

Lesson 2

Student Handout 2.3C—Major Results of the Thirty Years' War, 1618-1648

One major legacy of the Protestant Reformation was a violent period with seemingly-constant warfare based, in part, on the division of Europe into Catholic and Protestant enclaves. The conflicts began with the Peasants' War in Germany in the early sixteenth century, followed in the seventeenth century with religious wars involving many of the emerging European nation-states. In England, the Puritan Revolution sought to make England into a Protestant state. The Dutch also experienced a revolt of Protestants against Spanish Catholic rule. In France, the Protestant Huguenots fought the Catholic League and Protestant England battled Catholic Spain on land and sea.

The rise of national states such as England, France, Sweden, Denmark, and Spain, together with the rise of the Habsburg Empire centered in Germany, culminated in thirty years of bloody religious conflict. The battles occurred mostly in German states, where Luther's new Protestant religion attracted a number of small states and principalities, while other areas remained loyal to the Catholic Church.

The battles of the Thirty Years' War were particularly brutal. Protestants looted Catholic cathedrals. The Catholic Inquisition burned many at the stake. Assassinations, atrocities, and mob violence were common on both sides. After fierce fighting and five years of negotiations, the Thirty Years' War ended in compromise with the Peace of Westphalia of 1648. This important set of treaties established the broad outlines of modern Europe and set the precedent for states to have either a Catholic or a Protestant majority. Germany, however, remained divided between the two faiths, a fact that contributed to postponing the unification of that country into a single nation-state for more than two centuries.

The following European states were involved in the religious wars:

Ireland	Roman Catholic
Scotland	Calvinist
England	Protestant Church of England with strong Calvinist minority
France	Roman Catholic with a Huguenot, or Calvinist, minority
Spain, Portugal, Italy, Poland, Belgium, and Austria	Roman Catholic
The Netherlands	Calvinist
Switzerland	Catholic with strong Calvinist minority

Germany	Lutheran in northern sections, mostly Catholic in South
Bohemia (Czech Republic area today)	Catholics and Protestants
Balkan states	Catholic, Eastern Orthodox Christian, or Muslim
Russia	Eastern Orthodox Christian
Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Denmark	Lutheran

By the terms of the Treaty of Westphalia, the Habsburgs accepted the independence of Switzerland, and the separation of the United Provinces from the Spanish Netherlands. The sovereignty of the German states was also recognized, marking the failure of the Holy Roman Emperor to turn Germany into a centralized Catholic monarchy. France clearly came out of the war as a major power in Europe. The Netherlands was now independent of Spanish rule, and Sweden emerged as a rising power. The treaty also recognized Calvinism as a legitimate religion in Europe.

Like most major wars, the Thirty Years' War left significant legacies in its wake. The Catholic Church's long-standing dream of one universal Church was shattered, and the goal of an all-encompassing Holy Roman Empire under Church control, long more symbol than political reality, also ended. Instead of European unity, the religious wars ushered in an age of small nation-states, most of which embraced either Catholicism or some branch of Protestantism. The Treaty of Westphalia also introduced the beginnings of the idea of religious toleration.

The war was especially costly for Germans. The various German states lost seven million people out of a population of 21 million, a higher percentage of its population than they lost in World War II. The war, fought mostly in territories of the German states, visited pillage, famine, disease, and chaos upon an entire generation. After the war, Germany returned to a feudal system. The German people's enormous sufferings remained in the German consciousness for many generations.

The historical context

The Enlightenment was a period of intellectual ferment and discussion amongst scholars in Western Europe, leading to new ideas about human behavior. These ideas changed the way Europeans viewed society, politics, government, and the economy. The ideals of liberty and justice, which modern democracies now consider essential, grew out of the eighteenth-century Atlantic Enlightenment. These ideas, promoted initially by French intellectuals known as *philosophes* but later embraced by other Europeans, changed the way people thought about government and individuals' roles in preserving or overthrowing the ruling regime. They changed the common perception of individual rights. These ideas about liberty and the right of the governed to choose their governments encouraged colonists to break away from the tyranny of an unfair government and, as the American Declaration of Independence states, "to throw off such Government, and to provide new guards for their future security." In this unit, students will examine some of the more influential Enlightenment figures, including Adam Smith, John Locke, Baron de Montesquieu, Voltaire, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Cesare Beccaria, Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Hobbes, Benjamin Franklin, Father Miguel Hidalgo, Simón Bolívar, and Mary Wollstonecraft. As with most intellectual movements, these ideas did not develop in isolation or instantaneously.

Origins of the Enlightenment

The Enlightenment's immediate roots can be found in the Scientific Revolution. Just as Isaac Newton applied rational analysis to nature leading to the discovery of natural laws, Enlightenment thinkers applied these techniques to human behavior. They examined political, social, and economic problems and tried to establish solutions based on the scientific method established by Newton and others. While the ideas and principles of the Scientific Revolution helped inform the Enlightenment, they were not the only source of inspiration. The Enlightenment has longer roots, going back to the ideas of classical Greece and Rome.

