Week 5 5/18-5/22

***Monday 5/18 Age of Enlightenment Overview***

***Read Article***

AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT OVERVIEW

The [Age of Enlightenment](https://www.historycrunch.com/age-of-enlightenment.html) was an important time in the history of the world and modern western societies.  The Age of Enlightenment, or just the Enlightenment, occurred during the 18th century and is known as a time period of great change and new ideas.  Specifically, the Enlightenment involved an intellectual movement, in which famous thinkers and philosophers challenged some of the basic foundations of society, including: role of the government, basic human nature, sources of authority and ideas centered on liberty.  
  
The Enlightenment built on the earlier work of the Scientific Revolution which occurred in the centuries before the Enlightenment.  The Scientific Revolution involved a movement in society towards modern science based on using logic and reason to come to informed conclusions.  Enlightenment thinkers would then apply these same values to society and authority and begin to question all aspects of societal structure.

The ideas of the Enlightenment can best be seen in the work of several influential philosophers, including: [Thomas Hobbes](https://www.historycrunch.com/thomas-hobbes.html), [John Locke](https://www.historycrunch.com/john-locke.html), [Jean-Jacques Rousseau](https://www.historycrunch.com/jean-jacques-rousseau.html), and [Voltaire](https://www.historycrunch.com/voltaire.html).  In simple terms, each offered a particular view on human nature and the role of the government in society in their important essays and other writings.  To learn more about each philosopher and their ideas, click on their name.  
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Today, the Enlightenment is an important movement to understand because of the impact it had on the events that followed.  The Enlightenment ideas pushed European societies away from feudalism and absolute monarchies and towards societies based on liberty and equality.  It is considered by many to be central to the ideals of the [American Revolution](https://www.historycrunch.com/american-revolution.html) and [French Revolution](https://www.historycrunch.com/french-revolution.html) and the foundation of modern western democracies such, as: the United States, Britain, France, and Canada.  The central principles of the Enlightenment can be seen in the constitutions of these modern countries and their focus on human rights and human dignity.

***Tuesday 5/19 Age of Enlightenment Politics***

Read Article  
How did the Age of Enlightenment change Politics during its time?  
How might those changes be reflected in our own government?

**Enlightenment Politics**

The Declaration of Independence and Constitution are products of the Enlightenment, as the U.S. was created by politicians swept up in the movement when it was all the rage.  Paris was the epicenter of the Enlightenment, but its [*philosophes*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosophes) lived throughout Europe, the British Isles, and small but enthusiastic outposts in colonial America.  They rejected monarchs’ claim to the *divine right* of rule, turning the traditional political model upside down and arguing that power was a privilege bestowed by the people on their rulers.  They disagreed that God chose certain people to rule over others and instead promoted [representative government](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Representative_government) — an idea that had been mostly dormant in Western history since Classical times but had been reviving in England and a few small pockets in continental Europe during the Renaissance.  England’s absolutist monarchy eroded in the 17th century in a series of revolutions.  This is a vivid and important example of Enlightenment thinkers reexamining traditional wisdom.

Along with free trade, representative government was a cornerstone of [Classical liberalism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Classical_Liberalism).  In England in the late 17th century, physician/philosopher [John Locke](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_locke) wrote about the “natural right” to “life, liberty and estate,” and helped draft the constitution for America’s [Carolina](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_locke#Constitution_of_Carolina) colony.  If these rights sound familiar, they morphed a century later into *life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness* in Thomas Jefferson’s Declaration of Independence and protection against government denial of life, liberty or property without due process of law in the U.S. Constitution’s 5th Amendment.  Locke saw it as part of a government’s [social contract](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_contract) to secure such [natural rights](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Natural_and_legal_rights) among free men of means (he was a major shareholder in the Royal African slave-trading company).  Other English [Radical Whigs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Radical_Whigs), including the anonymous author of [*Cato’s Letters*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cato%27s_Letters), wrote of the “equality of all men.”

