The Enlightenment

What is the Enlightenment?
- Age of Reason, Enlightenment, age of Rationalism
  - Philosophers emphasize the use of reason
  - As the best method of learning truth
  - Runs 1600’s to late 1700’s
  - Relied heavily on Scientific Method
  - Relied heavily on Scientific Revolution

Why is it Important?
- It is a social reform movement
- The American (1776) and French (1789) Revolutions
  - Benjamin Franklin
  - Thomas Jefferson
  - Declaration of Independence & US Constitution
  - French Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen
- Shows the dominant Role French culture plays in Europe

English Empiricism
- Most Philosophes looked outside France
- Deep admiration of England
- English Empiricism
- Newtonian system of natural laws
- John Locke (1632-1704)
  - Essay Concerning Human Understanding (1690)
  - tabula rasa (blank slate)
- Pierre Bayle (1647-1706)
  - Dictionnaire historique et critique (Historical and Critical Dictionary) (1697),
  - profound skepticism about human knowledge
  - Loved religious contradictions

Who Were the Philosophes?
- Group of French Philosophers
  - Montesquieu (1689-1755)
  - Diderot (1713-1784)
  - Rousseau (1712-1778)
  - Condorcet (1743-1794)
- Apply reason to the study of people’s moral and social life
- Ideal of Progress
- Opposed the “Enlightened Absolutism” of France

Central Ideas of the Philosophe
- Progress
  - Human history is a history of the improvement
  - developing a knowledge of the natural world
  - ability to manipulate the world through technology
  - overcoming ignorance (superstitions and religions)
overcoming human cruelty and violence
• Deism
• Tolerance

Montesquieu and Locke on Politics
• Montesquieu (1689 – 1755)
  – *The Spirit of Laws* (1748)
  – Republic, Monarchy, Despotism
  – Natural laws govern human relations
  – Separation of Powers
• John Locke
  – *Two Treatises of Government* (1690)
  – Refute divine right
  – State of Nature (personal freedom)
  – Social Contract

Voltaire (François-Marie Arouet) (1694-1778)
• A talented playwright
• Admired English
  – *Philosophic Letters on the English* (1733)
• Criticized Traditional Religion
  – Treatise on Toleration
• Ferney
  – *Candide* (1759)
  – Complex inquiry into good and evil

Denis Diderot (1713-1784)
• Most prominent of the *Encyclopedists*
• Vast international movement
• Diderot supported Locke's theory of knowledge
  – *Lettre sur les aveugles* (1749)
• 28 volume *Encyclopedia*
  – Change the way of thinking
  – Weapon against “old society”

A “New Science of Man”
• The study of the social sciences
  – political and economic institutions
  – how man learns
  – human motivation
  – social relationships
• *David Hume* (1711-1776)
– preoccupation proof of God's existence and atheism
– tried to be original in everything he wrote
– Treatise on Human Nature

Wealth of Nations

• Adam Smith (1723-1790)
  – Scottish economist was the most influential thinker in the history of capitalist economics
  – Classical economics
  – *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*

• Condemned mercantilism
• The three pillars
• Do not interfere with economic matters
• Rejects Physiocratic school's emphasis on land

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778)

• Academy of Dijon
  – "Whether the progress of the sciences and of letters has tended to corrupt or to elevate morals."

• *Discourse on the Origins of The Inequality of Mankind* (1755)
  – Attacked private property
  – Government necessary evil
  – Participatory democracy

• *The Social Contract* (1762)
  – “General will”

• Repudiated by Voltaire and Diderot
  – "one feels like crawling on all fours after reading your work."

Women?

• The base nature of women
  – Natural biological differences
  – Female constitution

• Mary Astell (1666-1731)
  – One of the first feminists
  – *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies* (1694)

• Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797)
  – "hyena in petticoats"
  – *Thoughts on the Education of Girls* (1786)
  – *Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792)
  – Died in childbirth, 1797