

from The Crisis

Essay by Thomas Paine



READING 6 Analyze how rhetorical techniques in literary essays influence the reader, evoke emotions, and create meaning.

8 Analyze, make inferences, and draw conclusions about the author's purpose in historical contexts. **9A** Summarize a text in a manner that captures the author's viewpoint and its main ideas. **10A** Evaluate how the author's purpose and stated or perceived audience affect the tone of persuasive texts.

DID YOU KNOW?

Thomas Paine . . .

- failed out of school by age 12.
- was fired twice from a job as tax collector.
- didn't come to America until he was 37 years old.
- became involved in the French Revolution.

Meet the Author

Thomas Paine 1737–1809

Brash, bold, and fearless—and at times angry and offensive—Thomas Paine was the firebrand of the American Revolution. In the fall of 1775, few American leaders dared to advocate openly for independence. Not only did they risk being accused of treason, they were uncertain how the common people would react to such a radical notion. They turned to Tom Paine to test the waters. Paine had arrived in Philadelphia from London only the year before but was already gaining a reputation as a revolutionary writer.

He eagerly took up the task and in a few months wrote *Common Sense* (1776), a 50-page pamphlet that attacked the injustices of hereditary rule and urged the colonists to form their own independent country where “the law is king.” Paine’s pamphlet sold 120,000 copies in the first three months. Six months later, the colonies declared their independence.

New Voice for a New Political

Audience Paine’s political ideas in *Common Sense* were not particularly new or original.

In the Age of Enlightenment, intellectual circles were buzzing with talk of natural rights and democracy. What was new was Paine’s voice—raw, direct, full of energy. Unlike most political writers of the day, such as Thomas Jefferson,

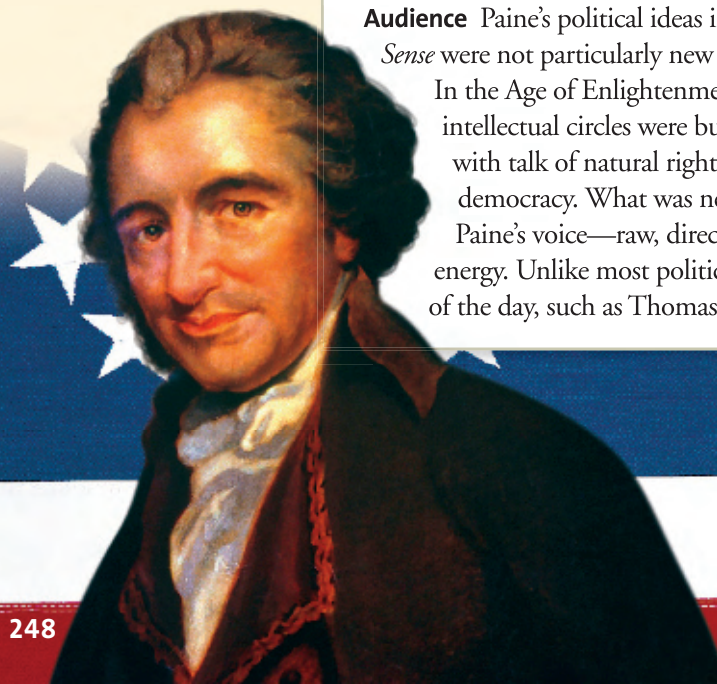
Paine addressed common men—farmers, craftsmen, and laborers—not the educated elite. His straightforward prose reinforced his democratic message that all men were capable of understanding and participating in government. People responded because Paine spoke their language. In his native England, he had worked as sailor, teacher, customs officer, grocer, and maker of ladies’ corsets. He envisioned America as the place where working men like him could have political and economic power.

Limits of Success With American independence won, Paine left for Europe in 1787 to join the reform efforts brewing there. But his outspokenness got him into trouble in both conservative England and revolutionary France. His last major work, *The Age of Reason* (1794, 1795), attacked organized religion and alienated many of his supporters. By the time he returned to the United States in 1802, few politicians wanted to associate with him. He spent his last years in poverty and obscurity.

Legacy Despite Paine’s later decline, his contribution to the intellectual and cultural life of Revolutionary America is indisputable. He was the radical the country needed, the spokesman for new American values and ideals.

