

THE IDEAS OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT

CHAPTER 8 SECTION 2



I. Ideas of the Philosophes

A. The Enlightenment was an eighteenth-century philosophical movement of intellectuals who were greatly impressed with the achievements of the Scientific Revolution.

1. One of the favorite words of these intellectuals was *reason*.
2. They hoped that by using the scientific method, they could make progress toward a better society.
3. *Reason, natural law, hope, progress*—were common words to the thinkers of the Enlightenment.

B. John Locke argued that every person was born with a tabula rasa, or blank mind.

1. Locke's ideas suggested that people were molded by the experiences that came through their senses from the surrounding world.

2. Enlightenment thinkers began to believe that if people were exposed to the right influences, then they could be changed to create a better society

C. Isaac Newton also influenced eighteenth-century intellectuals.

1. Newton believed that the physical world and everything in it was like a giant "world machine," operating according to natural laws.

D. If Newton was able to discover the natural laws that governed the physical world, then by applying his scientific methods, they would be able to discover the natural laws that governed human society.

E. The intellectuals of the Enlightenment were known by the French word *philosophe* meaning "philosopher."

F. Montesquieu, was a French noble.

1. His famous work *The Spirit of the Laws* was a study of governments.

2. He stated that England's government had three branches: the executive (the monarch), the legislative (Parliament), and the judicial (the courts of law).

3. The government functioned through a separation of powers.

a. The executive, legislative, and judicial powers of the government limit and control each other in a system of checks and balances.

Separation of Powers

U.S. Constitution

Legislative Branch (Congress)

- Writes the laws
- Confirms presidential appointments
- Approves treaties
- Grants money
- Declares war

Executive Branch (President)

- Proposes laws
- Administers the laws
- Commands armed forces
- Appoints ambassadors and other officials
- Conducts foreign policy
- Makes treaties

Judicial Branch (Supreme Court)

- Interprets the Constitution and other laws
- Reviews lower-court decisions

G. The greatest figure of the Enlightenment was François-Marie Arouet, known simply as Voltaire.

1. He was well known for his criticism of Christianity. He often challenged the actions of the Church, one of the most powerful institutions of the time.

a. He had a strong belief in religious toleration, fighting against religious intolerance in France.



2. Voltaire championed deism, an eighteenth-century religious philosophy based on reason and natural law.
 - a. In the Deists' view, a mechanic (God) had created the universe like a clock. God, the clockmaker, had created it, set it in motion, and allowed it to run without his interference and according to its own natural laws.

H. Denis Diderot's most famous contribution to the Enlightenment was the *Encyclopedia*, a 28-volume collection of knowledge that he edited.

- 1.** Sold to doctors, clergymen, teachers, and lawyers, the *Encyclopedia* spread Enlightenment ideas.

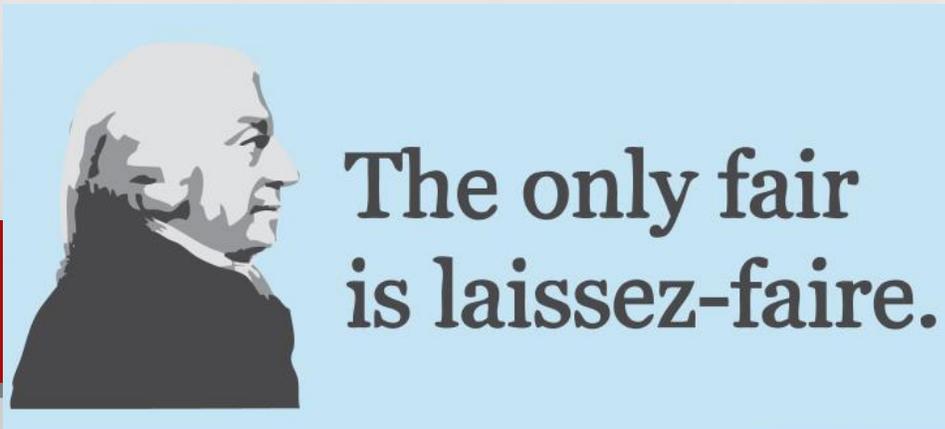


II. New Social Sciences

A. Adam Smith is the founders of the modern social science of economics.

1. The state should not interrupt the free play of natural economic forces by imposing regulations on the economy.

a. This doctrine became known as, laissez-faire meaning "to let (people) do (what they want)."



