

Enlightenment and Revolution

An Age of Revolutions
(1750–1914)



The Scientific Revolution

The Enlightenment

The American Revolution

Thematic Icons



Economics and business



Geography and environment



Historical concepts and questions



Politics, government and citizenship



Religion and thought



Society and culture



War, diplomacy and foreign policy

Icons: For more detailed instructions, see the *User Guide*



Flash activity (these activities are not editable)



Teacher notes included in the Notes page



By the end of this section, you will have learned about the Enlightenment and its key concepts, including:

- What the Enlightenment was
- Hobbes and Locke
- The impacts of the Enlightenment
- Enlightened absolutism.



The **Enlightenment** was an 18th century cultural intellectual movement. It aimed to spread knowledge and reform society.

Enlightenment thinkers shared some key ideas but more often disagreed with one another. The Enlightenment affected most European countries but differed in each of them.

One key feature was the liberation of knowledge and thought. This also impacted on views on the freedom of people and the movement broadly opposed intolerance.



The image shows a salon. What was a salon?



The Enlightenment built upon the thoughts of two key individuals, **Thomas Hobbes** and **John Locke**:

Accepted the ability to change the nature of human beings and improve their situation

Continued to doubt the absolute truth of ideas from ancient times



Focused on the importance of the human mind

Believed in the rationality of human beings and the creation of rational societies

How did Enlightenment ideas spread?



Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) was an English political philosopher. He was strongly influenced by the new science concerning nature and the mechanistic view of the world. He applied these ideas to human beings.

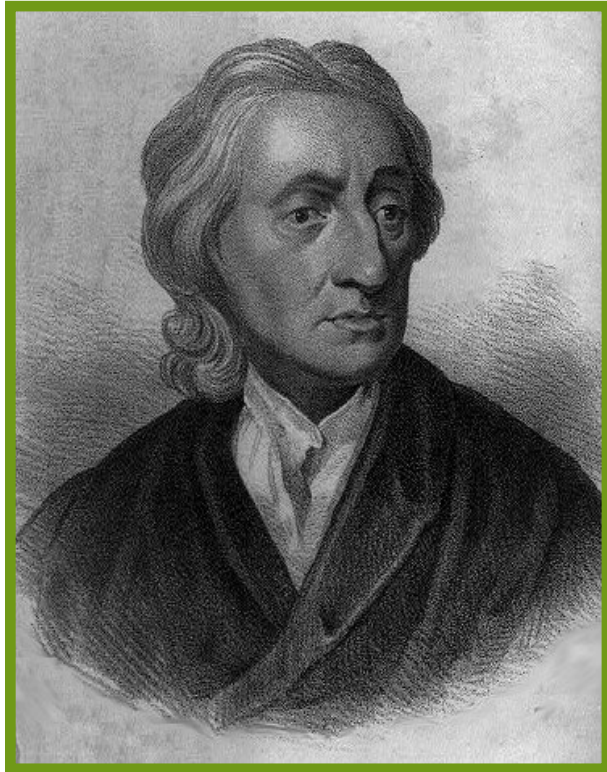
Hobbes lived during the **English Civil War** and saw the chaos and upheaval that it caused.

He sought to explain in a systematic way the answer to preventing the type of unrest caused by the war.





John Locke (1632–1704) was another English political philosopher influenced by the scientific thought of the time. Like Hobbes, he was also influenced by the English Civil War.



Locke agreed with Hobbes that humans were born with certain freedoms. However, he saw humans as innately good.

He saw conflict coming from the failure of rulers to protect the right of people, not competition between people.



The writings of Thomas Hobbes and John Locke were very important during the Enlightenment. *Leviathan* and *Two Treatises of Government* were their most famous works.

Explore these famous works to see the ideas presented by these philosophers.

Press **start** to begin.

start





The **philosophes** were a group of French writers who put forth new and often controversial ideas. Not all were actually philosophers and they studied in various fields including politics, literature, art, science and economics.
Press on each image to find out more about some of the key thinkers of the time.

Press **start** to begin.

start





The *philosophes* published many key texts during the 18th century. Their new ideas influenced political and societal issues over the next 150 years. Either press on a date or drag the pointer along the timeline to find out information about the works published in each year.

Press **start** to begin.

start



What ideas from these texts influenced society?



The Enlightenment had many wide-reaching impacts. These included criticism of organized churches, a rise in print culture and a change in the role of women. Drag each statement to the correct place depending on which impact it relates to.

Press **start** to begin.

start



What motivates one group to subjugate another?



As the ideas of the Enlightenment spread throughout Europe, some rulers used the new ideas to institute reforms in their countries.

This was enlightened absolutism.

Press the buttons to find out about enlightened absolutism and its monarchs.

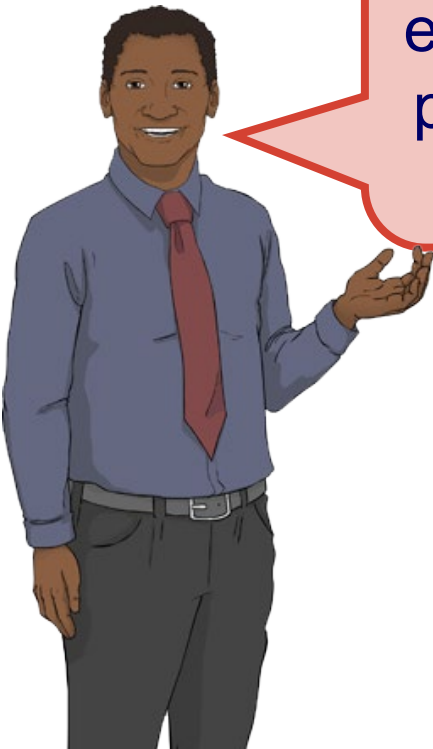
Press **start** to begin.

start






The people governed by the absolute monarchs gained new rights, but at the cost of giving more power to the monarchs.



Some historians claim that the enlightened absolute monarchs only pursued these ideas to create more power for themselves.



While they did benefit personally, some historians believe they genuinely were acting in the interests of their people.



Were the gains made by the people worth the costs?