telling others how they can help protect this right.
 - Illustrations or drawings related to the natural right.



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Paine's Pamphlet Challenge



Creating the Pamphlet

- Students will work together to create their pamphlet. Encourage them to use Paine's ideas and their own opinions. For example, if a group is working on the "Right to Liberty," they can explain how Paine's call for independence connects to the right to make choices and live freely.
- They should make their pamphlet colorful and persuasive, with clear arguments and a bold statement that catches people's attention.

Sharing Their Pamphlets

Once the groups finish their pamphlets, each group will present its pamphlet to the class. They should explain:

- What their natural right means.
- Why Paine believed it was important.
- How it applies to our lives today.
- A creative way they can protect or support this right.

Interactive Reflection

After all the groups have presented, ask the class to vote for the most persuasive pamphlet by giving a thumbs-up to their favorite. Then, hold a brief discussion about what they learned:

- How did Paine's ideas influence the rights we have today?
- How does freedom of speech connect to what we learned about *Common Sense* and the Revolution?

Extension Activity

- Have students write a short paragraph explaining how they would use one of their natural rights to solve a current problem they care about.
- Encourage them to share their ideas with the class using their "freedom of speech."

Goal

By the end of the activity, students should have a better understanding of natural rights, why Paine's ideas were so important, and how those ideas helped lead to the creation of the United States. The activity also reinforces the concept of freedom of speech and its role in shaping democracy today.

Natural Rights Cards

Right to Life

Definition: The right to express your ideas and thoughts without fear of punishment.

Importance: Paine used freedom of speech to share his ideas with the colonists, helping them understand why they should seek independence.

Why Paine Thought It Was Important: Without freedom of speech, people cannot speak out against unfair treatment or share ideas that could lead to change.

Right to Liberty

Definition: The right to express your ideas and thoughts without fear of punishment.

Importance: Paine used freedom of speech to share his ideas with the colonists, helping them understand why they should seek independence.

Why Paine Thought It Was Important: Without freedom of speech, people cannot speak out against unfair treatment or share ideas that could lead to change.

Right to Pursue Happiness

Definition: The right to go after what makes you happy.

Importance: Paine believed that people should not only be free, but they should also have the chance to do what makes them happy and fulfilled.

Why Paine Thought It Was Important: Paine's message in Common Sense inspired people to stand up for their right to live a life that makes them happy, whether that's through education, work, or pursuing their dreams.

Natural Rights Cards

Freedom of Speech

Definition: The right to express your ideas and thoughts without fear of punishment.

Importance: Paine used freedom of speech to share his ideas with the colonists, helping them understand why they should seek independence.

Why Paine Thought It Was Important: Without freedom of speech, people cannot speak out against unfair treatment or share ideas that could lead to change.

Equality Before the Law

Definition: The idea that no one should be treated unfairly by the law, regardless of who they are.

Importance: Paine argued that everyone, including kings, should be held accountable to the law.

Why Paine Thought It Was Important: Paine believed that a government should be created to protect the rights of everyone equally, not just for the benefit of a few powerful people.



Paine's Pamphlet Challenge Grading Rubric

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

Criteria	Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Satisfactory (2)	Needs Improvement (1)
Understanding of Natural Rights	Demonstrates a clear and thorough understanding of natural rights. Provides strong examples from Paine's ideas.	Demonstrates a good understanding of natural rights with some examples from Paine's ideas.	Demonstrates a basic understanding of natural rights, with limited connection to Paine's ideas.	Demonstrates a minimal understanding of natural rights with no connection to Paine's ideas.
Creativity and Design	Pamphlet is creative, colorful, and well-organized, with clear visuals and persuasive content.	Pamphlet is creative and colorful, but may be lacking in clarity or organization.	Pamphlet has limited creativity or is poorly organized. Some sections are unclear.	Pamphlet lacks creativity, has poor organization, and does not clearly convey ideas.
Persuasiveness	Pamphlet provides a very convincing argument for the assigned natural right, using strong language and examples.	Pamphlet provides a clear argument for the assigned natural right, but lacks depth in some areas.	Argument is unclear or lacks strong examples to support the natural right.	Argument is weak, with little to no examples provided.
Group Collaboration	All group members actively participate, share ideas, and work together effectively.	Most group members participate, but some could have been more involved.	Only a few group members participated, and the group worked somewhat effectively.	Limited group participation, with one or more members not contributing.
Presentation and Communication	Group clearly and confidently explains their pamphlet, with each member contributing to the presentation.	Group explains their pamphlet well, but with some hesitation or missing detail.	Group struggles to explain the pamphlet, with limited participation or unclear communication.	Group is unable to explain the pamphlet clearly, with little to no participation from members.

