

Module 5: Stretching Limits in the Age of Reason

Topic 4 Content: ARC Strategy Model

Thoughts on the Present State of American Affairs

By Thomas Paine
January 19, 1776

In the following pages I offer nothing more than simple facts, plain arguments, and common sense; and have no other Preliminaries to settle with the reader, than that he will divest himself of prejudice and **prepossession**, and suffer his reason and his feelings to determine for themselves; that he will put ON, or rather that he will not put OFF the true character of a man, and generously enlarge his views beyond the present day.

Comment [HH1]: An attitude, belief, or impression formed beforehand; a pre-conception.

Summary:

Ethos – Establishing his argument as straight-forward; wants the reader to be open-minded.

Questions/Comments/Connections (Q/C/C):

He seems to say, “Be a man” which implies that if the reader rejects his argument, then he is weak. Is this an emotional appeal or a logical fallacy? A kind of ad hominem?

Volumes have been written on the subject of the struggle between England and America. Men of all ranks have **embarked** in the controversy, from different motives, and with various designs; but all have been **ineffectual**, and the period of debate is closed. Arms, as the last resource, decide this contest; the appeal was the choice of the king, and the continent hath accepted the challenge.

Comment [HH2]: started; began

Comment [HH3]: Not producing any or the desired effect

Summary:

Talking about the struggle with England hasn't helped. Now it's time to fight. That was the King's choice, and we are responding to the challenge.

Questions/Comments/Connections (Q/C/C):

DID the British send in “arms” first?

[... a portion of the essay has been omitted...]

I have heard it asserted by some, that as America hath **flourished** under her former connection with Great Britain that the same connection is necessary towards her future happiness, and will always have the same effect. Nothing can be more fallacious than this kind of argument. We may as well assert that because a child has thrived upon milk that it is never to have meat, or that the first twenty years of our lives is to become a precedent for the next twenty. But even this is admitting more than is true, for I answer roundly, that America would have flourished as much, and probably much more, had no European power had any thing to do with her. The commerce, by which she hath enriched herself, are the necessaries of life, and will always have a market while eating is the custom of Europe.

Comment [HH4]: Grow or develop in a healthy or vigorous way; develop rapidly and successfully

Summary:

Logos – He anticipates and argues the opposing argument that America has prospered under British rule and will continue to do so.

Questions/Comments/Connections (Q/C/C):

Cool! He points out the “appeal to tradition” fallacy. He also says that Europe will always need American products. Is that claim true today?

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But she has protected us, say some. That she has engrossed us is true, and defended the continent at our expense as well as her own is admitted, and she would have defended Turkey from the same motive, viz, the sake of trade and dominion.

Comment [HH5]: Having all one's attention or interest absorbed by someone or something; absorbed; immersed

Comment [HH6]: namely

Summary:

Logos – He makes a comparison, basically saying that the British would have protected any other place if it were in their own interest to do so.

Questions/Comments/Connections (Q/C/C):

Don't we do the same thing today – get involved in other country's affairs because it in some way will benefit us as Americans?