The Enlightenment and Democratic Revolutions

Enlightenment ideas help bring about the American and French revolutions.

Enlightenment Thinkers and Ideas
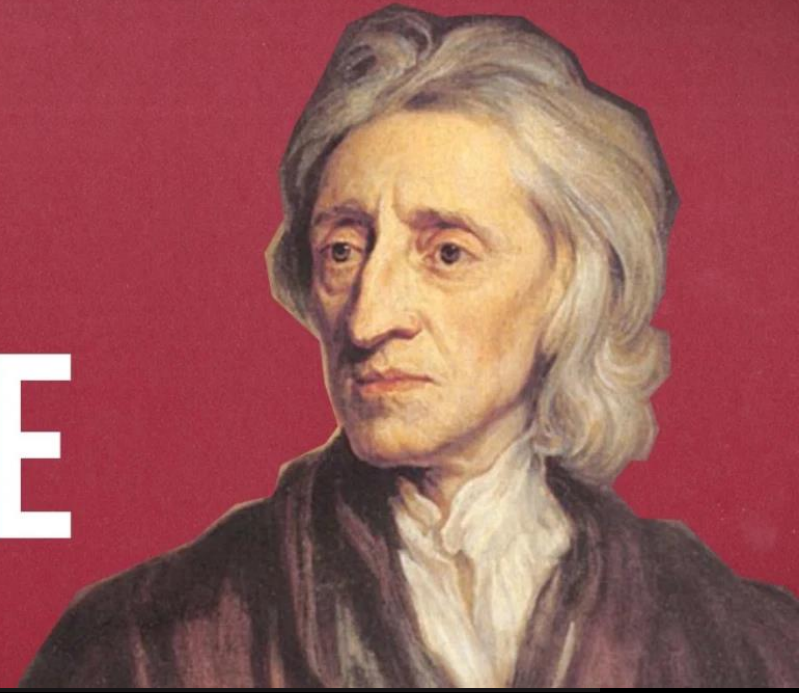
The Enlightenment

- Enlightenment—intellectual movement of the 17th, 18th centuries
  - applies principles of reason, methods of science to examine society
- Scientific Revolution of 16th, 17th centuries spurs Enlightenment
  - teaches reliance on rational thought, not traditional beliefs

All people are born with natural rights that do not come from the government.
- The Right to Life
- The Right to Liberty
- The Right to Own Property

The purpose of government is to protect our natural righrs

JOHN LOCKE

Enlightenment Thinkers and Ideas

Voltaire and Rousseau

- Voltaire argues for tolerance, freedom of religion, free speech *[Visual]*
  - frequent critic of French government, Christianity
- Rousseau says social contract is agreement among free individuals
  - legitimate government comes from consent of the people

Montesquieu

- Montesquieu believes people in power try to increase own power
  - separation of powers into legislative, executive, judicial branches

Portrait of the French author Voltaire as a young man.

The Beginnings of Democracy in America

Americans Protest British Policies

- Colonists help Britain defeat France in French and Indian War
- Extra soldiers needed to protect new territories
- Britain wants colonies to help pay for war, new soldiers
  - passes series of tax measures
- Colonists protest taxation without representation, closing of frontier

