In 1776 the prospects for American victory seemed small.ColonialColonial eliteselites—large landholders and plantation masters—benefited most from American benefited most from American independence: independence: They continued to rule at home without outside interference. The pamphlet Common SenseCommon Sense by Anglo-American philosopher ThomaThomas Paines Paine presented powerful arguments opposing kings and supporting a pure republicopposing kings and supporting a pure republic. They fought on their own territory, and in order to win they did not have to defeat the British but only to and in order to win they did not have to defeat the British but only to convince the British that the colonists could not be defeated convince the British that the colonists could not be defeated. Britain had a population more than three times that of the colonies, and the British army was large, well-trained, and experienced. But Americans had powerful advantages that in the end were decisive.