

In Depth: The Enlightenment 2

Name: _____

Time: _____

Date: _____

Instructions: Read each section and answer the multiple choice questions for each section. Each question may have multiple answers. Circle all letters that apply.

John Locke

Following the concept of the scientific method, many philosophers turned to reason to answer the questions of the day. Britain had limited the power of its monarchy, increased the power of its elected officials, and expanded civil rights of its people. These reforms allowed for more freedom of expression than anywhere else in Europe.

English philosopher John Locke used reason to examine the purpose of government. In his greatest work, *Two Treatises of Government*, published in 1689, he wrote that all people were born with natural rights: life, liberty, and property. People had a right to live their lives without harm coming to them; people had a right to do as they pleased so long as it did not interfere with the rights of others; people had a right to own things, especially land. These rights were given to people by God and could not be taken away.

Since individuals in a totally free society might be unable to protect themselves from other individuals or groups seeking to cause damage or harm, Locke concluded, people gave up some of their freedom to create governments that would protect the natural rights of the people and punish those that violated those natural rights. This agreement between the people and government was known as the social contract. People agreed to obey the government and the government agreed to protect the natural rights of its citizens. According to Locke, however, if government failed to protect the natural rights of the people or exceeded its authority, the social contract was broken and the people had a right to abolish that government and create a new government. John Locke's writings on the nature of government influenced many other Enlightenment thinkers around the world.

Description: The author describes a topic by listing characteristics, features, and examples.

Sequence: The author lists items or events in numerical or chronological order.

Comparison: The author explains how two or more things are alike and/or how they are different.

Cause and Effect: The author lists one or more causes and the resulting effect or effects.

Problem and Solution: The author states a problem and lists one or more solutions for the problem.

1. Look at the text in the box above. Identify how the information is presented. (choose one answer only)

- B. description
- H. sequence
- L. comparison
- R. cause and effect
- Y. problem and solution

2. According to John Locke, natural rights included...

- B. life, liberty, and property
- H. life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness
- R. life, liberty, and jury trials
- Y. freedom of speech

3. According to John Locke, the purpose of government was to...

- B. attack Protestant religions
- H. make all citizens equal
- R. collect taxes
- Y. protect natural rights

4. What happened if government broke the social contract?

- B. citizens could form a new government
- H. government could punish lawbreakers
- R. people had a right to overthrow the government
- Y. people could create new natural rights

The French Philosophers

France produced some of the greatest thinkers of the Enlightenment age. These people became known as philosophes (French for philosophers). They attacked the corrupt policies and wealth of the monarchy and the Catholic Church and deplored the poverty of the French people. The philosophes believed all of society's problems could be solved with the application of reason. While differences existed among the philosophes as to what form of government worked best, most agreed that limiting the power of government was necessary to expand the rights of the people.

Philosopher Baron de Montesquieu wanted to apply scientific thinking to the problems of society. In his 1748 book, *On the Spirit of the Laws*, he argued that there were three types of government: (1) a monarchy in which families ruled according to some form of fairness, (2) a republic in which leaders were elected to rule according to right and wrong, and (3) a dictatorship in which an individual ruled by fear. Montesquieu favored republican rule. He was an admirer of the British form of government as it was broken into three parts: the legislative branch headed by Parliament that made the laws, the executive branch headed by the monarch that enforced the laws, and the judicial branch headed by judges that decided court cases. Dividing power and responsibilities within a government kept any one branch of government from becoming too powerful and taking away the rights of the people. Montesquieu's observations later influenced the founders present in Philadelphia at the Constitutional Convention in 1787.

5. The French philosophes believed that

- B. a powerful government was necessary
- H. limited government expanded rights
- R. monarchy was the best government
- Y. poverty was acceptable in a free society

had reached a critical point: Americans began to debate independence. Referring to John Locke's theories about the purpose of government, Thomas Paine wrote in *Common Sense* that America could only secure its natural rights by breaking away from a corrupt Great Britain.

Six months later, Virginian Thomas Jefferson presented the Declaration of Independence to the Continental Congress. Again, borrowing from John Locke's ideas on government, Jefferson argued that since the British government had denied natural rights given to Americans by God, it had broken the social contract; therefore, the colonies had a right to throw off the British government by declaring independence and create a new, more perfect government.

Historians argue about when the Enlightenment period came to an end. Some say it ended in 1793 with the beginning of the French Revolution when the French people rose up against its monarchy and instituted a democracy. Other historians argue that the Enlightenment ended with the collapse of French democracy when Napoleon Bonaparte in 1799 took political power over the country. Regardless of its official end, the Enlightenment led to the spread of civil rights in many countries and the beginning of democratic governments around the world.

6. What reason did Jefferson give to justify the call for American independence?
- B. Napoleon Bonaparte came to power
 - H. The French government collapsed
 - R. Great Britain was corrupt
 - Y. Britain had broken the social contract

America

The Enlightenment began in Europe, but across the Atlantic Ocean it was the Americans who put the ideas into practice. By 1776, tensions between the American colonies and Great Britain