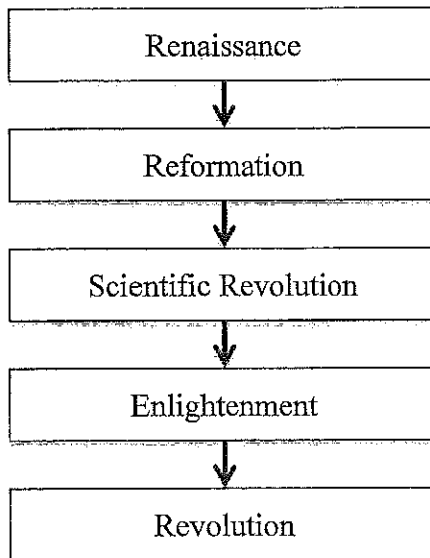


Enlightenment Completed Notes



We as humans have the ability to **reason**.

Reason

- Our ability to reason is what makes us **unique**.
- Reason can be used to solve problems and improve lives.
- Reason can free people from **ignorance**, superstition, and unfair government

What was the Enlightenment?

- The Enlightenment was an 18th Century **philosophical** movement (a change of outlook) built on the achievements of the Renaissance, Reformation, and Scientific Revolution
- The Enlightenment **philosophers** hoped to make a better society by applying reason to social, political, and economic problems

Roots of the Enlightenment

- The **Renaissance & Reformation**
 - The **humanists** of the Renaissance questioned accepted beliefs and celebrated the worth of the individual
 - During the Reformation, Protestants rebelled against the Catholic Church
- The **Scientific Revolution**
 - Scientific successes created great confidence in the power of reason – if people could use reason to find laws that governed the physical world (physical sciences), why not use reason to discover laws that govern human nature?

Enlightenment thinkers asked questions such as:

- What natural laws govern the way people should live?
- How well do our institutions agree with natural law?
- Does **natural law** give all people certain rights?
[Natural Laws- unseen forces that guide human behavior]
- What is the best form of government?

Essential Understanding

Enlightenment thinkers believed that human **progress** was possible through the application of scientific knowledge, reason, and logic to issues of law and government. Enlightenment ideas influenced the leaders of the American Revolution and the writing of the Declaration of Independence.

Enlightenment Thinkers

Thomas Hobbes
John Locke
Baron de Montesquieu
Voltaire

Denis Diderot
Mary Wollstonecraft
Adam Smith

Thomas Hobbes

- In nature, people were **cruel, greedy and selfish**. They would fight, rob, and oppress one another.
- To escape this people would enter into a **social contract**: they would give up their freedom in return for the safety and order of an organized society.
- Therefore, Hobbes believed that a powerful government like an absolute monarchy was best for society – it would impose order and compel obedience. It would also be able to suppress rebellion.

John Locke

- Believed that people were basically reasonable and moral
- Believed in natural rights (rights that belonged to all humans from birth):

Life – Liberty – Property

- Wrote *Two Treatises of Government*
 - Argued that people formed governments to protect their natural rights
 - Government existed to protect rights, and if it didn't, it should be **overthrown** (Social Contract)
- Supported democracy (limited power and accepted by all citizens); opposed absolute monarchy

The Social Contract: Locke's and Hobbes' view

- The social contract is the concept that human beings have made an **agreement with their government**, whereby the government and the people have distinct roles and responsibilities
- The theory is based on the idea that humans abandoned a natural (free and ungoverned) condition in favor of a society that provides them with **order, structure, and most importantly, protection**

What are Natural Rights?

The right to:

- religious worship
- speech
- press
- assembly
- property
- the pursuit of happiness.

John Locke

- Argued that people are born with a mind that is a tabula rasa, or **blank slate**, and that knowledge comes to it through the five senses.
- This meant that the right influences could create a new kind of society by creating a new way of understanding

<u>Thinker</u>	<u>Major Ideas</u>	<u>Quotation</u>	<u>Connection to US</u>
Locke	People have a natural right to life, liberty, & property. Rulers have a responsibility to protect those rights. People have the right to change a gov't that fails to do so.	"Men being... by nature all free, equal, & independent, no one can be put out of this estate & subjected to the political power of another without his own consent."	Ideas influenced authors of the Declaration of Independence.
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> <u>Publication</u> <i>Treaties of Gov't</i> </div>			

Influencing Revolution

- Locke's idea that the people could overthrow a government that isn't protecting their natural rights influenced leaders of the American Revolution, the French Revolution, and the Latin American Revolutions

