How Thomas Paine earned the title, "Father of the American Revolution", by Nikhil Tummalapalli. Thomas Paine was a political writer and activist who had a significant influence on the American Revolution. He was born in Thetford, England in 1737. He attended the Thetford Grammar School between 1744 and 1749. He failed out of school at the age of 12. When he was thirteen, he was apprenticed to his corset maker father and established a shop in Kent. Thomas Paine married Mary Lambert in 1759 and his business collapsed soon after that. In 1762, he became an Excise Officer in Grantham. He was paid a very minimum salary per annum while he was working here. On August 27th, 1765, he lost his job as an excise officer after he was accused to have inspected goods he did not inspect. From 1772 to 1773, Paine was busy writing a twenty-one-page article called The Case of the Officers of Excise, in which he argued for the pay raise for tax officers. This was his first political writing and he spent the winter distributing approximately 4,000 copies. He was again dismissed from his service in 1774 after being absent from his post without permission. Short of money and in an attempt to avoid debtors prison, he sold his material possessions to pay off his debts. On June 4th, 1774, Thomas Paine's luck turned around when he met Benjamin Franklin in London. Benjamin Franklin suggested that Paine should immigrate to America and gave him a recommendation letter. So Thomas Paine set off on his journey to British Colonial America. The transatlantic voyage was a struggle as the ships supplies were bad and different sicknesses were spreading among the people on the ship. He finally arrived at Philadelphia on November 30th, 1774. It took him six weeks to recover his health after the journey. He became a citizen of Pennsylvania and eventually in 1775 he became
the editor of the "Pennsylvania Magazine". He published his *African Slavery in America* in 1775 criticizing the practice of slavery in America. Paine said that it was not fair and completely inhumane. This is when his career turned into journalism.

In 1776, Thomas Paine published a 96-page pamphlet called the 'Common Sense'. It presented the American colonists with an argument for independence from the British rule. It was published anonymously on January 10, 1776 just when the American Revolution started to unfold and became an immediate sensation. It was widely sold and read aloud at meetings. The Common Sense was divided into 4 sections. In the first section he states the difference between a society and government. He says that as the society grows, it leads to a lot of problems. He believes a government is necessary to enforce rules and laws, and then he goes on to analyze the Constitution of Great Britain. He finds that the English constitution is monarchical and aristocratic and Paine criticizes this kind of constitution by examining the relationship between the king, his subordinates and the commons. In the second section, Paine criticizes monarchy from a biblical and historical perspective. He states that all men are equal by birth and therefore the difference between kings and the commons is not right. Paine also analyses some of the problems monarchies have created in the past. In the third section, Paine states his thoughts on the present state of affairs in British Colonial America and argues that the best thing to do is independence considering the violence between England and the Colonies. He also proposes a structure and form for the congress. In the fourth section of the pamphlet, Thomas Paine talks about the potential of Americas Military. This was the part of the pamphlet that really inspired American troops to keep fighting and not give up. Paine wrote the Common Sense in a style that common people understood. His second most influential work in the American Revolution was 'The American Crisis'. The American Crisis is a series of Pamphlets written between 1776 and 1783 during the American Revolution. The pamphlets were written at a very crucial time when
the colonists needed some inspiring work. Like the Common Sense, the Crisis papers were written in very simple language so the common man could understand. The writings clarified the issues at stake in the war and improved the morale of the American colonists. The pamphlet begins with the words, "These are the times that try men's souls." The people believed that these were strong lines to start of with. The pamphlet was read aloud to the Army three days before the Battle of Trenton in New Jersey to intrigue the army and improve resistance among them. Paine states that the Americans do not lack the force by any means to revolt in the Crisis papers a few times. All throughout this work, Thomas Paine maintains a positive view overall for the Continental Army.

Thomas Paine's famous words and work invigorated the American troops to continue their battle for independence from England. Paine believed in freethinking and standing up for one's rights and beliefs. He believed that all people had the right to be free. He expressed these thoughts and beliefs through his writings. Through these writings he had a significant influence and impact on the American Revolution and the people of America.

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**Primary Sources:**


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