

# Revisiting *Common Sense*

COMMON SENSE,

ADDRESSED TO THE

INHABITANTS

OF

AMERICA,

On the following interesting



*W. H.*  
COMMON SENSE;

ADDRESSED TO THE

*W. Hamilton*

INHABITANTS

O F

A M E R I C A,

On the following interesting

S U B J E C T S.

- I. Of the Origin and Design of Government in general, with concise Remarks on the English Constitution.
- II. Of Monarchy and Hereditary Succession.
- III. Thoughts on the present State of American Affairs.
- IV. Of the present Ability of America, with some miscellaneous Reflections.

*by Thomas Paine*

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Man knows no Master save creating HEAVEN,  
Or those whom choice and common good ordain.

THOMSON.

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PHILADELPHIA;

Printed, and Sold, by R. BELL, in Third-Street.

MDCC LXX VI.

# Reading a Historical Document

- \* To learn about the past
- \* To reflect on the present
- \* To stimulate imagination and thinking

# January, 1776

Boston Massacre, six years old

Boston Tea Party, two years old

Lexington and Concord, nine months old

Battle of Bunker Hill, seven months old

The “Olive Branch” petition, six months old

***Common Sense*** published in Philadelphia,  
January 10, 1776

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Written by an ENGLISHMAN.

*Introduction to the Third Edition*  
*February 1776*

PERHAPS the sentiments contained in the following pages, are not yet sufficiently fashionable to procure them general favor; a long habit of not thinking a thing wrong, gives it a superficial appearance of being right, and raises at first a formidable outcry in defense of custom.

Who the Author of this Production is, is wholly unnecessary to the Public, as the Object for Attention is the Doctrine itself, not the Man. Yet it may not be unnecessary to say, That he is unconnected with any Party, and under no sort of Influence public or private, but the influence of reason and principle.

Written by an ENGLISHMAN.

I. Of the Origin and Design of Government in general;  
with concise Remarks on the English Constitution.

Society vs Government

the castaway argument

The English Government

King & Peers vs Commons

The Problem of Kings

## Colonial Argument:

Parliament for England,  
Colonial Assemblies in America.

Parliament has overstepped,  
King should see this, help Colonies.

Argument of Common Sense:

King is the worst part of gov't!

WHY attack the King?



## II. Of Monarchy and Hereditary Succession.

Distinction in Society

The Pride of Kings

the immorality of Kingship

The Evil of Hereditary Succession

“an ass for a lion”

the origin of the present kings

the origin of English Kings

*“Yet I should be glad to ask how they suppose kings came at first?”*

The Business of the King

In contrast to a republic

### III. Thoughts on the present State of American Affairs.

*“In the following pages I offer nothing more than simple facts, plain arguments, and common sense . . .”*

We are driven to the point of war and union or disunion:  
So let us compare dependence and independence.

The ARGUMENTS — “as some say . . .”

The men in favor of continued union . . .

The arguments for separation

The case for independence NOW

A Model for Government

IV. Of the present Ability of America, with some miscellaneous  
Reflections.

The present time is the best time

Arguments about the British Navy

The need to declare independence

(for foreign assistance)

# ***Common Sense*** published in Philadelphia, January 10, 1776

. . . also on January 10, 1776 . . .

KING GEORGE declared colonies in rebellion,  
orders up foreign mercenaries to fight.



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On the following interesting

SUBJECTS.

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An APPENDIX added  
in later reprinting

Basically summarizes  
and doubles down

# Thomas Paine



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IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776.

# A DECLARATION

BY THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE

## UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

IN GENERAL CONGRESS ASSEMBLED.

# W

HEN in the Course of human Events, it becomes necessary for one People to dissolve the Political Bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the Powers of the Earth, the separate and equal Station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent Respect to the Opinions of Mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the Separation.

We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness—That to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the Consent of the Governed, that whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these Ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its Foundation on such Principles, and organizing its Powers in such Form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient Causes; and accordingly all Experience hath shown, that Mankind are more disposed to suffer, while Evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the Forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long Train of Abuses and Usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object, evinces a Design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their Right, it is their Duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future Security. Such has been the patient Sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the Necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The History of the present King of Great-Britain is a History of repeated Injuries and Usurpations, all having in direct Object the Establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid World.

He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public Good.

He has forbidden his Governours to pass Laws of immediate and pressing Importance, unless suspended in their Operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other Laws for the Accommodation of large Districts of People, unless those People would relinquish the Right of Representation in the Legislature, a Right inestimable to them, and formidable to Tyrants only.

