

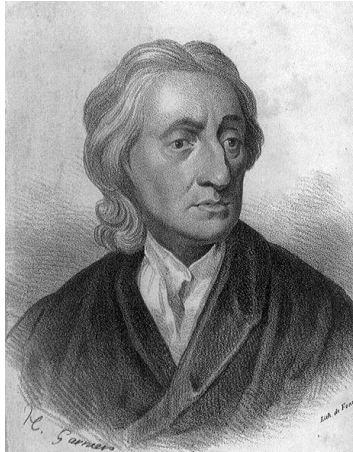


Contextualize

# Who were the Enlightenment Thinkers? What points of view did Enlightenment Thinkers have about government?

**Directions:** Read through the biographical information about each of the Enlightenment Thinkers and excerpts from their writing, then complete the tasks accompanying the information.

## John Locke (1632-1704)



John Locke

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### Historical Context

John Locke was an English philosopher and writer. He lived through the English Civil War and the Glorious Revolution in England both of which heavily influenced his ideas and he lived for a time in France during the reign of Louis XIV. Locke was a religious Protestant Christian and believed in freedom of religion. Combining his Christian beliefs with reason and the examination of evidence that scientists used, he wrote about the government, its purpose, and the best way to govern.

His most popular and influential book was *Two Treatises of Government*. A treatise is a written work dealing with a specific subject. The book explains Locke's view on the purpose of government and the natural rights of people. It influenced Thomas Jefferson's writing of the *Declaration of Independence*.

Source: Adapted from "John Locke." Encyclopedia Britannica <https://www.britannica.com/biography/John-Locke>



[Video Biography from CloudBiography](#)

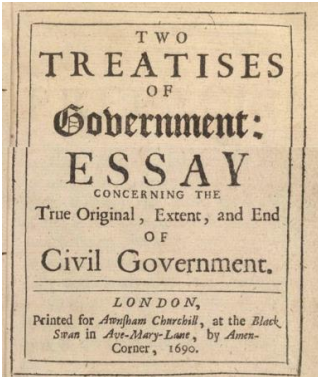
**Location:** England

**Famous Writing:** *Two Treatises of Government*, 1690

**Most Well-Known Ideas:** Government should protect people's **Natural Rights (life, liberty, and property)**

Government should be based on the **Consent of the Governed**. This means that the people (the governed) should give their permission (consent) to the government, usually through voting.

# Two Treatises of Government 1690 by John Locke



[Image](#) is courtesy of Wikimedia Commons and is public domain.

Text Sources: NYS Global History and Geography Regents Exam; John Locke. *Second Treatise of Government*. <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/7370/7370-h/7370-h.htm>

## Excerpts from *Two Treatises of Government*

If man in the **state of nature** is free, if he is absolute lord of his own person and possessions [things that he owns], why will he give up his freedom? Why will he put himself under the control of any person or **institution** [an organization created for a religious, educational, social, or political purpose]? The obvious answer is that rights in the state of nature are constantly exposed to the attack of others. Since every man is equal and since most men do not concern themselves with **equity** and **justice**, the enjoyment of rights in the state of nature is unsafe and insecure. Hence each man joins in society with others to preserve his **life, liberty, and property**.

...as far as we have any light from history, we have reason to conclude, that all peaceful beginnings of government have been laid in the **consent** [permission] of the people.

[When] the **legislature** shall . . . grasp [for] themselves, or put into the hands of any other, an absolute power over their lives, liberties, and estates of the people, . . . they forfeit [give up] the power the people had put into their hands for quite contrary [opposite] ends, and it [passes] to the people, who have a right to resume their original liberty. . . .

## Questions

1. What do you think Locke means by “state of nature?”
2. According to John Locke, why would a person “put himself under the control of any person or institution,” like a government?
3. What does Locke mean when he says, “the enjoyment of rights in the state of nature is unsafe and insecure?” Can you think of an example of this?
4. What are the three natural rights that Locke lists at the end of this excerpt?
5. According to Locke, what have “all peaceful beginnings of government” had in common? Why do you think that might lead to a more peaceful government?
6. According to Locke, when does a legislature, or government, lose its right to rule?

## Baron de Montesquieu (1689-1755)



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**Location:** France

**Most Famous Writing:** *The Spirit of Laws*, 1748

**Most Well-Known Idea:** **Separation of Powers**- there should be **three branches of government**- one that makes laws, one that enforces laws, and one that interprets laws

### Historical Context

Charles de Secondat was born to a noble family of modest wealth in France. He inherited the title “Baron de Montesquieu” when his uncle died and is now most commonly referred to by that name.

Montesquieu was a lawyer but later devoted his life to political study and writing. He lived during the English Civil War and the reign of Louis XIV, both of which influenced his writing.