Author Online

Go to thinkcentral.com. KEYWORD: HML11-248



LITERARY ANALYSIS: PERSUASIVE TECHNIQUES

Thomas Paine used a number of **persuasive techniques** in *The Crisis* to persuade Americans to join the cause. He was a master of **rhetoric**, the use of language to persuade.

- **Emotional appeals** have powerful rhetorical impact. They persuade by eliciting strong feelings, such as pity or fear.
- **Ethical appeals** influence readers by appealing to their sense of right and wrong.
- **Appeals to association** suggest that readers will gain acceptance or prestige by taking the writer's position.
- **Appeals to authority** influence readers by citing experts or others who warrant respect.

As you read, notice Paine's patriotic **purpose** and his understanding of his fellow colonists—the readers who make up his **audience**. Examine how his purpose and his audience affects his **tone** or attitude in this important historical essay.

READING STRATEGY: SUMMARIZE MAIN IDEAS

Summarizing means identifying main ideas and combining them into a brief overview of a text. As you read Paine's essay, use a chart like the one shown to identify main ideas. Afterwards, combine the main ideas into a brief paragraph.

Main Ideas	Summary
<i>I see no real cause for fear.</i>	

VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT

Complete each phrase with the appropriate word from the list.

WORD LIST	ardor	prudent	tyranny
	celestial	relinquish	wrangling

1. ____ brothers who never seemed to get along
2. will fight ____ and other forms of oppression
3. a ____ decision in dangerous circumstances
4. would not ____ control of the property
5. music so sweet it seemed ____
6. expressed his ____ in mushy love poems



Complete the activities in your **Reader/Writer Notebook**.

Whose SIDE are you on?

Loyalty is a value easily expressed but often difficult to uphold. Situations change, doubts creep in, and conflicts arise that can test the strongest bonds of loyalty. Paine's essay addresses the crisis of loyalty threatening the ranks of American soldiers during the dark days of the Revolutionary War.

QUICKWRITE Think about a time when your loyalty was tested and you were tempted to switch sides or give up. In a short paragraph, briefly describe the situation and explain what you decided. What was the most crucial factor in your decision?



The CRISIS

Thomas Paine

BACKGROUND On the blustery Christmas Eve of 1776, the situation looked bleak for the Continental Army. General Washington’s ragtag troops had retreated to the western banks of the Delaware River. Tom Paine was camped with them. The British were within striking distance of Philadelphia, and Washington knew he had to advance the next day or risk losing the war. To boost the morale of his ill-equipped and outnumbered soldiers, he ordered his officers to read aloud the following essay, which Paine had written the day before.

These are the times that try men’s souls: The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of his country; but he that stands it NOW, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. **Tyranny**, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly:—’Tis dearness only that gives every thing its value. Heaven knows how to set a proper price upon its goods; and it would be strange indeed, if so **celestial** an article as FREEDOM should not be highly rated. Britain, with an army to enforce her tyranny, has declared, that she has a right (*not only to TAX*) but “to BIND us in
10 ALL CASES WHATSOEVER,”¹ and if *being bound in that manner* is not slavery, then there is not such a thing as slavery upon earth. Even the expression is impious, for so unlimited a power can only belong to God. **A**

1. “to BIND us in ALL CASES WHATSOEVER”: a reference to wording in the Declaratory Act of 1766, in which the British parliament asserted its “power and authority” to make and enforce laws over the American colonies.

