

0. American Colonies - Story Preface

1. A DIVINELY ORDAINED FIGHT
2. AMERICAN FIRSTS
3. DRAFTING THE DECLARATION
4. WE ARE FREE!
5. EVIDENCE OF FREEDOM

Photograph depicting the portrait of Thomas Paine, copy by Auguste Millière, circa 1876 (original: 1792). Maintained by the National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution. Accession number: NPG 897. Image online courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

*When in the Course of human events,
it becomes necessary for one people
to dissolve the political bands which
have connected them with another...*

Declaration of Independence - July 4, 1776

It was 1775. George III ruler of Great Britain, viewed the thirteen American colonies as "his." Heavy taxes, paid by the colonials, filled the king's treasury.

Life was good - for some people. For others, like Thomas Paine:

*These are the times
that try men's souls*

The American Crisis

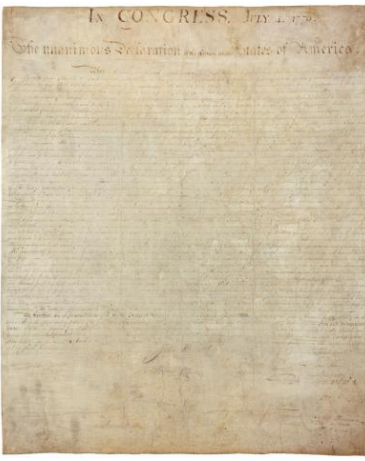
What was trying "men's souls" was British rule. The time had come for America to be free.

But cutting the ties that bound thirteen colonies to England would not happen without a revolt. No one ever gives up a treasure without a fight. Especially not a king.

Many colonists, however, believed their cause was supported by a power much higher and greater than King George. Those beliefs helped to fan the flames of revolutionary fervor.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/American-Colonies)
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See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/American-Colonies)
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The Declaration of Independence

Image, Courtesy U.S. National Archives

Reference and quoted passage from [Charters of Freedom](#) at the U.S. National Archives.

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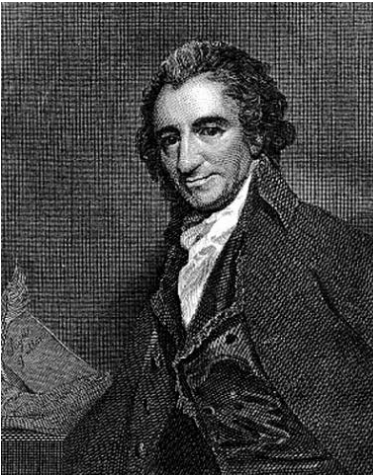
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King George III

Image, Courtesy U.S. National Archives.

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Thomas Paine

Image, online courtesy Library of Congress.

Common Sense, linked above, courtesy Google Books.

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British Colonies in North America - 1763-1775

Map from *Historical Atlas* by William R. Shepherd, New York, Henry Holt and Company, 1923.

Online, courtesy Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection, University of Texas at Austin.

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American Colonies in 1775 - Map

Map online, courtesy United States Military Academy.

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American Colonies

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