

Research Paper Outline Example

Title: Common Sense and Its Impact on American Political Thought

Thesis: Thomas Paine's Common Sense articulated the anti-British sentiments of the Colonies in a way so unprecedented that it permanently changed the face of political thought in America.

I. Introduction:

A. Thesis: Thomas Paine's Common Sense articulated the anti-British sentiments of the Colonies in a way so unprecedented that it permanently changed the face of political thought in America.

II. What did Common Sense say that was so different?

A. It denounced both the monarchy and the English Constitution, which had previously been looked upon as a brilliant political document. Americans realized the inherent fallacies of hereditary government (specifically monarchy) as well as the English Constitution which protected the monarchy.

B. It called for Americans to disconnect themselves from the flawed British system and create a new one for themselves. Common Sense questioned the long-standing belief that residents of the colonies were inseparably connected to England. It gave them a new identity – Americans rather than Britons.

C. It also outlined the benefits of a republican government, which would go on to influence the ideas of the Founding Fathers as they created a new government for their new country.

III. What was Common Sense's immediate effect on the Colonies?

A. The debate in the American Colonies shifted from that of reconciliation with England to that of independence.

B. It was read by an unprecedented number of colonists and united a great majority of them behind independence.

C. It inspired American intellectuals with its call for independence, leading to the composition of the Declaration of Independence a mere six months later.

IV. What were Common Sense's long-term effects?

A. It changed the connotation of the word "revolution" to something that looked to the future. "Revolution" became a word of innovation rather than renovation.

B. It permanently cemented the idea of a republican, non-hereditary government into the heads of Americans. Common Sense's design for a republican government, and its basic principles were carried on to the Constitution.

V. Conclusion

A. Common Sense's eloquent, articulate, and unprecedented arguments led to a permanent change in American political thought.