

Thomas Paine's Lost Body

Education Material

Background

Learn about American Patriot Thomas Paine and his influence on the American Revolution.

Marker of focus: Thomas Paine marker, Westchester County.

Review the primary sources below and answer the following questions.

NYS Social Studies Standards

7.3 AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE: Growing tensions over political power and economic issues sparked a movement for independence from Great Britain. New York played a critical role in the course and outcome of the American Revolution.

11.2 CONSTITUTIONAL FOUNDATIONS (1763 – 1824): Growing political and economic tensions led the American colonists to declare their independence from Great Britain. Once independent, the new nation confronted the challenge of creating a stable federal republic.

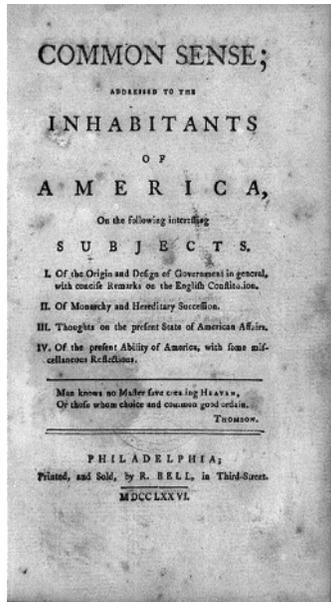
Questions

Using the excerpt from Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*, what was one reason that Thomas Paine gave as to why America should be independent from England? Why were Thomas Paine's writings important during the Revolutionary era?

Using the images of the printing press, what are the benefits of using a printing press? How was the printing press an important tool of the American Revolution?

Using the A New York Minute in History podcast episode *Thomas Paine's Lost Body*, in what ways did Thomas Paine have an international influence during the Age of Revolutions?

Excerpt from *Common Sense* pamphlet written by Thomas Paine in 1776



Paine, Thomas, *Common Sense*, 1776. Philadelphia: Printed, and sold, by R. Bell, in Third-Street. Photograph. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2006681076/>.

“As to government matters, it is not in the power of Britain to do this continent justice. The business of it will soon be too weighty and intricate to be managed, with any tolerable degree of convenience, by a power so distant from us and so very ignorant of us; for if they cannot conquer us, they cannot govern us. To be always running three or four thousand miles with a tale or a petition, waiting four or five months for an answer which, when obtained, requires five or six more to explain it in, will in a few years be looked upon as folly and childishness.—There was a time when it was proper, and there is a proper time for it to cease.

Small islands not capable of protecting themselves are the proper objects for kingdoms to take under their care, but there is something absurd in supposing a continent to be perpetually governed by an island. In no instance hath nature made the satellite larger than its primary planet; and as England and America, with respect to each other, reverses the common order of nature, it is evident that they belong to different systems: England to Europe, America to itself.”

“Common Sense Full Text” Thomas Paine, *Common Sense*, 1776. America in Class National Humanities Center, 2014. <https://americainclass.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Common-Sense--Full-Text.pdf>

Printing Press



Above is a print depicting Benjamin Franklin as a boy at the printing press and a photograph of the very printing press on which Benjamin Franklin worked when he was apprenticed to his brother James in 1722. When Thomas Paine emigrated to America, he connected with Benjamin Franklin and began publishing pro-independence articles and pamphlets.

Benjamin Franklin, as a Boy, at a Printing Press, image, 1913. New York State Archives. NYS_A3045-78_1103 [image on left]
<https://considerthesourcenyc.org/document/benjamin-franklin-boy-printing-press-1913>

Printing Press, photograph, 1912, New York State Archives. NYS_A3045-78_1105 [image on right]
<https://considerthesourcenyc.org/document/benjamin-franklins-1722-printing-press-photograph-1912>

A New York Minute in History Podcast- *Thomas Paine's Lost Body*



Listen here: <https://wamcpodcasts.org/a-new-york-minute-in-history/>

Thomas Paine's Lost Body. A New York Minute in History. podcast episode.