

Chapter 3

Guided Reading Questions for *The Elementary Common Sense of Thomas Paine*

1. Read this line from Thomas Paine’s text: “This is not a cause for a day, a year, or an age, but forever.” Why does Paine want to convince the colonists this needs to be a cause that will last forever? What would happen if the king agreed to give the colonists what they wanted?

2. According to Paine, “We have a duty to mankind to end our relationship (with Britain).” Would you have agreed with Paine? Why or why not?

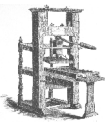
3. “We just flatter arrogant kings . . . with our repeated petitions.” One of the petitions he refers to is The Olive Branch Petition (see page 85 to read this document). What do you think Paine meant by this statement?

4. Paine says the King “thirsts for unchecked power.” What is “unchecked power,” and why would a King want it?

5. Look at the drawing on page 43. In 1776, why do you think it was important for new citizens to immigrate to the colonies?

6. Paine refers to the colonies as perfect equals, and being equal creates no jealousy. Do you agree with that statement? Why or why not?

7. “Everyone in the colonies no longer feels close to the British government. They feel more like a teenager preparing to leave home.” Why would Paine use an analogy like this? Now, more than two centuries later, can you identify with that statement? How so?



8. According to Paine, “Europe is too thickly planted with kingdoms.” Paine loved comparisons. What other metaphors can you find in this chapter?

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