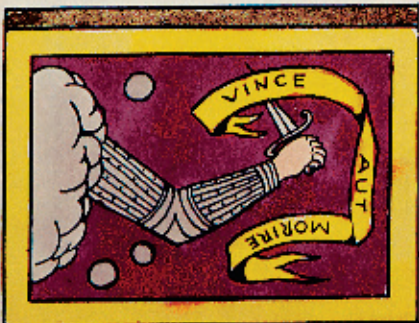
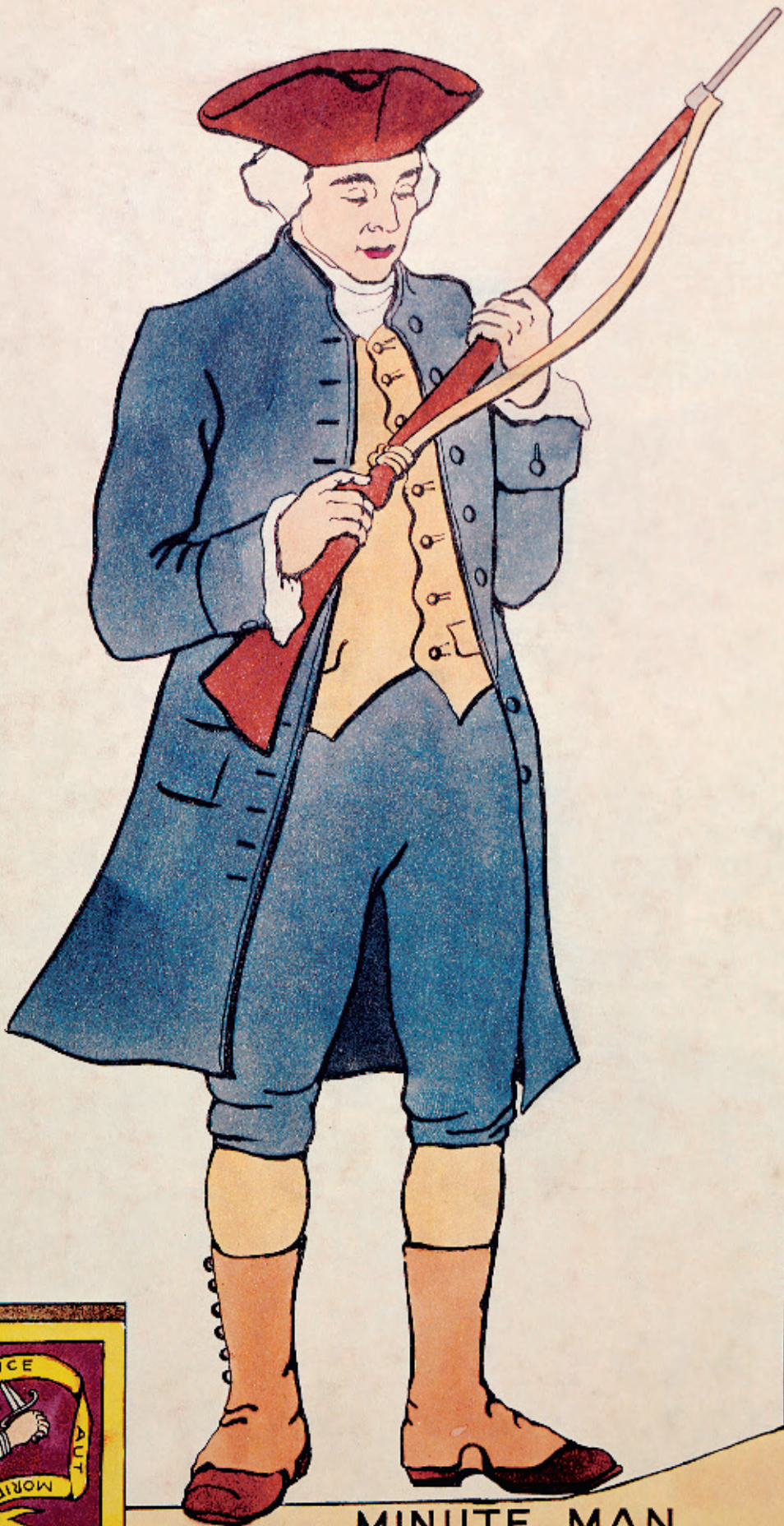
Analyze Visuals ►

A minuteman was pledged to be ready to fight on a minute’s notice. What does this suggest about the preparedness of the colonists?

tyranny (tĭr’ə-nē) *n.*
cruel and oppressive government or rule

celestial (sə-lēs’chəl) *adj.*
heavenly

- A** **PERSUASIVE TECHNIQUES**
Identify the **loaded language**—words with strong connotations—in lines 1–12. What kind of emotional appeal do these words have? What tone do they establish?