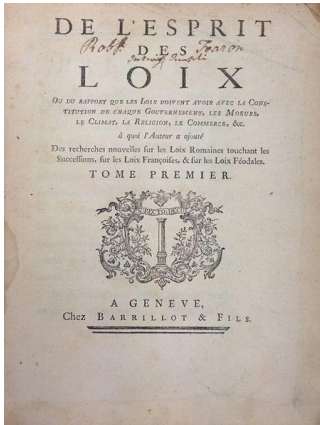
Montesquieu’s most well known book, *De l'Esprit des Lois* (*The Spirit of the Laws*) was critical of absolute monarchy. The kings and queens of Europe and their supporters disagreed with his claims and it was banned by the Catholic Church. It was very popular among opponents of monarchy, especially in England and the British colonies in North America where it heavily influenced the writing of the United States Constitution.

Source: Adapted from “Montesquieu.” Encyclopedia Britannica.  
<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Montesquieu>

Excerpts from *The Spirit of Laws*

Questions

# **The Spirit of Laws, 1748 by Baron de Montesquieu**



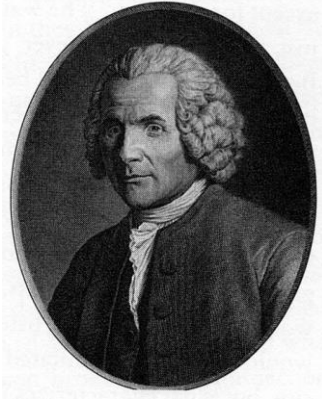
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Political **liberty** is to be found only in moderate governments; and even in these it is not always found. It is there only when there is no abuse of power: but constant experience shows us that every man invested with power is apt to abuse it, and to carry his authority as far as it will go. To prevent this abuse, it is necessary, from the very nature of things, that power should be a check to power...In order to have this liberty, it is requisite [required] the government be so constituted [created] as one man need not be afraid of another. When the **legislative** and **executive** powers are united in the same person, or in the same body of magistrates [government employees], there can be no liberty. . . . Again, there is no liberty if the **judiciary** power be not separated from the **legislative** and **executive**...

Source: The Spirit of the Laws (1749) Charles de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu.  
[http://www.learner.org/courses/amerhistory/pdf/Enlightenment\\_LOne.pdf](http://www.learner.org/courses/amerhistory/pdf/Enlightenment_LOne.pdf)

1. According to Montesquieu, when is “political liberty” found in a government?
2. Explain what Montesquieu means when he writes, “every man invested with power is apt to abuse it, and to carry his authority as far as it will go?” Do you agree or disagree? Why?
3. According to Montesquieu, how can the “abuse” of power be prevented in a government?
4. What three branches of government does Montesquieu say must be separated to have liberty?

## Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778)



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[Video Biography from CloudBiography](#)

**Location:** Switzerland/France

**Most Famous Writing:** *The Social Contract*, 1762

**Most Well-Known Idea:** Social Contract Theory

### Historical Context

Jean-Jacques Rousseau was born in Geneva, Switzerland. He spent much of his adult life travelling first as a teacher and the secretary of the French ambassador in Venice, Italy. He spent time in Paris where he met and socialized with other Enlightenment philosophers including Voltaire and Diderot. Rousseau returned to Switzerland when his relationships with other Enlightenment Thinkers became strained.

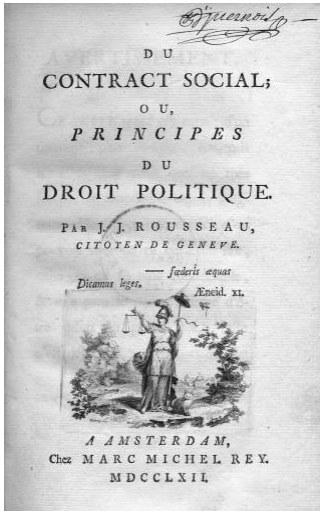
While in Geneva, Switzerland, he wrote his most famous book, *The Social Contract*. In the book, Rousseau argues that as members of a society we enter an agreement, **the social contract**, in which we promise to follow the “general will” of the members of the society as expressed by the laws made by the government. In exchange, we receive the liberty to do what we want as long as we do not break those laws.

*The Social Contract* was banned in France and Switzerland. To avoid arrest for his views, Rousseau moved to England. Eventually he returned to Paris where he lived until his death and continued to write books that were politically controversial.

His writings, which were heavily influenced by John Locke, inspired the leaders of the French Revolution which started shortly after his death.

Source: Adapted from “Jean-Jacques Rousseau.” Encyclopedia Britannica.  
<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Jean-Jacques-Rousseau>

# **The Social Contract, 1762 by Jean-Jacques Rousseau**



[Image](#) is courtesy of Wikimedia Commons and is public domain.

## Excerpts from *The Social Contract*

I...regard the establishment of the political body as a real **contract** between the people and the chiefs chosen by them: a contract by which both parties bind themselves to observe the laws therein expressed, which form the ties of their union.

From whatever side we approach our principle [belief], we reach the same conclusion, that the social compact [contract] sets up among the citizens an equality of such a kind, that they all bind themselves to observe the same conditions and should therefore all enjoy the same rights.

Source: Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract & Discourses*. Published by J.M. Dent & Sons, 1920. <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/46333/46333-h/46333-h.htm>

## Questions

1. According to this excerpt from *The Social Contract*, what do the people and the government agree to as a part of the contract?
2. According to Rousseau, what is one advantage of the social contract?