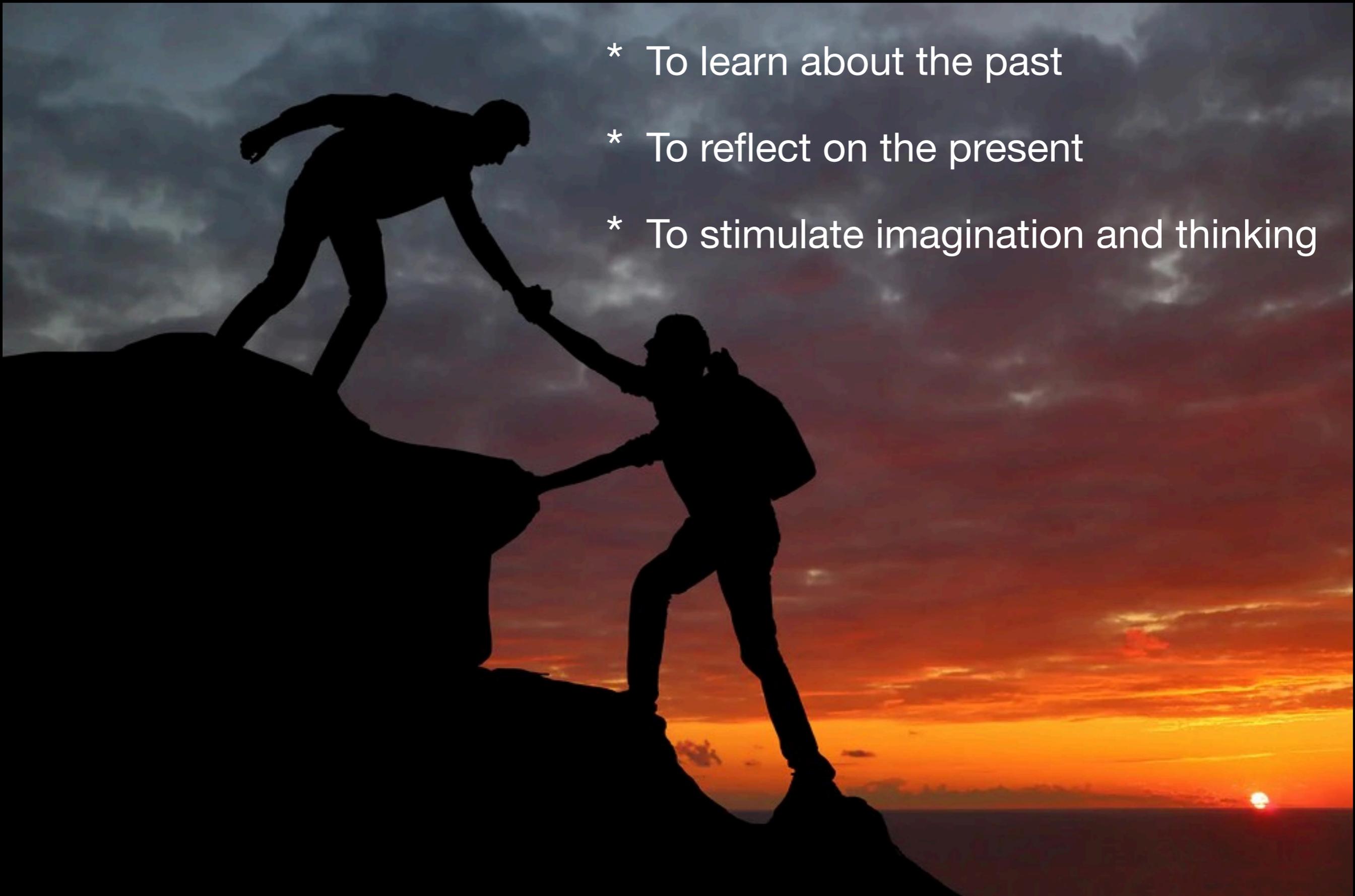
He has called together Legislative Bodies at Places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the Depository of their public Records, for the sole Purpose of fatiguing them into Compliance with his Measures.

He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly Firmness his Invasions on the Rights of the People.

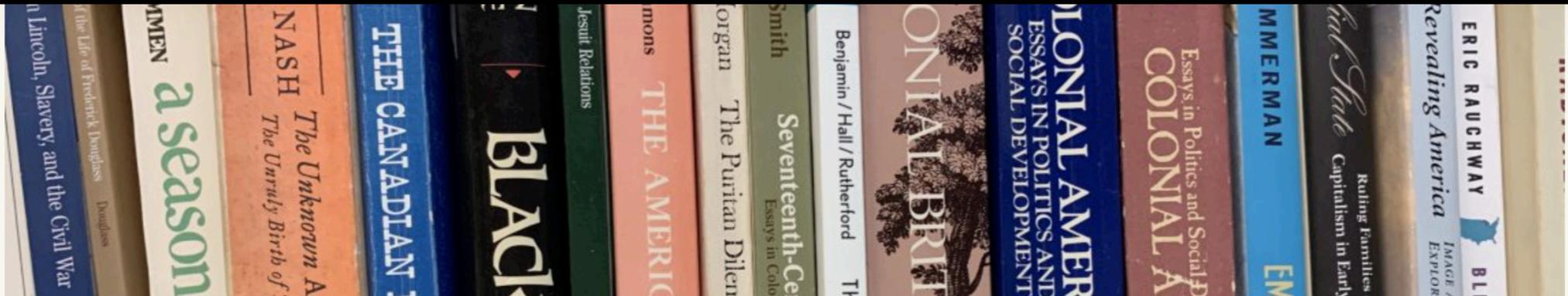
He has refused for a long Time, after such Dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative Powers, incapable of Annihilation, have re-

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## About Me

Hello!

I'm Mark Eifler

Next Time: Saturday, Feb 28, 2026

# Lewis and Clark in the Geopolitical West