LIBERTY
OR
DEATH

MINUTE MAN

1774
-75

Whether the Independence of the Continent was declared too soon, or delayed too long, I will not now enter into as an argument; my own simple opinion is, that had it been eight months earlier, it would have been much better. We did not make a proper use of last winter, neither could we, while we were in a dependant state. However, the fault, if it were one, was all our own; we have none to blame but ourselves. But no great deal is lost yet; all that Howe has been doing for this month past is rather a ravage than a conquest which the spirit of the Jerseys a year ago would have quickly repulsed, and which time and a little resolution will soon recover. **B**

I have as little superstition in me as any man living, but my secret opinion has ever been, and still is, that God almighty will not give up a people to military destruction, or leave them unsupportedly to perish, who had so earnestly and so repeatedly sought to avoid the calamities of war, by every decent method which wisdom could invent. Neither have I so much of the infidel in me, as to suppose, that he has **relinquished** the government of the world, and given us up to the care of devils; and as I do not, I cannot see on what grounds the king of Britain can look up to heaven for help against us: A common murderer, a highwayman, or a housebreaker, has as good a pretense as he. . . .

I once felt all that kind of anger, which a man ought to feel, against the mean principles that are held by the Tories:² A noted one, who kept a tavern at Amboy,³ was standing at his door, with as pretty a child in his hand, about eight or nine years old, as most I ever saw, and after speaking his mind as freely as he thought was **prudent**, finished with this unfatherly expression, “*Well! give me peace in my day.*” Not a man lives on the Continent but fully believes that a separation must some time or other finally take place, and a generous parent would have said, “*If there must be trouble, let it be in my day, that my child may have peace;*” and this single reflection, well applied, is sufficient to awaken every man to duty. Not a place upon earth might be so happy as America. Her situation is remote from all the **wrangling** world, and she has nothing to do but trade with them. A man may easily distinguish in himself between temper and principle, and I am as confident, as I am that God governs the world, that America will never be happy until she gets clear of foreign dominion. Wars, without ceasing, will break out until that period arrives, and the Continent must in the end be conqueror; for, though the flame of liberty may sometimes cease to shine, the coal never can expire. . . . **C**

I turn with the warm **ardor** of a friend to those who have nobly stood, and are yet determined to stand the matter out: I call not upon a few, but upon all; not on this State or that State, but on every State; up and help us; lay your shoulders to the wheel; better have too much force than too little, when so great an object is at stake. Let it be told to the future world, that in the depth of winter, when nothing but hope and virtue could survive, that the city and the country, alarmed at one

B MAIN IDEAS

Reread lines 13–21. What is Paine’s main idea in this paragraph? Support your answer with evidence from the passage.

relinquish (rĭ-lĭng’kwĭsh)
v. to withdraw from; to give up

prudent (prōōd’nt) *adj.*
showing caution or good judgment

wrangling (răng’glĭng)
adj. arguing noisily
wrangle v.

