



# Common Sense and Other Writings (Barnes & Noble Classics Series)

*Thomas Paine*

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Though he did not emigrate from England to the American colonies until 1774, just a few months before the Revolutionary War began, **Thomas Paine** had an enormous impact on that war and the new nation that emerged from it. *Common Sense*, the instantly popular pamphlet he published in January 1776, argued that the goal of the struggle against the British should be not simply tax reform, as many were calling for, but complete independence. His rousing, radical voice was balanced by the equally independence-minded but more measured tones of Thomas Jefferson, who wrote the Declaration of Independence later that year.

In later works, such as *The Rights of Man*, *The Age of Reason*, and other selections included in this volume, Paine proved himself a visionary moralist centuries ahead of his time. He believed that every human has the natural right to life's necessities and that government's role should be to provide for those in dire need. An impassioned opponent of all forms of slavery, he understood that no one in poverty is truly free, a lesson still to be learned by many of our leaders today.

**Joyce Appleby**, Professor Emerita at the University of California, Los Angeles, has followed the trajectory of American nation-building in her books *Capitalism and a New Social Order: The Republican Vision of the 1790s*, *Inheriting the Revolution: The First Generation of Americans*, *Thomas Jefferson*, and *A Restless Past: History and the American Public*.

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