

**Enlightenment and Revolution****Lesson 2****Enlightenment Thinkers****Key Terms and People**

**Enlightenment** 18th-century European movement in which thinkers attempted to apply the principles of reason and the scientific method to all aspects of society

**social contract** agreement by which people define and limit their individual rights, thus creating an organized society or government

**John Locke** English philosopher and founder of British empiricism; he developed political and economic theories during the Enlightenment. He declared that people have a right to rebel against governments that do not protect their rights.

**philosophe** one of a group of social thinkers in France during the Enlightenment

**rationalism** belief that truth could be found through reason or logical thinking

**Voltaire** French philosopher and author who believed in tolerance, reason, freedom of religious belief, and freedom of speech

**Montesquieu** French political philosopher who explored democratic theories of government; he proposed a government divided into three branches and greatly influenced the United States Constitution.

**Rousseau** Swiss-French political philosopher; he championed the freedom of the individual and the notion that all people were equal.

**Before You Read**

In the last lesson, you read about how the Scientific Revolution began in Europe.

In this lesson, you will read about how the Enlightenment began in Europe.

**As You Read**

Use a web diagram to summarize the ideas of different Enlightenment thinkers.

**TWO VIEWS ON GOVERNMENT****What were the views of Hobbes and Locke?**

The **Enlightenment** was an intellectual movement. Enlightenment thinkers tried to apply reason and the scientific method to laws that shaped human actions. They hoped to build a society

founded on ideas of the Scientific Revolution. Two English writers—Thomas Hobbes and John Locke—were important to this movement. They came to very different conclusions about government and human nature.

Hobbes wrote that there would be a war of “every man against every man” if

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there were no government. To avoid this war, Hobbes said, people formed a **social contract**. It was an agreement between people and their government. People gave up their rights to the government so they could live in a safe and orderly way. The best government, he said, is that of a strong king who can force all people to obey.

**John Locke** believed that people have three natural rights. They are life, liberty, and property. The purpose of government is to protect these rights. When it fails to do so, he said, people have a right to overthrow the government.

1. How were Hobbes’s and Locke’s views different?

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**THE PHILOSOPHES ADVOCATE REASON**

***Who were the philosophes?***

French thinkers, called **philosophes**, had five main beliefs: (1) thinkers can find the truth by using reason—this is known as **rationalism**; (2) what is natural is good and reasonable, and human actions are shaped by natural laws; (3) acting according to nature can bring happiness; (4) by taking a scientific view, people and society can make progress and advance to a better life; and (5) by using reason, people can gain freedom.

The most brilliant of the philosophes was the writer **Voltaire**. He fought for tolerance, reason, freedom of religious belief, and freedom of speech. Baron de **Montesquieu** wrote about political freedom and separation of powers—dividing power among the separate branches of government. The third great philosophe was Jean Jacques **Rousseau**. He wrote in favor of human freedom. Rousseau believed that all people were naturally free and good but that civilization chained them. He wanted a true democracy in which all people were equal, and government was guided by the “general will” of the people. Cesare Beccaria was an Italian philosophe. He spoke out against abuses of justice and in favor of all people’s rights. He believed that laws should be based on fairness and reason.

2. Name the types of freedoms that Enlightenment thinkers championed.

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As you read, fill in the diagram by describing the beliefs of Enlightenment thinkers and writers.