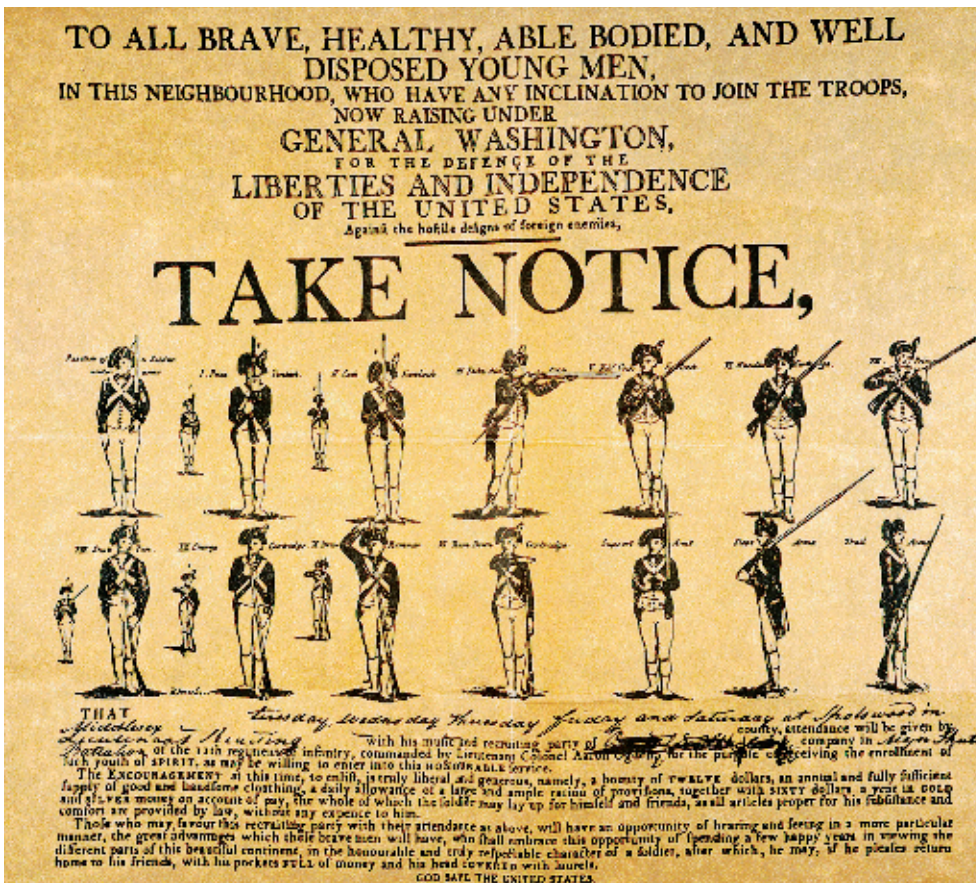
C PERSUASIVE TECHNIQUES

Notice that Paine makes an **ethical appeal** in lines 31–39. How does he say a parent should behave?

ardor (ăr’dər) *n.* intense enthusiasm; passion

2. **the mean principles . . . Tories:** the small-minded beliefs of those colonists who remain loyal to Great Britain.

3. **Amboy:** probably Perth Amboy, a town in New Jersey.



◀ Analyze Visuals

A broadside is a public notice printed on one side of a large sheet of paper. What feelings and emotions does this American Revolutionary War broadside appeal to?

common danger, came forth to meet and to repulse it. Say not, that thousands are gone, turn out your tens of thousands; throw not the burden of the day upon Providence, but “*shew your faith by your works,*” that God may bless you. It matters not where you live, or what rank of life you hold, the evil or the blessing will reach you all. The far and the near, the home counties and the back, the rich and the poor, shall suffer or rejoice alike. The heart that feels not now, is dead: The blood of his children shall curse his cowardice, who shrinks back at a time
60 when a little might have saved the whole, and made *them* happy. I love the man that can smile in trouble, that can gather strength from distress, and grow brave by reflection. ’Tis the business of little minds to shrink; but he whose heart is firm, and whose conscience approves his conduct, will pursue his principles unto death. My own line of reasoning is to myself as strait and clear as a ray of light. **D** Not all the treasures of the world, so far as I believe, could have induced me to support an offensive war, for I think it murder; but if a thief break into my house, burn and destroy my property, and kill or threaten to kill me, or those that are in it, and to “*bind me in all cases whatsoever,*” to his absolute will, am I to suffer it?



TEKS 10A

D PERSUASIVE TECHNIQUES

Reread lines 47–64. Notice how Paine’s persuasive **purpose** and his awareness of his **audience** contribute to his attitude or **tone** of passionate conviction. He identifies with his readers by calling himself a friend. He uses emotionally loaded words to appeal to beliefs shared by the colonists who read his essays. Choose an especially persuasive sentence from this passage. What is Paine’s tone in this sentence? What purpose does the sentence reveal? Explain your response.

What signifies it to me, whether he who does it, is a king or a common man; my
70 countryman or not my countryman? whether it is done by an individual villain,
or an army of them? If we reason to the root of things we shall find no difference;
neither can any just cause be assigned why we should punish in the one case, and
pardon in the other. Let them call me rebel, and welcome, I feel no concern from
it; but I should suffer the misery of devils, were I to make a whore of my soul by
swearing allegiance to one, whose character is that of a sottish, stupid, stubborn,
worthless, brutish man. I conceive likewise a horrid idea in receiving mercy from a
being, who at the last day shall be shrieking to the rocks and mountains to cover him,
and fleeing with terror from the orphan, the widow and the slain of America.

