



The Enlightenment

"Age of Reason"

Learning Objective Today

- ▶ Students will be able to define the Enlightenment and key vocabulary, and identify the historical roots of this time period.



State Standards of the Day

- ▶ W.1 Compare the major ideas of philosophers and their effects on the democratic revolutions of in England, the U.S., France, and Latin America – including John Locke, Montesquieu, etc.
- ▶ W.2 Analyze the principles of the Magna Carta (1215), English Bill of Rights (1689), American Declaration of Independence (1776), and the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen (1789)...

Key Vocabulary

- ▶ Enlightenment: a period during the 1600s and 1700s in which educated Europeans changed their outlook on life by seeing reason as the key to human progress.
- ▶ Age of Reason: another name for the Enlightenment
- ▶ Salons: in France, a place for a simple meeting of philosophers to discuss ideas during the Enlightenment
- ▶ Philosopher: a scholar or thinker
- ▶ Reason: Using logical thinking, not superstition

Roots of the Enlightenment

- ▶ The Enlightenment grew out of the Renaissance, Reformation, and the **Scientific Revolution**.
- ▶ What's the same?: Like all of these other movements, Enlightenment was about **challenging accepted beliefs**.
- ▶ What's new?: Enlightenment philosophers wanted to use the ideas and **reason** of the Scientific Revolution for problems in **government and society**.

Think/Pair/Share

- In what ways are the periods of the Renaissance, Reformation, and Scientific Revolution similar to the Enlightenment?
- Answer: They are similar because they all challenged accepted beliefs.

Think/Pair/Share

- In what new areas did Enlightenment philosophers want to use reason?
- Answer: They wanted to use reason for problems in government and society.

Light out of the Darkness

- ▶ A Frenchman, **Bernard de Fontenelle**, expressed this optimistic faith in reason and progress. In 1702, he wrote that the new century “will become more enlightened day by day, so that all previous centuries will be lost in darkness by comparison.”

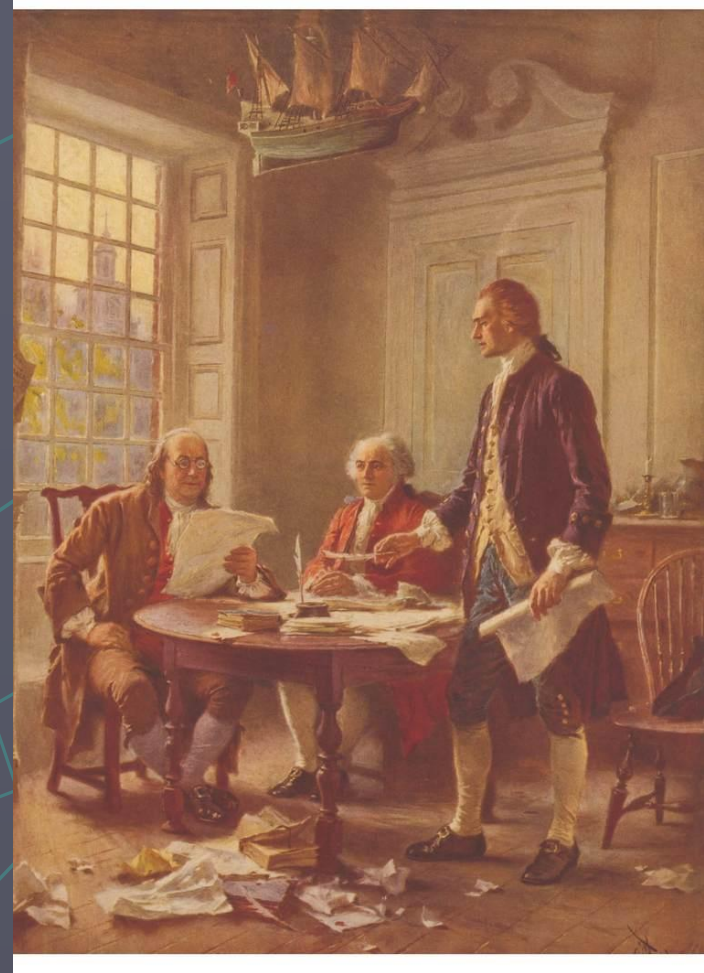


The Salons

- ▶ In France, thinkers called *philosophes* (French for “philosophers”) championed the idea of reason in government.
- ▶ Philosophers often gathered in informal meetings, called **salons**. There they exchanged and debated ideas for hours.
- ▶ Many salons were organized by women. Gatherings like these helped to shape and spread the ideas of the Enlightenment.
- ▶ Think/Pair/Share: Describe the purpose of a salon.

