



American Crisis Primary Source Questions – Teacher Answer Key

1. What is Paine implying when he refers to some soldiers as “summer soldiers” and “sunshine patriots”?
 - He is implying that certain Patriot soldiers do not have the courage to fight for the independence when the conditions become treacherous – that they cover when things become too difficult.

2. What is the main right that Paine argues they must continue to fight for?

- Freedom.

3. Do you think this essay was written towards the beginning of the war or the end? Why do you think so?

- It was written towards the beginning. *Have the students determine their reasons for thinking so.

4. Does Paine argue that the Patriots should have waited to declare war or that they should have declared it sooner?

- Paine thinks that the Patriots should have started the war 8 months earlier.



5. What reaction was Paine hoping to spark in his audience?
- An increase in morale, an understanding of the importance of their reasons for fighting, increased hope for victory. Paine uses language to instill confidence in the American soldiers' and their abilities to gain victory.
6. Paine says he could not be convinced to start an offensive war. What reason then does he give for justifying the Patriots' involvement in their current war?
- Paine writes that the distinction lies in the fact that the British came onto the colonists' land, burning and destroying that which was not theirs. The Patriots are therefore defending their country, their land, and their freedom against those who want to "bind [them] in all cases whatsoever." Paine says it is their right to defend themselves against those who threaten and kill.
7. What does Paine ask of his fellow Patriots to end his essay?
- He asks them to continue the fight with increased resolve, to give all that they have to the cause, and to push harder rather than back down.