There are cases which cannot be overdone by language, and this is one. There
80 are persons too who see not the full extent of the evil that threatens them; they
solace themselves with hopes that the enemy, if they succeed, will be merciful.
It is the madness of folly to expect mercy from those who have refused to do
justice; and even mercy, where conquest is the object, is only a trick of war: The
cunning of the fox is as murderous as the violence of the wolfe; and we ought
to guard equally against both. Howe's first object is partly by threats and partly
by promises, to terrify or seduce the people to deliver up their arms, and receive
mercy. The ministry recommended the same plan to Gage, and this is what the
Tories call making their peace; "*a peace which passeth all understanding*" indeed!
A peace which would be the immediate forerunner of a worse ruin than any we
90 have yet thought of. Ye men of Pennsylvania, do reason upon those things! Were
the back counties to give up their arms, they would fall easy prey to the Indians,
who are all armed: This perhaps is what some Tories would not be sorry for.
Were the home counties to deliver up their arms, they would be exposed to the
resentment of the back counties, who would then have it at their power to chastise
their defection at pleasure. And were any one State to give up its arms, that State
must be garrisoned by all Howe's army of Britons and Hessians to preserve it from
the anger of the rest. Mutual fear is a principal link in the chain of mutual love,
and woe be the State that breaks the compact. Howe is mercifully inviting you to
barbarous destruction, and men must be either rogues or fools that will not see it.
100 I dwell not upon the vapours of imagination; I bring reason to your ears; and in
language, as plain as A, B, C, hold up truth to your eyes. **E**

I thank God that I fear not. I see no real cause for fear. I know our situation
well, and can see the way out of it. While our army was collected, Howe dared not
risk a battle, and it is no credit to him that he decamped from the White Plains,
and waited a mean opportunity to ravage the defenceless Jerseys; but it is great
credit to us, that, with an handful of men, we sustained an orderly retreat for near
an hundred miles, brought off our ammunition, all our field-pieces, the greatest
part of our stores, and had four rivers to pass. None can say that our retreat was

Language Coach


Etymology *Horrid* (line 76) comes from the Latin *horrere*, meaning "to be afraid." *Horrid* means "very bad" or "terrible." Look up these related words in a dictionary: *horrendous* and *abhor*. Use each in a sentence about Paine's beliefs.

E PERSUASIVE TECHNIQUES

Reread lines 79–101. At the beginning of this paragraph, what statement does Paine make about the use of language? What does this assertion reveal about his use of **emotional appeals** and loaded language in this essay? Explain your answer.



Washington Crossing the Delaware (1851), Eastman Johnson. Copy after the Emmanuel Leutze painting in the Metropolitan Museum, New York. Private collection. © Art Resource, New York.

precipitate, for we were near three weeks in performing it, and the country might
 110 have time to come in. Twice we marched back to meet the enemy and remained
 out till dark. The sign of fear was not seen in our camp, and had not some of the
 cowardly and disaffected inhabitants spread false alarms through the country, the
 Jerseys had never been ravaged. Once more we are again collected and collecting;
 our new army at both ends of the Continent is recruiting fast, and we shall be
 able to open the next campaign with sixty thousand men, well armed and clothed.
 This is our situation, and who will may know it. By perseverance and fortitude
 we have the prospect of a glorious issue; by cowardice and submission, the sad
 choice of a variety of evils—a ravaged country—a depopulated city—habitations
 without safety, and slavery without hope—our homes turned into barracks and
 120 bawdy-houses for Hessians, and a future race to provide for whose fathers we shall
 doubt of. Look on this picture, and weep over it!—and if there yet remains one
 thoughtless wretch who believes it not, let him suffer it unlamented.  **F**

▲ Analyze Visuals

What figures and objects are emphasized by the **composition**, or the arrangement of shapes? Consider what this emphasis adds to the painting's meaning.

F MAIN IDEAS

Reread this paragraph, focusing on what Paine says about fear. What is the main point he makes about fear? Support your answer with evidence from the paragraph.

Comprehension

- Recall** At the end of the essay, what two qualities does Paine say American troops need to win the war?
- Summarize** In the third paragraph, what reasons does Paine give for assuring the Americans that their cause is right?
- Clarify** What is implied by the terms “summer soldier” and “sunshine patriot” in the first paragraph?



READING 6 Analyze how rhetorical techniques in literary essays influence the reader, evoke emotions, and create meaning. **8** Analyze, make inferences, and draw conclusions about the author’s purpose in historical contexts. **9A** Summarize a text in a manner that captures the author’s viewpoint and its main ideas. **10A** Evaluate how the author’s purpose and stated or perceived audience affect the tone of persuasive texts.

