The Enlightenment

Age of Reason
- Same as Enlightenment
- 18th Century
- Years preceding the French Revolution (1789)
- Grew out of Scientific Revolution
  - Philosophers applied reason to social, political, and economic reasons
  - Rejected authority
    - Demanded proof
- Centered in France
  - Started in England
  - Spread all over Europe
- Philosophes
  - French Philosophers
    - Thinkers with critical and inquiring spirit
  - Writers
    - “Men of letters”
    - Spread ideas of the Enlightenment
    - Wrote for the public
      - Fun, comical, satirical, pleasant
    - Advocated reform, not revolution
      - Critical of society
        - Government
        - Religion
        - Economics
        - Law
    - Ideas varied
      - Agreed on key issues
        - Valued equality
        - Political freedom
        - Religious tolerance
        - Criticized organized church
        - Opposed to superstition, war, slavery
        - Opposed censorship
  - Salons
    - “Cocktail parties/book clubs”
    - Meetings in homes of prominent women
      - Gathered and discussed issues
      - Helped spread ideas of Enlightenment

Characteristics
- Belief in natural law and natural rights
- Emphasis on reason, science, proof
  - Skeptical of tradition, authority, censorship
- Rejection of superstition
  - End to witchcraft
- Critical of organized religion
  - Rejected original sin
- **Deism**
  - God exists; not atheist
  - God = First Cause
  - Man does not need the church to promise him salvation
  - God not necessarily loving God; only intellectual concept
  - **“Great Watchmaker”**
    - God made the world, wound it up, and left it
    - Intelligent Design – present day deism
  - Confined to the philosophes

- Religious fervor remained
  - Pietism
    - Northern Germany
    - Purify Lutheranism
    - More personal religion
    - “Inner Spirit” not reason
  - Methodism
    - Josh Wesley 1703-1791
    - Against gambling, drinking, dancing
    - *Great Awakening* in America
    - Revival of religion
  - Mystification
    - J.C. Lavater
    - Study facial expressions and figure out character
  - Mesmerism
    - Anton F. Mesmer 1734-1815
    - Try to hypnotize patients
    - Not scientific
    - “Quack doctor”
  - Freemasons
    - Secret society
    - An organized fraternity
    - Met in lodges closed to the public

**The Philosophes**

**Montesquieu**

- Background
  - French
  - Aristocratic
- Political scientist
  - Studies different governments and culture
    - Concluded that none of them were perfect, but all had good characteristics
    - Critical of absolute monarchy
    - Admired British
      - **Constitutionalism** – law is the highest, not the king or ruler
        - Balance of power
        - Wanted to have little of every government
    - Separation of Power
      - **Spirit of Laws** – 1748
        - Wanted division between legislative, judicial, and executive branches
        - Balance of power
- Interests in law
  - Everyone must obey the law
    - Including the king
  - “Liberty is doing whatever the laws allow”
  - **Persian Letters**
    - Criticized Nobles
    - Men are better, but women are capable
    - Good for separation of power
    - Written like a travel log
      - Outsiders making observations and sending them home
      - Escaped censorship in this way
  - Forms of government vary by climate
    - Despotism – hot climates
    - Democracy – cooler climates

- Social views
  - Opposed slavery
    - Violated natural laws

- Religious views
  - Not very religious
  - Church useful for the balance of power
  - Compares the pope to a magician
  - Against Divine Right
    - Power comes from the people

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**Voltaire**

- Background
  - Real name Francois Marie Arouet
  - Royal historian to Louis XV
    - Also communicated with Catherine the Great
  - Bourgeois
- Characteristics
  - Very popular
    - Witty
    - Funny
    - Sarcastic
    - Easiest to read
    - Optimistic
- Accomplishments
  - Wrote 70+ books
  - **Candide**
    - Mocked nobility and philosophers
      - “Tend to your own garden”
- Religious views
  - Deist
  - Believed in religious toleration
  - Highly critical of organized church
  - Criticized Christians
    - Christ was a religious fanatic
    - Bible is the work of ignorant men
    - Miracles are a bunch of lies
- Clergy more concerned with privilege and power than morals
- Christianity is the history of religious persecution in the name of God

- Political Views
  - Enlightened Monarchy is the Best Government
    - Need strong government
    - People too stupid to rule themselves
    - Rulers should be enlightened
  - Democracy is okay, but not for France
  - Government should
    - Fight stupidity and laziness
    - Keep church weak
    - Protect freedom of thought, religion, and press

- Social views
  - Nobility is source of problems
    - Titles of nobility should be gotten rid of
  - Opposed to slavery
  - Freedom of thought and press
    - Opposed to censorship
    - “I do not believe a word you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it”

**Diderot**

- Background
  - Denis Diderot
    - French
    - Deist

- Encyclopedia
  - 28 volumes
  - Had pictures, and diagrams
  - Each article written by a different author
    - Over 60,000
  - Very subjective
    - Opinionated and biased
  - Banned by church
    - Bad press is good press!
    - Sold 20,000 copies
  - Helped spread ideas of Enlightenment

- Exposed evils of society
  - Torture
  - War
  - Slavery

- Supported
  - Free speech
  - Education

- Critical of
  - Absolute monarchy
  - Organized religion
  - Wanted to look critically at everything

- “Man will never be free until the last king is strangled with the entrails of the last priest”
Rousseau

- **Background**
  - 1712-1778
  - Jean Jacques Rousseau
  - Very poor
    - Gave kids to orphanage
  - Controversial
    - Misfit
- **Forerunner of Romanticism**
  - Emotion is most important
- **Social views**
  - Man born good
    - **Corrupted by busy society**
  - Progress is bad
    - Opposed to modern world
    - Admired the ‘noble savage’
      - Someone who lived simple life
      - Good human qualities
  - Wanted to reform society
    - Simpler life
    - Free from evil, private property, materialism
    - Assuredness of liberty
    - Women lack ability
- **Books**
  - “Emile” – life, education
  - “Confessions” – Society
  - “Social Contract” – Government
- **Political views**
  - Most democratic
  - Man is capable of ruling himself
  - Faith in common man
  - Government should reflect the “general will”
    - Preferred a direct democracy
- **Religious Views**
  - Catholic
    - But Tolerant
- **Education**
  - Purpose is to lead to self-reliance
  - No formal education until age 12
    - Empiricism
      - Learn from experience