

I. The Enlightenment

A. Background

1. The Enlightenment was a new intellectual movement that stressed reason and thought and the power of individuals to solve problems.
2. Philosophes developed new ideas about government, religion, economics, and education.

B. Two Views on Government

1. Thomas Hobbes believed in a social contract in which people hand over the rights to a ruler in exchange for law and order.
2. John Locke preferred a self-government in which people had their natural rights protected.

C. Philosophes Advocate Reason

1. The core of the philosophes' beliefs included reason, nature, happiness, progress, and liberty.
2. Voltaire combated intolerance in his writings.
3. Montesquieu promoted a separation of powers.
4. Rousseau was committed to individual freedom.
5. Beccaria was an advocate for criminal justice.

D. Women and the Enlightenment

1. The male philosophes held a traditional view of women. Women writers, such as Mary Wollstonecraft, argued that women should be educated and sought more equality.

E. Legacy of the Enlightenment

1. A belief in progress and an increase in scientific knowledge supported human reason.
2. There was a rise in secularism.
3. Individualism, including the importance of the individual and the power of reason, flourished.

II.

The American Revolution

A. American Independence

1. Britain's American colonies were upset with King George III for taxing them.

2. In 1776, Thomas Jefferson borrowed John Locke's ideas and wrote the Declaration of Independence.

B. The Influence of the Enlightenment

1. Americans were influenced by Enlightenment ideas like consent of the governed, natural rights, separation of powers, democracy, free speech, religious toleration, rights of the accused, etc.

C. The American Revolution

1. France under King Louis XVI helped Americans fight their rival, Britain, in the American Revolutionary War.
2. Americans shocked the world by winning their independence in 1783.

D. Americans Create a Republic

1. The Constitution outlined the American government's structure.
2. Using Montesquieu's ideas, a federal system of government with three separate branches and a system of checks and balances was created.

D. Americans Create a Republic

3. Ten amendments known as the Bill of Rights were added to the Constitution to provide protections for the people.

4. Many of these rights came from Voltaire, Rousseau, Beccaria, and Locke.