Total Score: _____/20

Paine's Pamphlet Challenge Grading Rubric

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

Scoring:

- **18-20 points** = Excellent work!
- **15-17 points** = Good work, but room for improvement.
- **10-14 points** = Needs improvement in some areas.
- **5-9 points** = More work needed to meet expectations.

Suggestions for improvement:

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>

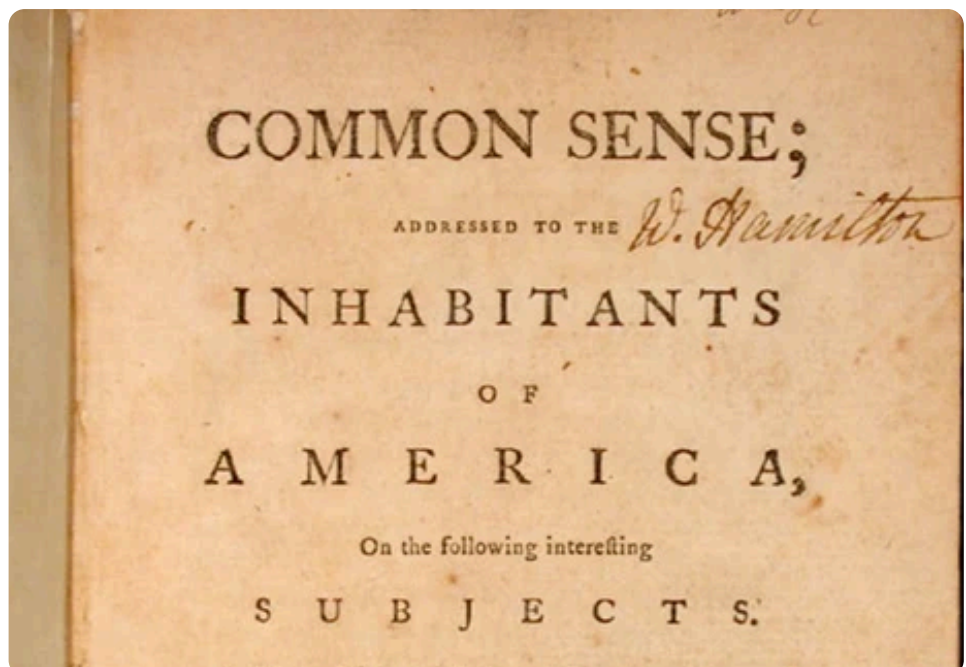
Images

Thomas Paine



Credit: Wikipedia

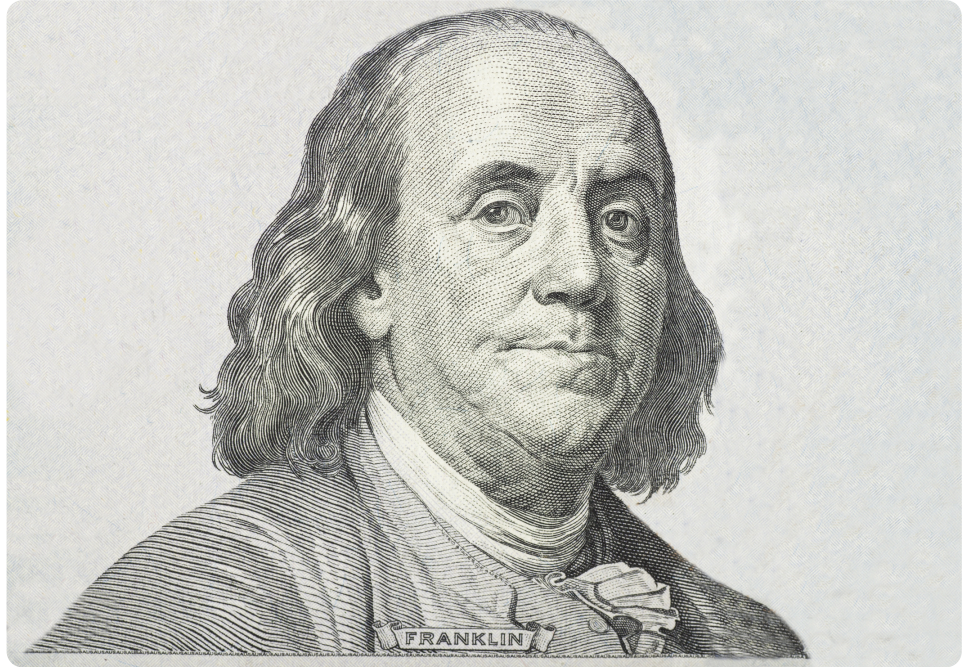
Common Sense



Credit: Wikipedia

Images

**Benjamin
Franklin**



Credit: Canva Pro

Voting



Credit: Canva Pro

Images

John Adams



Credit: Canva Pro

Notes

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