



# THOMAS PAINE

## Biographical Summary

- Born in England on January 29, 1737
- Emigrated to America in 1774 and settled in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, just in time to take part in the American Revolution
- Wrote *Common Sense*, a persuasive pamphlet that advocated American independence from Great Britain; often credited with turning the tide of public opinion in favor of independence
- Considered a radical intellectual with an ability to present complex ideas in clear and concise language
- Served (1777–1779) as secretary to the committee on foreign affairs of the Continental Congress, and in 1779 was named clerk of the Pennsylvania assembly
- Went to Great Britain in 1787. While there, Paine wrote *The Rights of Man* (1791) defending the French revolution and calling on the English to overthrow their monarchy and form a republic. In 1792, he was tried, convicted of treason, and outlawed from England. After being outlawed from England, he moved to France.
- Other works include *The Age of Reason* (Part I, 1794; Part II, 1796)
- Returned to the United States in 1802.
- Died in New York City on June 8, 1809

## ***Common Sense***

- First published anonymously on January 9, 1776
- An estimated 500,000 copies of the pamphlet were sold. Some scholars estimate that by the end of 1776 nearly half of all Americans had read or were familiar with Paine's arguments
- At a time when many colonists were anxious about the prospects of separation, *Common Sense* condemned monarchy as an evil institution and advocated independence
- Laid the philosophical groundwork for American independence
- Instrumental in bringing about the Declaration of Independence, which was published just six months later
- Though Paine profited from his publications, he put the money back into furthering the cause of liberty

### ***The Crisis***

- A series of sixteen pamphlets published irregularly over a period of seven years (1776–1783)
- *The Crisis, No. 1* was published on December 23, 1776
- Written by Paine while he was serving as an enlisted soldier in the Continental army
- Designed to bolster morale among patriots in the early years of the war with Great Britain
- George Washington ordered that *The Crisis, No. 1* be read to the troops, and soon all Americans had the opportunity to read it