British Americans carried on this republican, Radical Whig tradition in the 18th century, most famously Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence.  Locke and Jefferson were concerned with the political representation of middle-class men and above, but their descendants applied democracy more broadly.  You can see why Enlightenment critics see its philosophy as merely a self-serving justification for white male [hegemony](http://www.thefreedictionary.com/hegemony); yet, you can also see how its ideas contained the seeds of a more universal revolution.  With the republican [genie out of the bottle](http://idioms.thefreedictionary.com/let+the+genie+out+of+the+bottle), white male elites found it increasingly difficult to explain why they should run roughshod over everyone else.  That’s because, by the *philosophes‘* own standards of justice and equality, there isn’t a good reason.  Enlightenment political theory was also concerned with *balance* — reflected in the U.S. Constitution’s emphasis on checks and balances and equality among its three main branches.  You could say that, via the Declaration and Constitution, the Enlightenment is built into the fabric or DNA of American politics.  Politics, like science, was a vehicle for progress and making the world a better place.  Though often not religious in the traditional sense, especially with their commitment to questioning tradition, *philosophes* had an undying faith in progress.

***Wednesday 5/20 Age of Enlightenment Science***

***Read Article***

Galileo’s claim in the [*Starry Messenger*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sidereus_Nuncius) (1610) that moons orbited Jupiter (below) contradicted Catholic doctrine that Earth was the center of the universe.  It’s intuitive to think we’re standing still and that we’re the purpose of existence, and unsettling to consider Earth’s insignificance in a larger cosmos (at the time, no one distinguished between our solar system, galaxy, and universe).  Nonetheless, the Catholic Church initially supported Copernican heliocentric theory until Galileo’s writings appeared to lampoon Pope Urban VIII and the Jesuits and he promoted heliocentrism publicly.  The Church sentenced Galileo to house arrest in 1633.  As he left the courtroom, he purportedly muttered “Eppur si muove” (*nevertheless, it moves*) and the Vatican overturned their verdict posthumously in 1992.  Protestants also encouraged science, indirectly by weakening the Catholic Church and directly by supporting education and literacy.  Protestant Reformer [Philipp Melanchthon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philip_Melanchthon) was an early supporter of the Copernican, Sun-centered model of the cosmos.

Isaac Newton was most famous as a scientist, not a theologian.  He built on Copernicus, Bruno, Galileo, and Kepler’s Renaissance theories of the aforementioned *heliocentric*, Sun-centered universe (solar system) and developed the theory of gravity to explain the planets’ orbits.  Newton was also the inventor of the reflecting telescope and co-inventor of calculus along with German [Gottfried Leibniz](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gottfried_Leibniz).  Newton formulated the general laws of motion and mechanics that dominated physics for the next centuries in [*Principia Mathematica*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosophi%E6_Naturalis_Principia_Mathematica)(1687).  His “cradle” of pendulums at the top of the chapter demonstrated [conservation of momentum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Momentum#Conservation) and energy.  His optical research led to prisms that dispersed white light into the colors of the rainbow.  Newton’s work was typical of how 17th and 18th-century scientists developed laws to *codify* nature’s order in the same way the Bible provided a code for Christianity.  Enlightenment philosophers had faith that scientific laws were [discernible](http://www.thefreedictionary.com/discernible) (or perceptible) and provided the foundation for laws that governed other fields like politics and economics.  Put another way, there was a rhyme and reason to nature that transcended science.  Politicians like Locke and Jefferson based their beliefs in concepts like *natural rights* on Newton’s scientific principles, as did Scottish economist [Adam Smith](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adam_smith).

Enlightenment scientists’ passion for categorizing, collecting, and cataloging knowledge found its extreme expression in British and French modifications of the [encyclopedia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Encyclopedia#18th.E2.80.9319th_centuries).  Ephraim Chambers *Cylopaedia* (or Universal Dictionary of Arts & Sciences, 1728) and Diderot and D’Alembert’s *Encyclopédie* (1751) exceeded ancient and medieval compilations in their breadth and sophistication.  Contributors included luminaries such as Voltaire, Rousseau, and Montesquieu.  Because of its secular emphasis and denunciations of ecclesiastical power, the Catholic Church banned its 28 volumes, but they delivered to subscribers in secret.  The Wikipedia entries linked to terms in these chapters are modern-day manifestations of the Enlightenment as are many of the courses one takes in school, and the way those courses are divided up into various topics and “[ologies](http://users.tinyonline.co.uk/gswithenbank/ologies.htm)” (from the Greek *logos*, for study of).