Why is this important?

- ▶ Many of our own ideas about government, such as the **Declaration of Independence** and the **American Constitution** got their ideas directly from the Enlightenment.
- ▶ In fact, many of **America's founding fathers** studied the ideas of the Enlightenment thinkers during the American Revolution.



Left to right: Benjamin Franklin, John Adams,
Thomas Jefferson

Question of Interest

- Which of these was greatly influenced by the Enlightenment?
 - A. The Mandate of Heaven
 - B. The Magna Carta
 - C. The Civil War
 - D. The American Revolution

Answer of Interest

- Which of these was greatly influenced by the Enlightenment?

D. The American Revolution

What a concept!



- ▶ Enlightenment thinkers **rejected authority,** and upheld the **freedom of individuals** to think for themselves.
- ▶ Rene Descartes: "I think, therefore I am."

Enlightenment and Government

- ▶ Enlightenment thinkers criticized accepted ideas about government. Some questioned the medieval belief in the divine right of kings [the idea that God chose a country's king, and that the king got his authority from God.]
- ▶ Many Enlightenment thinkers stressed individual rights that governments must respect.
- ▶ Enlightenment thinkers also felt that people should have a say in their government.

Questions of Interest

- What old, medieval concept about government did Enlightenment thinkers reject?
- Divine Right of Kings
- Name one thing they did believe about government:
- Possible answers: Individual rights, people having a say in government.

Enlightenment and Religion

- ▶ Enlightenment thinkers believed humans were capable of discovering truth for themselves.
- ▶ Many believed in an all powerful deity (or God), but not in a specific church or holy book. Some called themselves Deists [Dee-ists].
- ▶ Right and Wrong should be based on rational insight.

Closing Questions

- What is another name for Enlightenment?
- Age of Reason
- Where would people meet to discuss ideas during the Enlightenment?
- A salon
- What is the period during the 1600s and 1700s in which educated Europeans changed their outlook on life by seeing reason as the key to human progress?
- The Enlightenment
- The Enlightenment took the reason of the Scientific Revolution and used it for _____
- Government

Learning Objective

Next Up

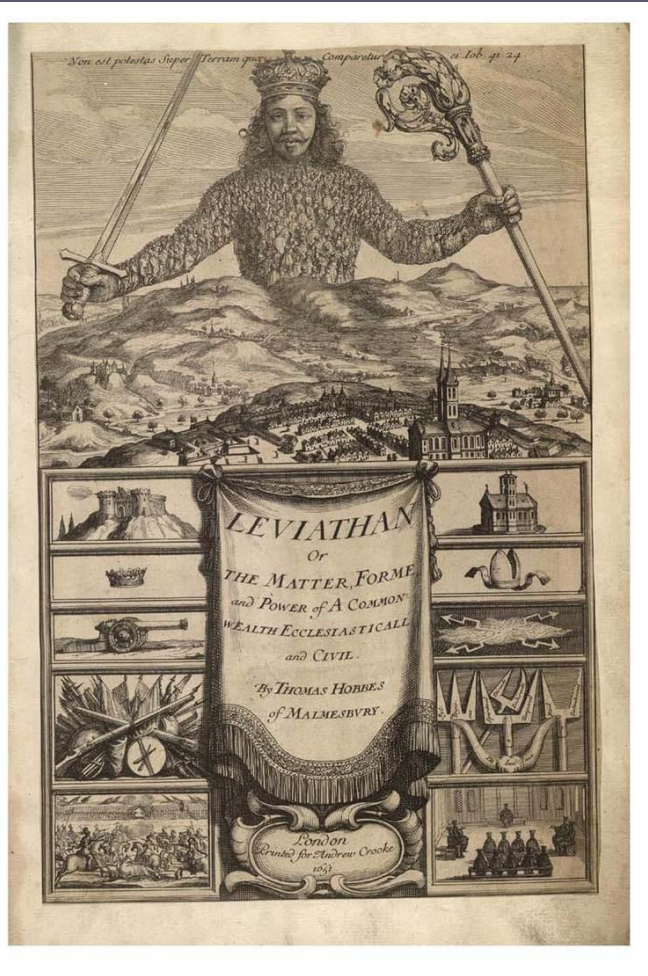
- ▶ Students will be able to describe the ideas of major Enlightenment thinkers.



