



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 1st Amendment right of *Freedom of Speech* mean to you?