

One Person's Impact

After years of turmoil and despair under the leadership of Britain, the colonies began to tire of the king's rule. The constant raising of taxes and the sudden controlling of the colonies again, lead to opposition of the mother land. The American Revolution was springing into action. When thinking about the American Revolution, most people will consider George Washington to be the main component of our country's victory over England. He was a very strong and courageous military leader who helped us fight to the finish for our freedom. However, in order to begin our fighting and get the country to advocate the war, a man by the name of Thomas Paine stepped up to the plate. Although he was only one man, he made an everlasting difference for the United States of America.

The beginning of his life took place on February 9, 1737 in the town of Norfolk, England. He was born into a Quaker family, and was able to have the privilege of attending school as a child, which was not available to many during his lifetime. As he grew up he began his work by establishing a shop in Sandwich, Kent but he moved on to be an excise officer in Lincolnshire. Not staying in one place for long, he moves again to Lewes and begins to participate in community affairs. He even wrote his first work in 1772, *The Case of the Officers of Excise*. In this article he petitioned for improved working conditions. After this he made his big move to the American colonies, as suggested by friend Benjamin Franklin, where it all began.

Gaining more fame than his previous work of literature, *Common Sense* revolutionized America. It was his second work and was written to gain support for the fight that was occurring with England. It can be considered "the Revolution's most electrifying pamphlet". It was published January 10, 1776 and was instantly a big hit. Roughly 100,000 to 150,000 copies were

sold and every distributor was immediately sold out. About 10 percent of all the citizens of the colonies had a copy of *Common Sense*, and even more had had the opportunity to read parts of it or had heard the concepts and principles explained in the pamphlet. It was so well-known that George Washington even read it to his troops before they went into battle. Although the fighting had already begun, Paine's writing of *Common Sense* lit the fire that was needed to help carry out the battle for liberty.

Common Sense can be overlooked, but it was actually one of the reasons that such powerful support for breaking apart from England occurred. In *Common Sense*, he wrote "Every quiet method for peace [has] been ineffectual..." He is referring to the previous tactics the colonies had taken in order to ask for more freedoms from Britain. By saying this, it allowed the people to realize that action needed to be taken in order for change to transpire. Previously, public debate about independence was kept to a minimum. But with Paine's published work, the topic was arising. Another famous quote from *Common Sense* is "Until an independence is declared the continent will feel itself like a man who continues putting off some unpleasant business from day to day, yet knows it must be done, hates to set about it, wishes it over, and is continually haunted with the thoughts of necessity." This is a very powerful quote that can make the impact that something needed to be done, and soon. Paine's pamphlet was extremely radical with controversial ideas, but the reason it had so much value to the American Revolution was the fact that it was written in a manner that all common folk could understand. As shown in that quote he uses a simile to create the emotion within his readers. Thomas Paine allowed the common people to truly consider independence. Another work of literature that Paine wrote was *The American Crisis* this was used to rally Washington's troops together before they went into battle. It helped rediscover their courage and strength in order to fight for their Independence. In

American Crisis II Thomas Paine was the first one to call us the “United States of America”. Clearly, Paine was a very revolutionizing man.

Thomas Paine was of huge importance to the American Revolution. Rallying up the common class and informing them of the situation and the need for action helped fuel the energy needed to carry out the revolution. His words were read and learned throughout the colonies, and the thrive for independence surged. Even though the actual impact of his works cannot be measured, it can be inferred that he did inform and change the minds of many colonists. Thomas Paine showed what one person can accomplish. Anyone can have an impact on others lives, if they put their effort and time into it.

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Autobiography

My name is Christie Mueller and I'm an 11th grader at Walled Lake Central High School. I am very active in our school society. I'm a member of National Honor Society as a junior, and I also am a member of our school's Spanish Club. I have had straight A's my whole high school career with a cumulative grade point average of 4.118 thus far. I have pushed myself academically taking AP U.S. History, A.P. World History, and A.P. Chemistry. Also at my school, I have participated in school sports. I have played on freshmen and junior varsity volleyball along with freshmen, junior varsity, and varsity soccer. My freshmen year, I had the opportunity to be captain of both the freshmen volleyball and soccer teams. Within my community, I competitively dance through Studio A Center for Performing Arts. I also attend Walled Lake Church of Christ where I am an active member in our youth group. My hopes are to attend a challenging college. I am not exactly sure where I would like to go, but I am looking into the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.