Add these definitions to your vocabulary list

- ▶ **Social Contract**: an agreement between people and their government, in which people give up some things in return for the benefit of having government.
- ▶ **Natural rights**: rights that people have simply for being human. (Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness)
- ▶ **Bill of rights**: a list of basic rights a government must protect.
- ▶ **Constitutional Monarchy**: a form of government in which the king's power is limited by a basic set of laws, or Constitution.

Thomas Hobbes



- ▶ Hobbes believed people are naturally selfish, cruel, and greedy.
- ▶ In 1651, he published a book called *Leviathan*. In this book, he wrote that people are driven by a restless desire for power.
- ▶ Without laws, people would always be in conflict.
- ▶ In such a “state of nature”, life would be “nasty, brutish, and short.”
- ▶ **His idea:** Governments were created to protect people from their own selfishness.

Hobbes continued....

- ▶ Later Enlightenment thinkers might not have agreed with Hobbes...
- ▶ But, he was important because he was one of the first thinkers to apply reason to the problem of politics
- ▶ His ideas may sound harsh, but it was based on his own observations of human nature and reasoning.

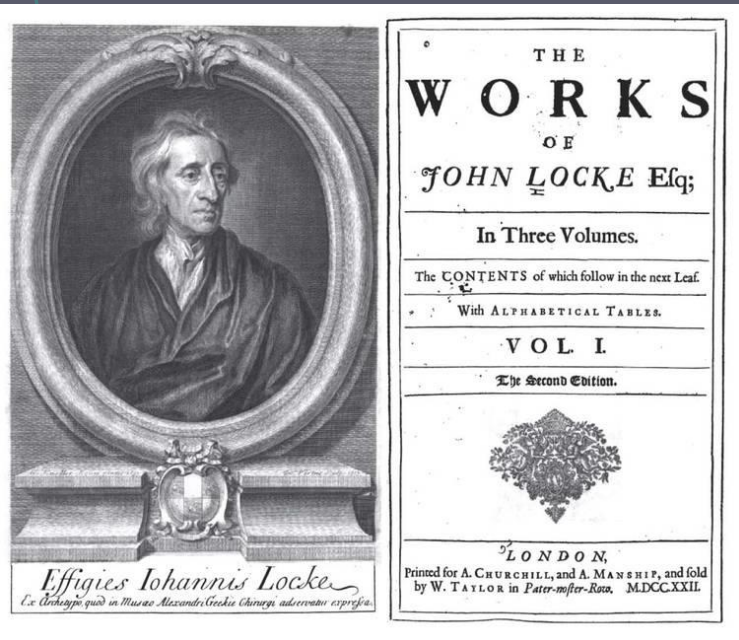
Think/Pair/Share

- Hobbes' ideas are based on the idea that people are naturally selfish. Do you agree with this? Why or why not?
- What does Hobbes mean when he said that if there was no government, life would be “nasty, brutish, and short.”?
- Do you agree with this idea? Tell your partner why or why not. Be prepared to share your answer with the class.

Think/Pair/Share

- Look at the definition for natural rights. With the class, list as many rights as you can think of that you believe people have just for being human.

John Locke: Social Contract and Natural Rights



- ▶ He wrote *Two Treatises of Government* in 1690.
- ▶ He believed the purpose of government was to protect people's natural rights. He said government should protect, "his life, liberty, and property—against the injuries and attempts of other men."
- ▶ His idea: The true basis of government was a social contract between people and their government. If the government didn't respect people's rights, it could be overthrown.

John Locke: Social Contract and Natural Rights

- ▶ In exchange for protection, people gave government the power to rule on their behalf. We call this idea the “consent of the governed.”
- ▶ Lasting Impact: the idea that government could be overthrown if it failed to respect people’s rights had wide influence and was ultimately echoed in the American Declaration of Independence.

Locke's ideas in England

- ▶ Locke was in favor of constitutional monarchies. This meant laws or a constitution limited the power of the monarchs (or kings).
- ▶ In 1689, the English set down a new set of rules called the English Bill of Rights. This strengthened the power of the people and their representatives in Parliament (an English congress.)

