

# CONTINUOUS DISTANCE LEARNING LESSON

## *Chains and Thomas Paine's Common Sense*

7th Grade Humanities

In January 1776, Patriot Thomas Paine published a pamphlet called *Common Sense*. In it, Paine called on colonists to overthrow its British tyrants and to become independent. Over 120,000 copies were distributed throughout the colonies and Paine's words persuaded many to support the Patriot cause.

Before beginning watch [this video from Hip Hughes on YouTube](#) where he explains the seven basic arguments in *Common Sense*, or what he calls "The Book of Dug." List the seven arguments in the chart below.

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## PART ONE: *Common Sense* Initial Thoughts

“YOUTH IS THE SEED TIME OF GOOD HABITS, AS WELL IN NATIONS AS IN INDIVIDUALS”

-Thomas Paine, *Common Sense*

A) According to Thomas Paine, what is the purpose of youth?	
B) How does Paine compare an individual's youth with a nation's youth?	
C) Why do you think this is an important quote when you consider the founding of America?	

The pamphlet begins:

“Some writers have so confounded society with government, as to leave little or no distinction between them; whereas they are not only different, but have different origins. Society is produced by our wants, and government by our wickedness...”

-Thomas Paine, *Common Sense*

A) In your own words, explain what Paine is saying.	
B) How does this excerpt relate to the American Revolution?	
C) Do you agree with Paine? Why or why not?	

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## PART TWO: A Close Reading of *Common Sense*

We're going to read excerpts from Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* now. We'll do one part together then you'll work in triads to complete the other two excerpts.

Passage 1	
<i>Common Sense</i>	Response
“In the following pages I offer nothing more than simple facts, plain arguments, and common sense;...  Volumes have been written on the subject of the struggle between England and America. Men of all ranks have embarked in the controversy, from different motives, and with various designs; but all have been ineffectual, and the	5-6 key words:
	Summary using key words:
	Summary in your own words:

period of debate is closed. Arms, as the last resource, decide the contest; the appeal was the choice of the king, and the continent hath accepted the challenge...

America would have flourished as much, and probably much more, had no European power had anything to do with her. The articles of commerce, by which she has enriched herself, are the necessities of life, and will always have a market while eating is the custom of Europe...

## Passage 2

<i>Common Sense</i>	Response
<p>But she has protected us, say some. That she has engrossed us is true, and defended the continent at our expense as well as her own is admitted and she would have defended Turkey from the same motives, viz (that is) for the sake of trade and dominion...We have boasted the protection of Great Britain without considering that her motive was <i>interest</i> not <i>attachment</i> and that she did not protect us from <i>our enemies</i> on <i>our account</i> but from <i>her enemies</i> on <i>her own account</i>, from those who had no quarrel with us on any <i>other account</i>, and who will always be our enemies on the same account... France and Spain never were, nor perhaps ever will be, our enemies as <i>Americans</i> but as our being the subjects of <i>Great Britain</i>...</p> <p>Our plan is commerce, and that, well attended to, will secure us the peace and friendship of all Europe; because it is the interest of all Europe to have America a <i>free port</i>. Her trade will always be a protection, and her barrenness of gold and silver secure her from invaders...</p> <p>I challenge the warmest advocate for reconciliation to show a single advantage that this continent can reap by being connected with Great Britain. I repeat the challenge; not a single advantage is derived. Our corn will fetch its price in any market in Europe, and our imported goods must be paid for, buy them where we will...</p>	6-7 key words:
	Summary using key words:
	Summary in your own words:

## Passage 3

<i>Common Sense</i>	Response
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<p>But the injuries and disadvantages which we sustain by that connection are without number; and our duty to mankind at large, as well as to ourselves, instructs us to renounce the alliance, because any submission to or dependence on Great Britain tends directly to involve this continent in European wars and quarrels, and sets us at variance with nations who would otherwise seek our friendship, and against whom we have neither anger nor complaint. As Europe is our market for trade, we ought to form no partial connection with any part of it. It is the true interest of America to steer clear of European contentions which she never can do, while, by her dependence on Britain, she is made the makeweight in the scale of British politics...</p> <p>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 3,000 or 4,000 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..."</p>	6-7 key words:
	Summary using key words:
	Summary in your own words:

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### PART THREE: The Opposing Team

Now that you've examined 3 sets of excerpts from *Common Sense*, read an excerpt from *Plain Truth*, a pamphlet that was printed in response to *Common Sense*. The author went by the name Candidus (real name James Chalmers), which means truth or straightforward. [Here's the original](#).

<p>PLAIN TRUTH; CONTAINING, REMARKS ON A LATE PAMPHLET, ENTITLED COMMON SENSE.</p> <p>His [Paine's] first indecent attack is against the English constitution; which with all its imperfections, is, and ever will be the pride and envy of mankind...This beautiful system...our constitution, is a compound of Monarchy, Aristocracy, and Democracy...</p> <p>After impotently attacking our Sovereign; and the constitution: He contradicts the voice of all mankind, by declaring, that America "would have flourished as much, and probably much more, had no European power taken any notice of her." If</p>
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he means, that had this Continent been unexplored, the original inhabitants would have been happier: For once, I agree with him...

...I shall humbly endeavour to shew, that our author shamefully misrepresents facts, is ignorant of the true state of Great Britain and her Colonies, utterly unqualified for the arduous task,...

...With the utmost deference to the honorable Congress, I do not view the most distant gleam of aid from foreign powers...At present Great Britain is the umpire of Europe...

...Can a reasonable being for a moment believe that Great Britain...will not exert herself as powerfully to preserve us from our frantic schemes of independency... Can we a moment doubt, that the Sovereign of Great Britain and his ministers, whose glory as well as personal safety depends on our obedience, will not exert every nerve of the British power, to save themselves and us from ruin...

...Until the present unhappy period, Great Britain has afforded to all mankind, the most perfect proof of her wise, lenient, and magnanimous government of the Colonies...

INDEPENDENCE AND SLAVERY ARE SYNONYMOUS TERMS.

In the chart below, make a list of 5 disagreements Chalmers had with Paine. Be as specific as possible.

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**PART FOUR: A Response to Both Sides**

Compose two found poems. If you’re unfamiliar with a found poem, [click here](#). One found poem should be written from the perspective of a Loyalist and one as a Patriot. You can visit [this site](#) for more information on Loyalists and Patriots. You may use words from either passage in both found poems. Compose your poems in the table below. Your poems must be at least 15 lines long.

Found Poem from a Patriot	Found Poem from a Loyalist