Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Period: \_\_\_

Essential Question: What were the changing ideas about Britain that inspired the colonists before and during the revolution?

**Excerpts from “Common Sense”**

Written by Thomas Paine in February 1776; published anonymously for Paine’s protection in colonial newspapers. Read each paragraph and summarize Paine’s argument in 1-2 sentences in your own words.

1. *In the following pages I offer nothing more than simple facts, plain arguments, and common sense; and have no other preliminaries to settle with the reader, than that he will divest himself of prejudice and prepossession, and suffer his reason and his feelings to determine for themselves; that he will put on, or rather that he will not put off the true character of a man, and generously enlarge his views beyond the present day.*

Summary Sentence:

1. *I have heard it asserted by some, that as America hath flourished under her former connection with Great Britain, that the same connection is necessary towards her future happiness, and will always have the same effect. Nothing can be more fallacious than this kind of argument. We may as well assert, that because a child has thrived upon milk, that it is never to have meat; or that the first twenty years of our lives is to become a precedent for the next twenty. But even this is admitting more than is true, for I answer roundly, that America would have flourished as much, and probably much more, had no European power had any thing to do with her. The commerce by which she hath enriched herself are the necessaries of life, and will always have a market while eating is the custom of Europe.*

Summary Sentence:

1. *But she has protected us, say some. That she hath 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 motive, for the sake of trade and dominion.*

Summary Sentence:

1. *Europe is too thickly planted with kingdoms to be long at peace, and whenever a war breaks out between England and any foreign power, the trade of America goes to ruin, because of her connection with Britain. The next war may not turn out like the Past. Every thing that is right or natural pleads for separation. The blood of the slain, the weeping voice of nature cries, “'Tis time to part!”*

Summary Sentence:

1. *Even the distance at which the Almighty hath placed England and America, is a strong and natural proof, that the authority of the one, over the other, was never the design of Heaven. The time likewise at which the continent was discovered, adds weight to the argument, and the manner in which it was peopled increases the force of it. The reformation was preceded by the discovery of America, as if the Almighty graciously meant to open a sanctuary to the persecuted in future years, when home should afford neither friendship nor safety.*

Summary Sentence:

1. *As to government matters, it is not in the powers 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 three or four thousand 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.*

Summary Sentence:

1. *But where says some is the king of America? I'll tell you Friend, he reigns above, and doth not make havoc of mankind like the Royal of Britain. Yet that we may not appear to be defective even in earthly honors, let a day be solemnly set apart for proclaiming the charter; let it be brought forth placed on the divine law, the word of God; let a crown be placed thereon, by which the world may know, that so far as we approve of monarchy, that in America the law is king.*

Summary Sentence:

**Common Sense or Not?**

1. Pick two of Paine’s arguments and write a 3-4 sentence rebuttal from the opposing viewpoint.

2. Pick one of Paine’s arguments that you believe has the most merit. Why do you think it is such a strong argument?

3. What do you think of Paine’s arguments overall? Would you have been swayed to risk your financial or perhaps personal property or even life for a Revolution based on such arguments? Explain.