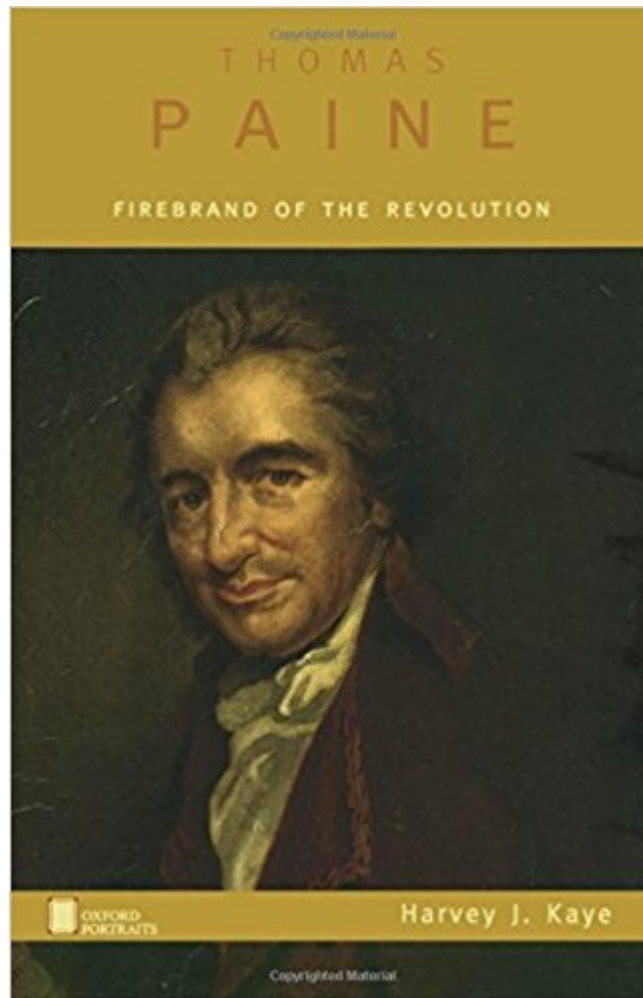




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# Thomas Paine: Firebrand Of The Revolution (Oxford Portraits)



## Synopsis

Thomas Paine (1737-1809) was one of the most fascinating figures of the late 18th century. His public antagonist and personal friend John Adams believed that their times would come to be known as the "Age of Paine." He came to America in middle age and became a radical-democratic pamphleteer, effectively turning colonial rebellion into a national liberation movement. He later returned to Europe where he played a prominent role in both the French Revolution and the cause of English radicalism. Paine is best remembered for his books: the controversial *The Rights of Man* and his book on the American Revolution, *Common Sense*. Harvey J. Kaye, well-known for his studies on Paine and his period, traces the English revolutionary's life and details his political writings in accessible, highly readable narrative that also covers important events of early American history. Oxford Portraits is a new series of biographies for young adults. Written by prominent writers and historians, each of these titles is designed to supplement the core texts of the middle and high school curriculum with intriguing, thoroughly informative and insightful accounts of the lives and work of the notable men and women who helped shape history. Each book is illustrated with numerous graphics, photographs, and documents. A unique feature is the inclusion of sidebars containing primary source material, mostly excerpts from the subject's writings. A chronology, further reading list, and index rounds out every volume.

## Book Information

Series: Oxford Portraits

Hardcover: 160 pages

Publisher: Oxford University Press; 1 edition (April 6, 2000)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0195116275

ISBN-13: 978-0195116274

Product Dimensions: 9.3 x 0.6 x 6.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 1 customer review

Best Sellers Rank: #729,415 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #62 in [Books > Teens >](#)

[Biographies > Political](#) #70 in [Books > Teens > Education & Reference > History > United States > Colonial & Revolutionary Periods](#) #80 in [Books > Teens > Biographies > Literary](#)

Age Range: 12 - 17 years

Grade Level: 7 - 12

## Customer Reviews

Grade 8 Up-Kaye skillfully weaves together the story of the man and the important historical events that occurred during his lifetime. The writing is lively and unbiased, fairly discussing Paine's disappointments and failures, as well as his successes. Extensive coverage is given to the publication of his pamphlet, *Common Sense*. The author also describes the circumstances under which Paine came to write *Rights of Man*, a pamphlet in defense of the French Revolution. Attention is given to Paine's many occupations and his political involvements in France, England, and America, as well as his writings against slavery and those in favor of the rights of women. Good-quality, black-and-white photos and reproductions appear throughout. While similar in scope to Milton Meltzer's *Tom Paine* (Watts, 1996), this volume's font size and layout make it appear to be for a slightly older audience. A solid addition to biography collections. Marilyn Long Graham, Lee County Library System, Estero, FL Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Tom Paine was one of the more intriguing figures of the American Revolution. The subject of numerous biographies and fictional accounts (e.g., Howard Fast's 1943 *Citizen Tom Paine*), he is now the subject of this new volume in the "Oxford Portraits" series. While the series is primarily aimed at high school students, Kaye (history, Univ. of Wisconsin, Green Bay) delivers a crisp and concise biography that will be appreciated by a broad general audience of readers. Although his writing style is occasionally too pared down ("Paine was a friendly and sociable young man"), this deceptively simple book is fast paced and well organized. Kaye appends a short bibliography but does not provide any reference notes. This is a suitable acquisition for high school and public libraries but will not replace major works on Paine such as Eric Foner's *Tom Paine and Revolutionary America* (1976).-Thomas A. Karel, Franklin & Marshall Coll. Lib., Lancaster, PA Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

This is essentially a biography of a leading thinker of the Age of Enlightenment and American Revolution, well-written and easy reading. Should be required reading for every American History class.

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