

KNTV: PHILOSOPHY

THOMAS PAINE

Programme-related questions (and answers)

1. Where did Thomas Paine come from and when was he alive?
(He was born in Norfolk, England, and lived from 1737-1809.)
2. What rights did Thomas Paine believe that every individual should have?
(He thought everyone had the right to freedom and equality.)
3. Why was Thomas Paine opposed to monarchy?
(He thought it was ridiculous that monarchs should have so much power, and believed that the only kind of government that would protect people's rights was a democracy, in which everyone had the right to vote.)
4. How did Thomas Paine think society should treat elderly people?
(He supported the idea of an old-age pension, and believed that society should show compassion and help those who didn't have enough food, money or shelter.)
5. What were Paine's views on war?
(He hated it and thought there should be no wars in a civilised society. He believed that nations should work towards world peace and reduce their armaments by 90%.)
6. What role did women play in society in Paine's era?
(They were second-class citizens and had very few rights. Paine thought women should have exactly the same rights as men.)
7. Who helped Paine to emigrate to America?
(The American thinker and politician Benjamin Franklin, who wrote letters of recommendation for Paine after meeting him in London.)
8. What was Paine's role in the American Revolution?
(He supported the American cause enthusiastically and fought for the Americans' right to demand independence. He wrote numerous influential pamphlets, and his words were used to encourage the American troops.)
9. Why was Paine forced to leave England forever in 1787?
(He published his anti-monarchist opinions in Rights of Man, and was accused of treason.)
10. How was Paine's life endangered during the French Revolution?
(He was sentenced to death by Robespierre, and only escaped execution because the guard marked the chalk cross – indicating that he was to be executed – on the wrong side of his cell door.)
11. When Paine was growing up, what did he see happening to criminals that influenced his thinking later in life?
(He saw them being put in the Thetford stocks and subjected to public humiliation, which he believed went against their fundamental human rights.)
12. Why did Paine die in poverty?
(His anti-Christian views alienated him from many of his former supporters in America.)