

# The Enlightenment: 1650-1750

## Connecting the Bridge

### The Scientific Revolution: Mid-1500s

- Thinkers and scientists using reason and logic towards traditional thinking and questioning the world around them.
- Copernicus: Heliocentric Theory
- Galileo: Telescope
- Newton: Physics and Science
- New Question: "Can the ideas and concepts of the Scientific Revolution be applied to the government, leaders, economics, religion, etc.?"



### The Enlightenment: Mid 1600s – mid-1700s

- Thinkers and philosophers begin to use reason and logic to question ideas on politics, such as governments, leaders, religions, etc.
- John Locke
- Jean Jacques Rousseau
- Voltaire
- Concept: The ideas and thinking that questioned the physical world are now applied to the natural and political world.



### Political Revolutions: Late-1700s

- The ideas and concepts of the Enlightenment will influence the rise of political revolutions as people challenge pre-existing ideas about who should rule:
- American Revolution
  - French Revolution
  - Haitian Revolution
  - Russian Revolution
  - Mexican Revolution

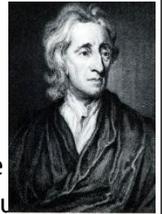


## The Age of Reason

After the Scientific Revolution, philosophers concluded reason could be used to solve all human problems. Writers published their works to spread their ideas, people gathered in coffeehouses and public spaces to debate, and wealthy Parisians gathered at social gathering called salons. Philosophers focused on two ideas-the rights/roles of government and the issues in society.

## Government

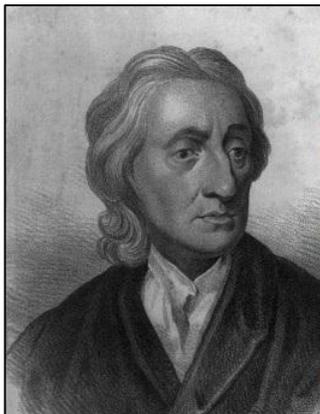
Prior to the Enlightenment, the view of absolutism was widely held by many. Absolutism is the idea that monarchs should have total or absolute power over people's lives. It is rooted in the belief of the divine right of kings-kings and queens got their power to rule from God. Enlightenment thinkers believed human behavior and man-made systems (like government) also followed a natural law. John Locke in *Two Treatises on Government* argued that government should protect people's natural rights of life, liberty, and property and that government got its power because consented. Other thinkers like Montesquieu argued that government needed a separation of powers to prevent an abuse of power. These ideas directly challenged the absolute monarchs of this era.



Man was born free, and he is everywhere in chains.

## Society

Philosophers focused on societal issues like religious toleration, women's rights, and economic systems. Voltaire attacked injustice where he saw it, Diderot published the *Encyclopedia* to promote knowledge, Mary Wollstonecraft demanded equal rights for women, and Adam Smith focused on economic systems. In his book *The Wealth of Nations* Smith argued for free markets, laissez-faire economics, and an economic system free from government regulation.



**"All mankind... being all equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty or possessions."**

**John Locke**

# Effects of the Enlightenment

## Documents

The ideas of the Enlightenment philosophers found their way into numerous political documents and manifestos.

-The Declaration of Independence lifted ideas directly from Locke and Rousseau.

The idea that the colonies had the right to rebel, plus the fact that people had the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

-The Constitution of the United States reflected the ideas of separation and balance of power from Montesquieu.

-the Bill of Rights contained guarantees for individual rights and freedoms-ideas championed by Voltaire.

-Finally, the Declaration of the Rights of Man, and important document in the French Revolution, defined the natural rights of man as described by Voltaire and Locke.



## Revolutions

The ideas of the Enlightenment had a dynamic impact on the political situation in several areas of the world.

-The first revolution that stemmed from Enlightenment ideas was the American Revolution in 1776. The Declaration of Independence was passed by men who were educated in Enlightenment ideas.



-The next revolution directly inspired by the Enlightenment was the French Revolution of 1789. Many of the most influential philosophers were French and France had a particularly repressive Absolute Monarchy. It was not surprising that revolution finally erupted there.



-The third area impacted was Latin America. The upper classes in Latin America had largely been educated in Europe in the philosophies of the Enlightenment. By 1811, revolutions seeking freedom from Spain had erupted throughout the region.

## Enlightened Despots

-Many monarchs were both intrigued and threatened by the ideas of the Enlightenment. Obviously, they were threatened by Locke and Rousseau's doctrine of revolution, however, they were intrigued by both Hobbes and Voltaire.

-Absolute monarchs who granted some rights and freedoms to their people were known as Enlightened Despots. These Despots often hosted famous thinkers like Voltaire and Diderot.

-Some of the famous despots in Europe were: Frederick the Great of Prussia, Joseph II of Austria, and Catherine the Great of Russia. They made reforms but stopped short of sharing their power.



## Economy

-Adam Smith's ideas in *Wealth of Nations* formed the basis of capitalism. In essence, Smith argued for freedom in the economy-freedom from governmental regulation and interference.



-These ideas laid the groundwork for the upcoming Industrial Revolution which was beginning in England in the late 1700s and swept through the rest of Europe in the early 1800s. The wealth and power created by the Industrial Revolution allowed Europe to dominate the world.

The effects of the Enlightenment in political, economic and social areas were felt all around the globe. As areas of Europe developed into nation states, we begin to see a rise in nationalism and imperialism as a way to demonstrate their strength.