[Carl Linnaeus’](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carl_Linnaeus) biological [taxonomy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Linnaean_taxonomy) is a good Enlightenment example of an attempt at all-encompassing knowledge.  The Swedish botanist took it upon himself to catalog all life forms under categories of family, genus, species, etc.  Linnaeus also exemplified the Enlightenment’s racist underbelly by helping to launch the pseudo-science of [Scientific Racism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scientific_racism) later applied to justify slavery and eugenics.  While modern biologists have re-arranged Linnaeus’ categories and don’t traffic in *families* of species, his conceptualization of life forms as being *related* on a [Tree of Life](http://www.tolweb.org/tree/) was the basis for Charles Darwin’s theory of natural selection later in the 19th century.  Darwin’s grandfather [Erasmus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erasmus_darwin), a contemporary of Linnaeus, was an early evolutionist.

Another example of Enlightenment categorizing was the study of elements at the University of Heidelberg, in Germany.  Among the students was Russian [Dmitri Mendeleev](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dmitri_Mendeleev), who is credited with developing the [Periodic Table of Elements](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Periodic_table) familiar to anyone who’s been in a lab or science classroom.  The table not only lists known elements, it predicts and explains their qualities based on its particular arrangement.  Like Linnaeus’ taxonomy, Mendeleev’s 19th-century original was arranged differently than today’s Periodic Table.  Enlightenment scientists didn’t just dig deeper into biology, chemistry, and physics, they cataloged their findings so that others could challenge and build on their theories as part of a worldwide effort.  If the Enlightenment had a modern creed, it might be that *extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence*, even if its proponents made plenty of their own unsubstantiated claims.

***Thursday 5/21 Enlightenment Impact on the French Revolution***

***Read Article***

AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT  
​IMPACT ON THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

The [Age of Enlightenment](https://www.historycrunch.com/age-of-enlightenment-overview.html) occurred during the 18th century, in the decades before the 1789 outbreak of the [French Revolution](https://www.historycrunch.com/french-revolution.html).  Although the Enlightenment took place many years before the outbreak of the French Revolution, its ideas and achievements still had a profound effect on the French Revolution.  In fact, many historians today look back on the Enlightenment as a major cause of the revolution.

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| The French Revolution saw the [feudal society](https://www.historycrunch.com/feudalism.html) of France overthrow the [absolute monarchy](https://www.historycrunch.com/absolute-monarchy.html) of Louis XVI in favor of a republic that was based on respect for individual rights of the people. The ideals of liberty and equality, that were needed to overthrow Louis XVI, emerged first from the writings of important and influential thinkers of the Age of Enlightenment. Specifically, the writings of [John Locke](https://www.historycrunch.com/john-locke.html), [Jean-Jacques Rousseau](https://www.historycrunch.com/jean-jacques-rousseau.html) and Baron de Montesquieu greatly influenced the revolutionaries in France.  Each of these three Enlightenment thinkers questioned the traditional authority of an absolute monarch and argued against the rigid class divisions of feudalism, or the estates-system, present in France.  Their questioning of authority and the role of the government inspired the revolutionaries, and ordinary citizens, of France.  In fact, the ideas of many Enlightenment thinkers were commonly discussed and debated in the salons of France, in which intellectuals and would gather to discuss the ideas of the day.  In general, the French Revolution is often viewed today as a time when the ideas of the Enlightenment were put into action. |

Another impact of the Enlightenment on the French Revolution can be seen in the [Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen](https://www.historycrunch.com/declaration-of-the-rights-of-man-and-of-the-citizen.html).  The document was adopted by the [National Assembly](https://www.historycrunch.com/national-assembly-of-the-french-revolution.html) on August 26th, 1789.  The declaration was vitally important to the French Revolution because it directly challenged the authority of Louis XVI. For example, the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen set out a series of individual rights protected by law.  The basic principles of the declaration can be seen in the ideas and arguments of the great thinkers of the Enlightenment.  As well, the declaration is considered to be one of the first documents that argued in favor of natural rights for all citizens and is seen as a major turning point in the history of the modern western world.

***Friday 5/22 Enlightenment Impact on the American Revolution***

Write 2 paragraphs on How might the Age of Enlightenment influenced the American Revolution?