No taxation without **Representation**
It wasn't about the money. Americans were upset by the way the taxes were imposed. The king and the parliament disrespected the Americans.
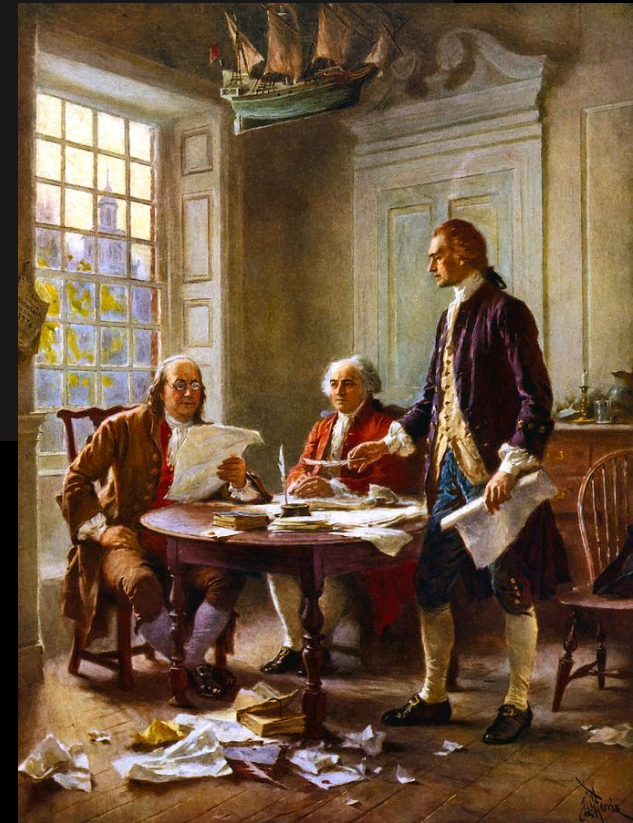
The Beginnings of Democracy in America

Americans Win Independence
- Colonists issue Declaration of Independence, influenced by Locke
- Win war against Britain; set up weak confederation of states

Enlightenment Ideas Shape the Constitution
- Framers use Enlightenment ideas to create strong, stable government
- Representative government—elected representatives make laws
- Federal system divides powers between federal, state governments
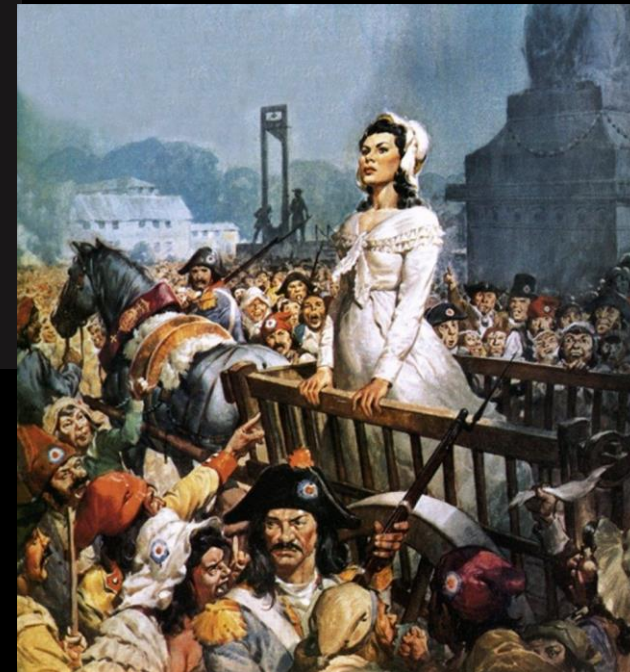- Includes separation of powers with checks and balances

The French Revolution

Causes of the Revolution
- Absolute monarchy of Louis XIV leaves massive debt, growing unrest
- Middle class, some nobles favor Enlightenment ideas, U.S. model
- Peasants restless after poor harvests, think rulers unconcerned

Early Reforms of the Revolution
- Louis XVI calls Estates-General to raise taxes; commoners leave
- National Assembly: Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen
- Drafts constitution with limited monarchy; reforms Church, courts

Guillotine
A machine they used to chop off heads

The French Revolution

Democratic Reforms Undone

- King, nobles, many Catholics reject new Legislative Assembly
- European monarchs fear spread of democracy, go to war with France
- Reign of Terror—radicals kill people thought to oppose revolution
- Napoleon Bonaparte takes control, established dictatorship
- French Revolution shows democracy more than freedom, representation
  - also rule of law, civil protections, tolerance, assent to majority vote

The Struggle for Democracy Continues

The United Nations Promotes Democracy

- United Nations works for peace, betterment of humanity
  - in General Assembly, member nations have equal representation
- UN's authority comes from member nations
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights sets worldwide standard

New Movements Toward Democracy [Visual]

- Many nations struggle toward more democratic government
  - since 1990s, 15 former Soviet republics, South Africa, East Timor

Pro-democracy demonstrator.

The Struggle for Democracy Continues

And who do the people of the world look to for hope?