

# Valley forge essay



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

When a person is in a stressful situation on instinct they have two options, fight or flight. In war the same is true. War is not always bayonets and bullets, it's the decisions you make during times of hardship. A soldier has to make the decision whether to keep fighting for what they believe in no matter what the stakes or to flee. In December of 1777, George Washington and his troops arrived at Valley Forge. Since the summer of 1775, all has gone well for the Continental Army.

More recently Washington was presumably unable to stop General Howe and his British soldiers from claiming the national capital of Philadelphia. With Howe and his army of approximately 18, 000 comfortably quartered in Philadelphia, Washington decided to build a winter camp at Valley Forge just 18 miles from Philadelphia in order to keep a close watch on the British. Washington now has a problem. Many soldiers' terms are coming to an end soon and the demand for soldiers couldn't be higher.

My 9-month enlistment for the war is up on February 1st in just one month's time. The question for most of us soldiers is, " Should I quit and desert the Continental Army? " I have thought long and hard about this, and even though I'm concerned about my aging mother and miss my family dearly, I feel that the need is greater to stay, so I must re-enlist. I will re-enlist because, I am loyal, we are not a nation of summer soldiers, and having sick and dying men means the healthy should fight. I am going to re-enlist because many men are sick and dying.

The winter months have been hard on us. Over half of the army is too sick for roll call which is an estimated value of 3, 989 men (Document A). Those

that are healthy need to fill in for them in order to make up for the lack of ready men. The amount of sick men is insurmountable and should only encourage us to fight harder for our cause. The estimated death rate from illness is 1, 800 to 2, 500 (Document A). Even though these numbers make me scared at times, it only makes me realize what I signed up for and why I can't quit now.

I mean, there is a 90% chance of survival and I can't let my friends die for nothing. I am no longer fighting for myself, but for my nation and for my fallen comrades whose death must not be in vain. Another reason I must re-enlist is the fact that my government deserves my loyalty. The Committee of Congress has stayed with us through much of the winter after arriving at Valley Forge a few weeks ago and has given us hope (Document B). That hope has sparked within us a new flood of encouragement and will power.

When George Washington was talking to the 5 members of Congress, he expressed the fact that we brave soldiers need help in our battle with Britain (Document B). Even though it's cold, and we have threadbare clothing that are merely rags, and the Congress members are all dressed in their finest, our spirit is still strong (Document B). Even Dr. Waldo stated that while tending to our sick soldiers, he was surprised by the magnitude of cheerful willingness to proceed with fighting for our cause (Document C). Dr. Waldo expected us to be down on our luck for having to withstand the poor food, fatigue, cold weather, crowded huts, and smoky air quality which was due to poor ventilation, but most soldiers were able to persevere through all of that hardship (Document C).

The Committee of Congress makes me feel like someone is listening to our needs. The general supports us and the government cares about us, so I must support my government. Lastly, I am re-enlisting because I am no summer soldier. Thomas Paine inspires me with his document, *The American Crisis* (Document D). As it says in his essay, “What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly.” (Document D).

In other words, you’ve got to be willing to pay the price if you want something. It also shows that we do not give value to what we are given and we shouldn’t cut and run when the going gets tough; otherwise we will never truly earn our victory over the tyranny of Britain. True patriots will not quit. They will press on for their liberty. We must re-enlist. Freedom is worth the price! I can understand why some of my comrades are going home. The huts are all smoky, our clothes are torn up, and a great many of our men are sick (Documents A, B, and C).

We’ve also heard rumors of local farmers, Americans, selling their goods to the British. Even though we have so much reason to struggle, we have even greater reason to fight. When I look at the fight or flight response, I realize that there really is only one option, to fight! I simply feel that our overall goal is bigger than all this. There’s still a job to do. Liberty and justice must prevail. I will fight for our freedom because even though there’s much hardship it takes real spirit of character and drive in order to get the job done!