**Document Analysis: Thomas Paine**

Excerpts from Common Sense Thomas Paine, February 14, 1776

“In the following pages I offer nothing more than simple facts, plain arguments, and common sense;...

Volumes have been written on the subject of the struggle between England and America. Men of all ranks have embarked in the controversy, from different motives, and with various designs; but all have been ineffectual, and the period of debate is closed. Arms, as the last resource, decide the contest; the appeal was the choice of the king, and the continent hath accepted the challenge…

I challenge the warmest advocate for reconciliation to show a single advantage that this continent can reap by being connected with Great Britain.  I repeat the challenge; not a single advantage is derived.   Our corn will fetch its price in any market in Europe, and our imported goods must be paid for, buy them where we will...

But the injuries and disadvantages which we sustain by that connection are without number; and our duty to mankind at large, as well as to ourselves, instructs us to renounce the alliance, because any submission to or dependence on Great Britain tends directly to involve this continent in European wars and quarrels, and sets us at variance with nations who would otherwise seek our friendship, and against whom we have neither anger nor complaint.  As Europe is our market for trade, we ought to form no partial connection with any part of it.  It is the true interest of America to steer clear of European contentions which she never can do, while, by her dependence on Britain, she is made the makeweight in the scale of British politics...

As to government matters, it is not in the power 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 3,000 or 4,000 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...”

**For the following questions:**

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**What were Thomas Paine’s main arguments in this excerpt?**

**Why do you think this pamphlet was so effective?**