Baron de Montesquieu

- Believed that the best way to protect liberty was to divide power between three branches: the legislative, executive, and judicial (separation of powers) – each with the power to check the other two
- His idea of checks and balances would influence the U.S. Constitution
- Published *The Spirit of the Laws*: 1748
- Believed that government elected by the people was the best form

<u>Thinker</u>	<u>Major Ideas</u>	<u>Quotation</u>	<u>Connection to US</u>
Montesquieu	The powers of gov't should be separated into executive, legislative, & judicial branches, to prevent any one group from gaining too much power.	"In order to have... liberty, it is necessary that gov't be set up so that one man need not be afraid of another."	His ideas about separation of powers greatly influenced the Framers of the U.S. Constitution.
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> <u>Publications</u> <i>Persian Letters & Spirit of the Laws</i> </div>			

Voltaire

- Arguably, the most famous ‘philosophe’ was Voltaire
- Strong supporter of **Freedom of Speech, Thought, & Religion**
 - Believed governments should ensure personal freedoms – battled corruption, injustice, and inequality
- Believed in the **separation of church and state**
 - Satirist who used wit as a weapon to expose the abuses of his day (the French Monarchy, the nobility, and the Catholic Church)
- Wrote: *Candide* (‘we must cultivate our garden’)
- Was imprisoned and forced into exile

Jean Jacques Rousseau

- Argued that people are **naturally good**, but society corrupts them through environment, education, and laws
 - Felt that society placed too many limitations on people’s behavior –some controls are necessary, but should only be imposed by governments that had been freely elected
- Champion of **democracy** for his idea that political authority lies with the people
 - Opposed strong government (oppression)
- Published *The Social Contract* in 1762

<u>Thinker</u>	<u>Major Ideas</u>	<u>Quotation</u>	<u>Connection to US</u>
Rousseau	People are basically good but become corrupted by society. In an ideal society, people would make the laws & would obey them willingly.	“Only the <i>general will</i> can direct the energies of the state in a manner appropriate to the end for which it was founded -- i.e., the common good.”	Rousseau has been hailed as the champion of democracy for his idea that political authority lies with the people. -- Also, pushed social contract.
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;"> <u>Publications</u> <i>Social Contract & Emile</i> </div>			

Denis Diderot

- Leading philosophe who edited *The Encyclopedia*
 - a collection of articles from Philosophes and scientists covering every subject possible (including criticisms of aspects of society, the church, government, the slave trade, torture, taxes, and war)
- Purpose was to change the general way of thinking
- Helped spread Enlightenment ideas

Mary Wollstonecraft

- Early spokesperson for Women's Rights
- Argued that women should have the same rights as men
 - Governments should extend political rights to women
 - Women should enjoy educational freedoms
- Wrote: *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* in 1792

Adam Smith

- The French Physiocrats (those who focused on economic reforms) and the Scottish philosopher Adam Smith founded modern economics
 - The Physiocrats believed that if people were free to pursue their economic self-interest, all society would benefit
- They developed the doctrine of laissez-faire, which argued that the government should not interfere with natural economic processes by imposing regulations ("hands off")
 - Smith wrote about this in his book, *The Wealth of Nations*
- This policy replaced that of mercantilism, which required government regulation of the economy to achieve a favorable balance of trade

- Smith said the government had only three legitimate functions: protecting society from invasion (army), defending citizens from injustice (police), and maintaining public works like roads and canals that private individuals could not afford

Censorship

Some government and church authorities felt they had a sacred duty to defend the old order so they waged a war of censorship, or **restricting access** to ideas and information; however, ideas spread regardless

Goals of Enlightened Rulers

- Some monarchs did accept Enlightenment ideas. They became **enlightened despots**, or absolute rulers who used their power to bring about political and social change (governed by Enlightenment principles while retaining royal power).
- The Philosophes hoped to convince the ruling classes that **reform** was necessary and believed that enlightened rulers were to: establish and preserve natural rights; nurture the arts, sciences, and education; and to enforce the laws fairly over all subjects
- Philosophes tried to influence rulers in Prussia, Austria, and Russia to make enlightened reforms

Results of the Enlightenment

- Ideas about **freedom and representative government** inspired leaders in the American colonies to revolt and establish an independent republic (United States of America), which in turn influenced the French Revolution and the Latin American Revolutions
- The Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, and the Bill of Rights incorporated Enlightenment ideas

Enlightenment Main Ideas

- **Applied reason to the human world**
- **Stimulated religious tolerance**
- **Fueled democratic revolutions around the world**
- **Influenced the framers of the United States Constitution**

