**“Common Sense” by Thomas Paine**  
**Translation Exercise**

**Context:** As the rebellion intensified against Great Britain, colonists felt conflicting loyalties – they wished to remain loyal to the British crown, but felt the need to fight for their rights. In January 1776, 9-months after the start of the rebellion, American colonist Thomas Paine published a 47-page pamphlet to convince colonists to separate from Great Britain and to form their own country. This pamphlet was the first public cry for American independence.

**Directions:** Use the Translations “bank” to match with the following excerpts from Thomas Paine’s “Common Sense” as summaries of his arguments. Write the letter of the translation (A-J) in the small box, then copy the translation itself in the rest of the space provided.  
*Note: You may cut each translation down to bullet notes as long as you include its key ideas!*

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<tr>
<th>QUOTE FROM “COMMON SENSE”</th>
<th>TRANSLATION OF QUOTE</th>
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<td>Volumes have been written on the subject of the struggle between England and America. Men of all ranks have embarked in the controversy… but all have been ineffectual, and the period of debate is closed. Arms as a last resort decide the contest.</td>
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<td>I have heard it asserted by some, that America hath flourished under her former connection with Great Britain, and that the same connection is necessary towards her future happiness…. Nothing can be more fallacious than this kind of argument. … America would have flourished as much, and probably much more, had no European power taken any notice of her.</td>
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<td>But she has protected us, say some. That she hath . . . defended the continent at our expense as well as her own is admitted. . . . We have boasted the protection of Great Britain without considering that her motive was interest, not attachment; and that she did not protect us from our enemies on our account, but from her enemies on her own account. . .</td>
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<td>But Britain is the parent country, say some. Then the more shame upon her conduct. Even brutes do not devour their young, nor savages make war upon their families. . . . This new world hath been the asylum for the persecuted lovers of civil and religious liberty from every part of Europe. [A]nd it is so far true of England, that the same tyranny which drove the first emigrants from home, pursues their descendants still. . .</td>
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<td>I challenge the warmest advocate for reconciliation to show a single advantage that this continent can reap by being connected with Great Britain. … Our corn will fetch its price in any market in Europe, .</td>
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Europe is too thickly planted with kingdoms to be long at peace, and whenever a war breaks out between England and any foreign power, the trade of America goes to ruin because of her connection with Britain. . .

Everything that is right or natural pleads for separation. The blood of the slain, the weeping voice of nature cries, 'TIS TIME TO PART. Even the distance at which the Almighty hath placed England and America is a strong and natural proof that the authority of the one over the other, was never the design of heaven. . . .

Small islands, not capable of protecting themselves, are the proper objects for kingdoms to take under their care; but there is something very absurd in supposing a continent to be perpetually governed by an island. [I]t is evident that they belong to different systems: England to Europe; America to itself. . . .

But where, say some, is the king of America? I'll tell you, friend, he reigns above, and doth not make havoc [chaos; mayhem] of mankind like the Royal Brute of Great Britain. [I]n America THE LAW IS KING. For as in absolute governments the king is law, so in free countries the law ought to be king, . . .

Nothing but independence . . . can keep the peace of the continent. . . A government of our own is our natural right; . . . it is infinitely wiser and safer to form a constitution of our own in a cool deliberate manner, while we have it in our power. . . .

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**CLASS NOTES: CHOOSING SIDES**

As the debate over independence continued, colonists began choosing sides:

- Colonists known as _______________ chose to fight for independence (___________%);
- Colonists wanting to remain loyal to Great Britain were known as _______________ or _______________ (_______%).
Directions: Match the excerpts from Thomas Paine’s "Common Sense" to the following translations or summaries of his arguments. Write the letter of the translation (A-J) in the small box, then copy the translation itself in the rest of the space provided. Note: You may cut each translation down to bullet notes as long as you include its key ideas!

A. It is absurd to have a little island rule a large continent.

B. England protected us for her own self-interests, not out of love.

C. Peace will only come by creating an independent country with its own government

D. If England is the "parent," she has not been a good one. Many fled Europe because of persecution, and now England is again failing to uphold our rights.

E. We've tried everything. Now it's time to act.

F. Nothing good can come from staying with Britain. We can trade our goods anywhere.

G. Law should be all-powerful, not some king. We need to limit the king's power to protect us from tyrannical rule.

H. England will always be at war, and these wars interfere with our freedom to trade.

I. Some say that we need England for future prosperity. America didn't grow BECAUSE of England. We would have grown anyway.

J. Everything supports separating from England. For one, England is too far away from America to rule it.