Arguments for Liberty

Read and compare two Patriot arguments

8.C.2.2.A "Explain major arguments supporting the Patriot cause by analyzing the speech, Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death, attributed to Patrick Henry, and Common Sense by Thomas Paine."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one reason Henry gives for resisting Britain, circle two reasons Paine gives for independence, and write a 1 beside a sentence that shows an idea they share.

Two Cases for the Patriot Cause

1. In March 1775, delegates in Virginia debated how to respond to British rule. A speech attributed to Patrick Henry urged them to prepare for armed resistance. Henry argued that colonists had already tried petitions and other peaceful appeals, yet Britain sent soldiers and warships instead of changing course. He asked whether a people could remain free while armed forces stood ready to control them. In the version later published, he ended by choosing liberty over life without freedom. The exact wording was recorded decades after the speech.

2. Less than a year later, Thomas Paine published *Common Sense* as a pamphlet ordinary colonists could buy and discuss. Paine argued that an island should not rule a continent across an ocean. He also attacked hereditary monarchy: a ruler's child did not gain wisdom simply by being born into a royal family. Paine warned that remaining tied to Britain could drag the colonies into Britain's wars and hurt their trade with other countries. For Paine, independence offered a way to make laws for themselves and pursue safer connections abroad.

3. The two writers pushed readers toward the Patriot cause, but they faced different choices. Henry spoke while many colonists still hoped to settle the crisis with Britain; his case centered on why further waiting was dangerous. Paine wrote after fighting had begun, when the question of complete independence was harder to avoid. His case challenged the idea that British rule was natural or useful. Both treated freedom as something colonists must act to protect, rather than a gift a king might grant if asked again.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why did Henry argue that another peaceful appeal to Britain was not enough?

2. How did Henry use the presence of soldiers and warships to support his argument about freedom?

3. How did Paine's criticism of hereditary monarchy support his argument against British rule?

4. How did Paine use war and trade to argue for independence?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you are writing to a neighbor in 1776 who wants to wait for Britain to change its policies. In four or five sentences, use one argument from Henry and one from Paine to make your own case, and explain how the arguments work together.

ANSWER KEY

Arguments for Liberty

GRADE 8 · 8.C.2.2.A

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one reason Henry gives for resisting Britain, circle two reasons Paine gives for independence, and write a 1 beside a sentence that shows an idea they share. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why did Henry argue that another peaceful appeal to Britain was not enough?	**Colonists had already made peaceful appeals, but Britain sent soldiers and warships rather than changing course.**
2	How did Henry use the presence of soldiers and warships to support his argument about freedom?	**He presented Britain's armed forces as a threat to colonists' freedom and a reason to prepare to resist.**
3	How did Paine's criticism of hereditary monarchy support his argument against British rule?	**He argued that being born into a royal family did not make someone wise enough to rule the colonies.**
4	How did Paine use war and trade to argue for independence?	**He warned that ties to Britain could pull the colonies into British wars and harm trade with other countries.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Waiting for Britain to change sounds hopeful, but Henry argued that earlier petitions brought soldiers and warships, not relief. If peaceful requests have failed, more waiting may leave us less able to defend our freedom. Paine also argued that independence could free our trade from the effects of Britain's wars. Henry shows why delay is risky, while Paine shows what we could gain by governing ourselves.

Accept other passage-supported explanations of Henry's or Paine's arguments. For the open task, look for an argument from each writer and a clear explanation of how they work together.