Question

- The following ideas come from the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution's Bill of Rights. Which most closely relates to the work of John Locke?
 - A. speedy and public trial
 - B. innocent until proven guilty
 - C. life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness
 - D. Freedom of speech and the press

Answer

- The following ideas come from the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution's Bill of Rights. Which most closely relates to the work of John Locke?
 - C. life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness

Another Question

- Approved in 1689, the new set of rights for Parliament and the English people were set down in the
 - A. Magna Carta
 - B. Orders of Parliament
 - C. Laws of William & Mary
 - D. English Bill of Rights

Another Answer!

- Approved in 1689, the new set of rights for Parliament and the English people were set down in the

D. English Bill of Rights

Montesquieu: Separation of Powers

- ▶ Like Locke, Montesquieu was concerned with how to protect liberty from a bad government.
- ▶ He Wrote *The Spirit of Laws* in 1748. In this book, he described how governments should be organized.
- ▶ His idea: The **separation of powers**: By dividing different powers among more than one branch of government, no one group in the government could grow too powerful.

Montesquieu continued....

- ▶ Each branch of government **checked** the other branches. When powers were not separated this way, Montesquieu warned, liberty was soon lost. He said: "When the legislative and executive powers are united in the same person..., there can be no liberty."
- ▶ Lasting Impact: He greatly influenced the men who wrote the **U.S. Constitution**. We now have a separate legislative (Congress), judicial (courts), and executive (President) branch.

What? Another Question?

If Baron de Montesquieu were to visit the United States today, he might be most pleased to see the

- A. Bill of Rights.
- B. Three branches of government.
- C. Government-run tax system.
- D. Declaration of Independence.

Yay! Another Answer!

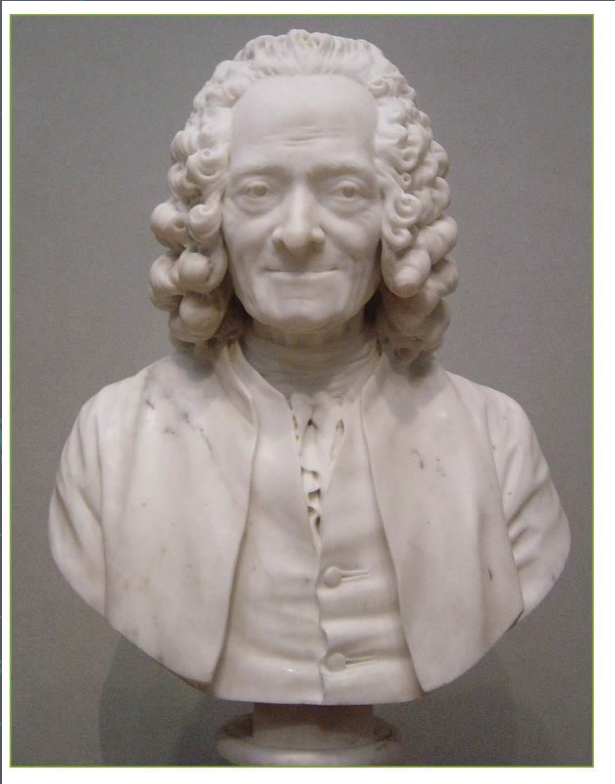
If Baron de Montesquieu were to visit the United States today, he might be most pleased to see the

- B. Three branches of government.

Closing Questions

- What is it called when the people give up certain powers in return for the benefits of government?
- A social contract
- What are rights that you have simply for being human?
- Natural rights
- What did Locke say these natural rights included?
- Life, Liberty, Property
- When we split the powers of government among three branches, what is this called?
- Separation of Powers
- Who came up with that idea?
- Montesquieu
- If the government becomes corrupt, what does Locke say to do?
- Overthrow the government

Voltaire: Religious tolerance and free speech



- ▶ Voltaire was an Enlightenment writer.
- ▶ His most famous novel was *Candide*, in which he poked fun at old religious ideas.
- ▶ Voltaire was especially concerned with freedom of thought and expression.
- ▶ His idea: He had a strong belief in religious tolerance and free speech.
Tolerance means the acceptance of different beliefs and customs.

Voltaire Continued...

- ▶ Voltaire said, "I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it."
- ▶ Lasting Impact: Voltaire met Benjamin Franklin, and when the U.S. Bill of Rights was written, the ideas of freedom of religion and freedom of speech were added to our 1st amendment of the Constitution.

Think/Pair/Share

- What does Voltaire mean when he says, “I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it.”?
- Do you agree with Voltaire? Why or why not?

Question

- Which of the following statements would most likely have been made by Voltaire?
 - A. "The king needs absolute power."
 - B. "The government protects people's natural rights."
 - C. "We should do away with the death penalty."
 - D. "People must be free to speak their minds."