Literary Analysis

- Interpret Metaphor** A metaphor is a figure of speech that equates two unlike things. Explain what Paine means by the metaphor in lines 45–46. How might this metaphor serve to inspire the troops’ loyalty?
- Summarize Main Ideas** Using the chart of main ideas you completed as you read, write a paragraph **summarizing** Paine’s main ideas. Does a summary of this essay’s main ideas lose the persuasive power of Paine’s rhetoric? Explain your answer.
- Analyze Persuasive Techniques** Review the persuasive techniques on page 249. Then, find six examples of Paine’s strong persuasive appeals. In a chart, record your examples and explain the types of appeals. How does Paine’s use of persuasive language affect the tone of this essay? Cite evidence from your chart to support your answer.

<i>Example from “The Crisis”</i>	<i>Kind of Appeal</i>
<i>Those soldiers who stand firm in the “service of [their] country” deserve the “love and thanks of man and woman.” (lines 2–3)</i>	<i>ethical appeal of “service to country” plus emotional appeal of love and gratitude</i>
<i>“God almighty will not give up a people to military destruction. . .” (lines 23–24)</i>	<i>appeal to authority—in this case, the ultimate authority</i>

Literary Criticism

- Critical Interpretations** John Adams, second U.S. president and no fan of Paine’s, nonetheless acknowledged his crucial influence: “Without the pen of Paine the sword of Washington would have been wielded in vain.” Use information from Paine’s essay, as well as facts from his biography on page 248, to support Adams’s assessment.

Whose SIDE are you on?

Political debates often compel people to decide which side they will be loyal to. Who or what deserves your loyalty? Why?

Vocabulary in Context

▲ VOCABULARY PRACTICE

Choose the letter of the phrase that defines or is related to the boldfaced word.

1. **celestial**: (a) an instrument, (b) a star in the sky, (c) a slogan
2. **tyranny**: (a) a country with no freedoms, (b) an old bicycle, (c) a relay race
3. **ardor**: (a) a grove of trees, (b) a passion for justice, (c) an accounting mistake
4. **relinquish**: (a) a building site, (b) a surrender of territory, (c) a bad argument
5. **prudent**: (a) a cautious investor, (b) a distant relative, (c) car insurance
6. **wrangling**: (a) a favor, (b) a rowing machine, (c) towns with border disputes

WORD LIST

ardor
celestial
prudent
relinquish
tyranny
wrangling

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY IN SPEAKING

• document • illustrate • interpret • promote • reveal

Paine's essay was used to inspire Washington's army to victory. Today, people sometimes use speeches, blogs, and videos to inspire others. However, even these messages started out as words on a page. In a small group, discuss the importance of the written word in **promoting** a cause or in **illustrating** important points. Use two of the Academic Vocabulary words in your discussion.

VOCABULARY STRATEGY: WORDS FROM MIDDLE ENGLISH

Many modern words from Middle English originally derive from French. Others come from Old English, the earliest recognized form of the English language. To learn the derivation of a word, you need to understand how to read a dictionary entry. The entry below begins with the word in boldface, divided into syllables, followed by the pronunciation guide in parenthesis, and then the part of speech. Two numbered definitions are provided, as well as a highlighted summary of the word's etymology—its derivation from Middle English, Old French, and Latin.

ar•dor (är der) *n.* **1.** Great intensity of feeling. **2.** Strong enthusiasms or devotion: zeal. [Middle English *ardour*, from Old French, from Latin *ardor*, for *ardere*, to burn.]

PRACTICE The boldface words in these sentences derive from Middle English. Use context clues to write a definition for each word. Then, use a dictionary to learn the etymology and original meaning of each word.

1. He demonstrated his athletic **pro**wess by participating in the triathlon.
2. She has been a **re**cluse ever since the death of her husband.
3. Her **ful**some praise of his decision greatly embarrassed him.
4. He had the perfect **re**joinder for every accusation of the committee.
5. The garden held a **plen**itude of rare plants and flowers.



READING 1D Recognize and use knowledge of cognates in different languages and of word origins to determine the meaning of words. **1E** Use general and specialized dictionaries, thesauri, glossaries, histories of language, books of quotations, and other related references (printed or electronic) as needed.

Interactive
Vocabulary



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KEYWORD: HML11-257