2. In *The Wealth of Nations*. Smith gave to government only three basic roles.

a. First, it should protect society from invasion (the function of the army).

b. Second, the government should defend citizens from injustice (the function of the police).

c. Keep up certain public works that private individuals alone could not afford—roads and canals.

III. The Spread of Ideas

A. Jean-Jacques Rousseau in his *Discourse on the Origins of the Inequality of Mankind*, argued that people had become enslaved by government and needed to regain their freedom.

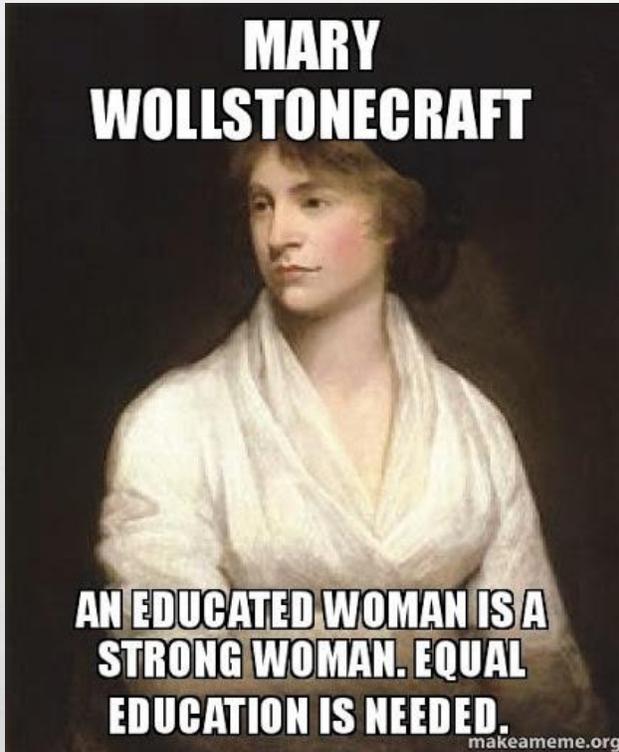
B. In his major work *The Social Contract*, Rousseau presented his concept of the social contract.

1. An entire society agrees to be governed by its general will. Individuals who wish instead to follow their own self-interests must be forced to abide by the general will.



C. In *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, Mary Wollstonecraft identified two problems with the views of many Enlightenment thinkers.

- 1.** She noted that the same people who argued that women must obey men also said that government based on the arbitrary power of monarchs over their subjects was wrong. Wollstonecraft pointed out that the power of men over women was equally wrong.
- 2.** She also argued that the Enlightenment was based on an ideal of reason in all human beings. Therefore, because women have reason, they are entitled to the same rights as men.



D. Henry Fielding wrote novels about people without morals who survive by their wits. Fielding's best-known work is *The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling*, which describe the adventures of a young scoundrel.

E. An important aspect of the growth of publishing and reading was the development of magazines and newspapers for the general public.

1. The first daily newspaper was printed in London in 1702.

F. Enlightenment ideas were also spread through the salon.

1. Salons were the elegant drawing rooms where invited guests gathered to discuss the ideas of the philosophes.
2. The women who hosted the salons were in a position to sway political opinion and helped spread the ideas of the Enlightenment.



- G.** The desire of ordinary people to have a greater religious experience led to Methodism being founded by John Wesley.
- 1.** His sermons often caused people to have conversion experiences.



IV. Enlightenment and the Arts

A. European monarchs created a new kind of architecture

1. Rococo- Emphasized grace, charm, and gentle action.

a. Antoine Watteau was the greatest Rococo painter.



B. Eighteenth century was a great century for music.

1. Bach- composer of *Mass in B Minor*.

2. Handel is best known for his religious work *Messiah*.

3. Joseph Haydn's *The Creation* is one of his greatest works.

4. Mozart- Child prodigy, known for symphonies, concerts, and operas.