Answer

- Which of the following statements would most likely have been made by Voltaire?

D. "People must be free to speak their minds."

Cesare Beccaria: The Rights of the Accused



- ▶ In the Middle Ages, torture of criminals was common. The rack was often used, as well as devices like thumbscrews.
- ▶ Beccaria, an Italian, wrote a book called *On Crimes and Punishments* in which he argued against brutal punishments.

Beccaria continued....

- ▶ His ideas: A person accused of a crime should receive a fair and speedy trial. Torture should never be used. Capital Punishment (death sentences) should be done away with.
- ▶ “For a punishment to be just it, should consist of only such gradations of intensity as to suffice to deter men from committing crimes.” This means that “punishment should fit the crime” and not be more than necessary to stop someone else from doing it again.

Think/Pair/Share

- How were Beccaria's ideas different from the usual ways of treating prisoners in the Middle Ages?
- What does the phrase, "the punishment should fit the crime," mean to you?
- Do you think this is important? Why or why not?

Beccaria's impact

- ▶ Beccaria's ideas were adopted straight into our Constitution's Bill of Rights. In fact our 8th amendment prevents "cruel and unusual punishment" for crimes, and our 6th amendment provides for a speedy trial. (The only exception is the Death Penalty, which we still have in the United States today.)

Closing Questions

- What freedoms did Voltaire want for the people?
- Freedom of Religion and Speech
- What types of punishments was Beccaria against?
- Torture and excessive punishment
- Where can we see examples of Voltaire's ideas in America?
- Bill of Rights, 1st ammendment
- What idea of Beccaria's did the U.S. NOT use?
- Getting rid of the death penalty

Learning Objective

- ▶ Students will be able to describe how democratic thoughts and governments were influenced by the Enlightenment.



Impact of the Enlightenment on Government

- ▶ Modern views of government owe a great deal to Enlightenment thinkers. The Enlightenment influenced **monarchs** in Europe, especially "**enlightened despots**," and greatly affected revolutions in **America** and **France**.

Enlightened Rule by Monarchs

- ▶ Despot: a king or other ruler with absolute, unlimited power.
- ▶ The Enlightenment did not change Europe overnight. Many countries still had kings. Some of them became “enlightened despots” by using enlightenment ideas in their countries.
- ▶ Examples: Some kings ended the use of torture, started universities, and used religious tolerance. They wanted to keep the people happy without losing their power.

The American and French Revolutions



- ▶ Both America and France had revolutions overthrowing their kings. However, the revolution in France was **much more violent**.

Question

- The Enlightenment led to revolutions in which two countries?
 - A. America and France
 - B. France and Ireland
 - C. England and Italy
 - D. America and Spain

Answer

- The Enlightenment led to revolutions in which two countries?
A. America and France

The Enlightenment in America

- ▶ Enlightenment ideas had a major influence on the leaders of the **American Revolution**. English leaders in America shared with John Locke the traditions of the **Magna Carta** and the English **Bill of Rights**.
- ▶ When the Americans rebelled in **1775**, they pointed to the **abuse** of their **rights** by the English king.
- ▶ The Declaration of Independence echoed Locke's ideas on **natural rights** and the **purpose** of government.

"We the People"



- ▶ Other Enlightenment ideas can be seen in the U.S. **Constitution**. America's basic law includes **Montesquieu's** idea of separation of powers.
- ▶ The **Bill of Rights** protects the freedom of religion and speech championed by **Voltaire**. It also includes some of the rights supported by **Beccaria**, such as the right to a speedy trial.

Think/Pair/Share

- Name two Enlightenment ideas that are included in our Declaration of Independence, Constitution or Bill of Rights.
- Which Enlightenment idea do you think is the most important for us to follow in America today? Why do you think that?

Enlightenment in France

- ▶ In **1789**, revolution broke out in **France**. The National Assembly adopted the ***Declaration of Rights of Man and Citizen***. This document talked about liberty and **equality**. It upheld the rights to own **property**, and freedom of speech and religion.

Violence of the French Revolution



- ▶ Soon, however, terrible **violence** erupted. Thousands of wealthy Frenchmen and members of the Royal family were **beheaded** on the **guillotine**.
- ▶ Guillotine: **a machine that cut off people's heads by dropping a sharp blade.**
- ▶ The bloody chaos brought a strange end to the Enlightenment dream based on reason.