

# The Enlightenment

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Period 6

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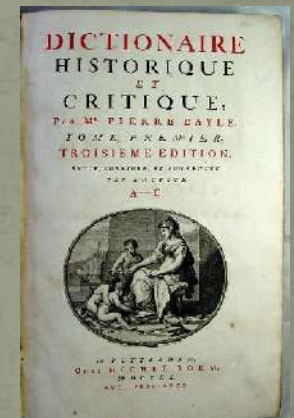
# Prompt

1998 – To what extent did the Enlightenment express optimistic idea in the 18<sup>th</sup> century Europe? Illustrate your answer with references to specific individuals and their works.

# Enlightenment

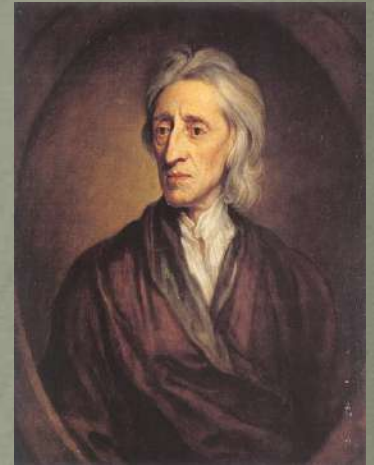
- What is the Enlightenment?
  - A. Enlightenment – An 18<sup>th</sup> century movement in European and American that emphasized the power of reason and science, unlike the traditional doctrine, to understand and reform the world.
  - B. The Enlightenment gained strength gradually and did not reach full development until 1750.
  - C. The enlightenment immersed in the generation between the publication of Newton's *Principia* in 1687 and the death of Louis VIX in 1715.
  - D. The Enlightenment had a penetrating effect on the thought and culture or urban noble classes and the aristocracy.

# Pierre Bayle (1647 – 1706)



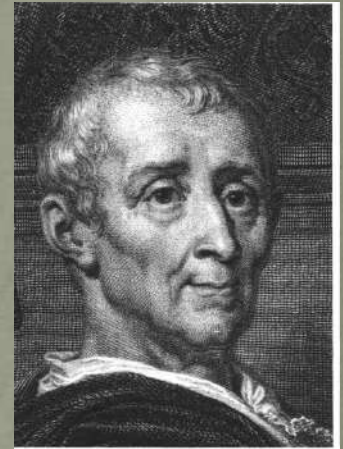
# John Locke (1632 -1704)

- A British philosopher of the 17<sup>th</sup> century that is widely known for his liberal, anti – authoritarian theory of the state, his empirical theory of knowledge, acceptance of religious tolerance, and theory of personal identity
- Greatly known for publishing the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, and the *Second Treatises of Civil Government* both in 1690.
- The *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* rejected the view of Descartes , which was all people are born with particular basic ideas and ways of thinking.
- The *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* supported that ideas are derived from experience, and human development is essentially determined by education and social institutions, for either good or evil.
- Locke's *Second Treatises for Civil Government* explained in the idea of natural rights.
- It advocated the right for rebellion and the purpose of the government is to protect individual rights: life, liberty, and property.
- The “Glorious Revolution” in 1689 was backed behind this principle.
- This works along with Newton's *Principia* played as one of the dominant intellectual inspirations of the Enlightenment in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.



# Baron de Montesquieu (1689 – 1755)

- A influential political philosopher during the 18<sup>th</sup> century Enlightenment.
- Published *The Persian Letters* in 1721 and *The Spirit of Laws* in 1748.
- *The Persian Letters* were extremely influential social satires in which consisted of letters supposedly written by Persian travelers, who saw European customs in a different perspective, indirectly criticizing the existing practices and beliefs .
- *The Spirit of Laws* explained how government was formed and shaped by history, geography, and customs. He urged that despotism could be avoided if there was a **separation of powers**, with political power divided and shared by a selection of classes and legal estates holding unequal rights and privileges.
- According to Montesquieu, in order to prevent the abuse of power, "it is necessary that by the arrangements of things, power checks power."
- His theory of separation of powers had a great impact on France's wealthy, well-educated elite during the Enlightenment.
- The early constitutions of the United States in 1789 and France in 1791 were based upon a big part of this theory.



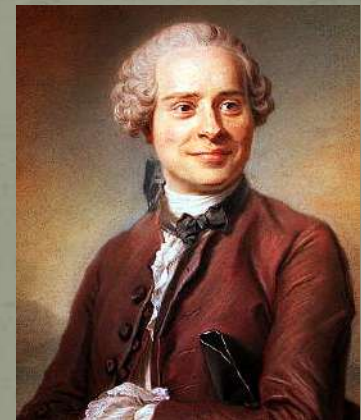
# Madame du Châtelet (1706- 1749)

- An intellectually gifted woman that came from a high aristocracy family and had a strong passion for science.
- Due to her gender, she was excluded on principle from the Royal academy of sciences and from stimulated interchange with other scientists.
- Depended on private tutors for instruction and had ambivalence over her ability to make important scientific discoveries.
- Translated with commentary Newton's *Principia* in French.
- This provided the explanation and break down of Newton's complicated mathematical proofs to Europe's foremost philosopher.
- Unique- due to the fact that scientific contribution by females was rare during this time, as well as the limited and unequal education in females.
- Wrote that if she were a ruler, "I would reform an abuse which cuts off, so to speak, half human race. I would make women participate in all rights of humankind, and above all in those of the intellect."
- This to some extent was encouraging to women's education and to overcome adversity during the 18<sup>th</sup> century Enlightenment.



# Denis Diderot (1713- 1784) and Jean le Rond d'Alembert (1717 – 1783)

- Both editors of the seventeenth-volume *Encyclopedia: The Rational Dictionary of the Sciences, the Arts, and the Crafts*
- Denis Diderot started his career as a hack writer, first acquiring attention with a skeptical tract on religion in which was burned by the judges of Paris.
- Jean le Rond d'Alembert was one of Europe's leading scientists and mathematics.
- Both editors faced difficult obstacles in creation of the *Encyclopedia*
- The first volume of the *Encyclopedia* in 1751 contained controversial subjects such as atheism, the soul, and blind people, essentially all words beginning with *a* in French.
- The government temporarily banned publication, and the pope placed the work on the Catholic Church's index of forbidden works and pronounced excommunication to all who read it or bought it.
- Publisher watered down some of the articles in the last ten volumes, without the editors approval to appease the authorities.
- Diderot held the encyclopedists together for 15 years and completed the *Encyclopedia* in 1765.
- In the *Encyclopedia*, Science and the industrial arts were brought forth, immortality and religion were questioned. Intolerance, out-of-date social institutions, and legal injustice was criticized.
- The *Encyclopedia* expressed that human beings could use the process of reasoning to expand human knowledge.
- It summed up the new-world-view of the enlightenment in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and was influential in France and throughout Western Europe.



# Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778)

- A brilliant and difficult thinker that attacked the Enlightenment's faith in reason, progress, and moderation.
- Was born in a poor family of watchmakers in Geneva.
- Went to Paris and was heavily influenced by Diderot and Voltaire.
- Rousseau was devotedly committed to individual freedom.
- Greatly contributed to political theory in *The social Contract* (1762)
- *The social Contract* discussed two fundamental concepts: the general will and popular sovereignty.
- According to Rousseau, the general will is sacred and absolute, which reflected the common interests of people who displaced the monarch as the holder of sovereign power.
- Although the general will was very respected and agreed upon people, it didn't necessarily reflect the will of the majority.
- Since 1789, this concept has been used by many dictators that claimed they represent the general will.

