



# Lesson #2

## Enlightenment Thinkers

### **The Big Idea**

A revolution in intellectual activity changed European's view of government and society.

### **Why it Matters Now**

The various freedoms enjoyed in many countries today are a result of Enlightenment thinking.

### **Setting the Stage**

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# Setting the Stage

- In the wake of the Scientific Revolution and the new ways of thinking it prompted, scholars and philosophers began to reevaluate old notions about other aspects of society.
- They sought new insight into the underlying beliefs regarding government, religion, economics, and education.
- Their efforts spurred the **Enlightenment**, a new intellectual movement that stressed reason and thought and the power of individuals to solve problems.

# The Philosophes Advocate Reason

- The Enlightenment reached its height in Paris, France in the mid-1700s.
- Paris became the meeting place for people who wanted to discuss politics and share ideas.
- The social critics of this period in France were known as **philosophes** (French for philosophers).
- The philosophes believed that people could apply reason to all aspects of life.

# Map of the Enlightenment



# Five concepts formed the core beliefs of the Philosophes

1. Reason - believed truth could be discovered through reason or logical thinking.
2. Nature – people have rights in their natural state as human beings to live with dignity, and no society or government should take them away.
3. Happiness – people should seek happiness on earth, not just wait for the afterlife.
4. Progress – society and humankind should and can improve.
5. Liberty – called for the liberties that the English won in their Bill of Rights to be universal.

# #3 Enlightenment Thinkers

**What major ideas and causes of liberties did each *Thinker* produce?**

Thomas Hobbes	Pg. 160
John Locke	Pg. 161
Montesquieu	Pg. 163
Voltaire	Pg. 162
Beccaria	Pg. 166
Rousseau	Pg. 164

# #4a

## Document-Based Investigation

### Two Views on Laws in a Democracy

- Both **Rousseau** and **Montesquieu** believed firmly that fair and just laws –not monarchs or unrestrained mobs –should govern society.
- **Read** both quotes on pg. 164
- **Answer:**
  - I. How do Rousseau and Montesquieu differ in their view of the role of laws in democracy?

## #4b

1. What did social critics such as the philosophes hope to accomplish through their writings and art?
2. Explain how the following statement reflects Enlightenment ideas: “**Power should be a check to power.**” (pg. 163)
3. Why was **Voltaire’s** use of satire effective? (pg. 162)



**Voltaire** at Frederick the Great's  
*Sanssouci*, by Pierre Charles Baquoy



# #4c

## Draw Conclusions:

*“I do not agree with a word you say but will defend to the death your right to say it.”*

-Voltaire

Answer:

1. Do you believe any speech should be censored (hate speech, politicians lying)?
2. How do you react to people who say things you do not agree with?
3. What does our 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment right of *Freedom of Speech* mean to you?