## Other Enlightenment Thinkers

### Voltaire (1694-1778)



[Image](#) is courtesy of Wikimedia Commons and is public domain.

**Location:** France

**Most Famous Writing:** *Candide*, 1762

**Most Well-Known Ideas:** Freedom of Expression

**Famous Quotes:** "I do not agree with what you have to say, but I'll defend to the death your right to say it."

### Denis Diderot (1713-1784)



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**Location:** France

**Most Famous Idea:** Editor of the *Encyclopedie (1751-1772)*, a 28 volume encyclopedia whose entries included useful knowledge on craft and trade skills and new discoveries from the Scientific Revolution and philosophy from Enlightenment Thinkers like Rousseau and Voltaire.



The *Encyclopedia* had a great impact on Enlightenment philosophers and later intellectuals who had never had access to the information contained within it before and certainly not all in one place.

1) Explain Voltaire's quote in your own words.

2) What information did Diderot's Encyclopedie contain? What impact did it have?

## Enlightenment Thinker Review

→ **Directions:** Use the information from previous activities in class to fill in the graphic organizer below.

Enlightenment Thinker	Mnemonic a helpful way to remember something	Most Famous Writing	Most Well-Known Ideas	How might these ideas affect a country under absolute rule?
<p>John Locke (1632-1704)</p> 	<p>Locke: <b>L</b>ife, <b>L</b>iberty, and <b>L</b>and (Property)</p>			
<p>Baron de Montesquieu (1689-1755)</p> 	<p><b><u>Mont-es-quieu</u></b> Three Syllables! Three Branches of Government!</p>			
<p>Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778)</p> 	<p><b><u>Rousseau</u></b> His name has two s's in it. His big idea starts with an s, <b>S</b>ocial Contract.</p>			
<p>Voltaire (1694-1778)</p> 	<p><b><u>V</u>oltaire</b> His name starts with a "v" just like the word <b>V</b>OICE and Voltaire supported the freedom of expression.</p>			





## The Roots of Feminism and Women's Rights Movements

→ **Directions:** Read the contextual information below and respond to the accompanying questions.

### Contextualize



Portrait of Mary Wollstonecraft painted by John Opie (c. 1797)

[Image](#) is courtesy of Wikimedia Commons and is public domain.

### What was life like women in 18th century Europe?

Throughout most of history, women were treated as inferior to men and those actions were supported by ideas in culture, religion, and law. In 18th century Europe, women were not as educated as men because of a lack of opportunities to go to school, and they were restricted by laws and customs that made women look to marriage as a means of stability and made them dependent on men. Due to their favored position in society, men were able to excel in public life, that is, science, philosophy, religion and politics, while women were expected to marry, have children, and take care of the home.

**1. According to this excerpt, how have women been perceived historically?**

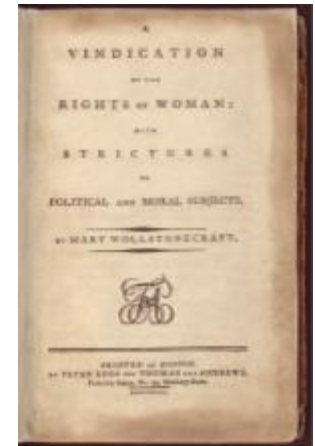
**2. According to this excerpt, what were European women expected to do in the 18th century?**

### Who was Mary Wollstonecraft?

Using Enlightenment ideas, some women, including Mary Wollstonecraft, argued for more equal rights for men and women. Mary Wollstonecraft (April 27, 1759 – September 10, 1797) was a British intellectual, writer, philosopher, and early feminist. She wrote several novels, essays, and children's books, but is best known for her book, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792). Wollstonecraft died at the age of 38, eleven days after giving birth to her second daughter, leaving behind several unfinished manuscripts.

### What is *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*?

*A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* is one of the earliest works of feminist philosophy. Wollstonecraft wrote *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* after reading Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord's 1791 report to the French National Assembly, which stated that women should only receive a domestic education such as training in cooking and cleaning. *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* is a treatise, or a long piece of writing that discusses a subject carefully and thoroughly. Wollstonecraft argued that all men and women had equal **natural rights**, and that an ideal society could not be realized until everyone was free to exercise those rights. She spoke out against the situation of women in the eighteenth century, declaring that they were educated to be submissive to men and to value physical attractiveness over character and intelligence.



A Vindication of the Rights of Woman by Mary Wollstonecraft  
[image](#) is courtesy of Wikimedia Commons and is public domain.

Sources: Adapted from *Social Status of Women in 18th Century English Society As Reflected In a Dictionary of the English Language of Dr. Johnson* Karabi Hazarika Research Scholar, CMJ University, Shillong, Meghalaya IJCAES Special Issue on Basic, Applied & Social Sciences, Volume II, October 2012. <http://www.caesjournals.org/spluploads/IJCAES-BASS-2012-189.pdf>; Adapted from "Mary Wollstonecraft." New World Encyclopedia. [http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Mary\\_Wollstonecraft](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Mary_Wollstonecraft)

1) Identify the author's point of view concerning the rights of women.

2) Explain the author's purpose for writing about women's rights in the 18th century.