The Enlightenment was also shaped by the Renaissance and the Protestant Reformation. During the Renaissance, humanists argued for the importance and worth of the individual. Reformers questioned the authority of the Roman Catholic Church and argued that individuals should think for themselves. Of course, the ideas of the Renaissance were shaped by the Renaissance thinkers' admiration of classical Greece and Rome. Enlightenment thinkers also found inspiration in some of the ideals of Greece and Rome. The idea that people should have a voice in their government finds parallels in the republican governments of Athens and Rome. Similarly, the belief in humans' ability to use reason and observation finds parallels in ancient Greece. It was not only intellectuals who adopted these Enlightenment ideals; they also spread to some of Europe's rulers.

Enlightened Despots

Because of the writings of Locke, Montesquieu, and others, we may have the impression that the Enlightenment led quickly to the creation of liberal societies having rules about justice and equality similar to those modern democracies have. All of the ideas of Enlightenment thinkers, however, were not necessarily liberal, and in fact some of the ideas were supported by those who had a conservative outlook and a desire to maintain the status quo. A number of European

leaders styled themselves as “enlightened” and attempted to implement some of these ideas in their regimes. Catherine the Great, Joseph II of Austria, and Frederick II are among the rulers who attempted to bring the benefits of Enlightenment to their rule. Some of their commitments were short-lived, as when Catherine took away reforms after the serfs rebelled. The Enlightenment’s most lasting influences can be seen in the governments of Western Europe and North America.

The Atlantic Enlightenment

John Locke’s influence on the Declaration of Independence is readily identifiable in its emphasis on natural rights. In the US, the historiography of the Enlightenment’s influence has focused more on political and social reform rather than on improvements in other areas.

English Enlightenment thinkers, especially John Locke, are credited with inspiring the ideals that formed the foundation for the Declaration of Independence and many of the rights protected by the US [Constitution](#) and its Bill of Rights. It was the application of Enlightenment ideas in the North American British colonies that helped transfer the political ideas of the Enlightenment from theory to reality. Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin were two of the most prominent North American scholars. Their work in creating the framework for the government of the United States may be credited as inspiring subsequent revolutionary political changes in France, Haiti, and Latin America. The influence of the Enlightenment was felt into the nineteenth century as colonies overthrew their colonial governments and reform movements took hold in various countries.

North American colonists were not the only ones to embrace the ideas of the Enlightenment. These ideas can also be seen in the political reforms and [revolutions](#) promoted by Simón Bolívar and Father Hidalgo. The Latin American countries were inspired by both the words and deeds of the Enlightenment. It was these ideas that propelled Mexico and other Latin American countries to embark on their own fight for individual rights and political independence.

Lesson 3***Student Handout 3.1*****Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679)****Education:**

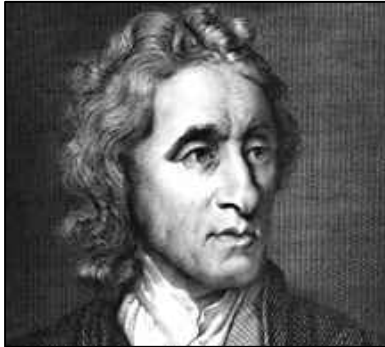
University of Oxford, England.

Early Life:

Hobbes was born in England. He did much traveling through France and Italy. During his travels, he met the astronomer Galileo and the French philosopher René Descartes. Hobbes was worried about being arrested by the government of England because of his beliefs, so he moved to France for eleven years. He worked as a scientist, philosopher, and math tutor.

Beliefs:

Hobbes is known as one of the first modern Western thinkers. He believed that religion should be separate from politics. He supported a strong government based on reason. Hobbes also tried to separate knowledge from faith, which eventually got him into trouble with the British Parliament. He was the first philosopher to emphasize reason instead of religious faith. Hobbes' major belief was that all people are fearful and predatory (greedy). As a result, they must submit to the absolute power of the **state**. By allowing the state to have absolute power, the people would live by reason and gain lasting preservation.

Lesson 3***Student Handout 3.2*****John Locke (1632-1704)**Education:

Christ Church College, University of Oxford, England.

Early Life:

Locke was born in England. His father fought in the English Civil war on the Parliament side. His father's views about the people's role in government influenced Locke's views.

Beliefs:

He disagreed with Thomas Hobbes about human nature. Hobbes felt all people were selfish. Locke believed that all people were born good and were given natural rights by God. These were rights to life, liberty, and owning property. Locke believed that the king's power should be limited by laws enacted by the people. This type of government is called a constitutional monarchy.

He argued that the agreement between the government and the people was a social contract. If the government did not uphold its part and protect the people's rights, the people should revolt.

Freedom of religion was a right that the government should protect. People should be allowed to choose which church to attend.

These ideas were used by American colonists in 1776 as a reason for the American revolution, and they helped shape the US Constitution. The ideas also influenced the French revolution in 1789.

Lesson 3***Student Handout 3.3*****Cesare Beccaria (1738-1794)****Education:**

Jesuit College at Parma, Italy.

Early Life:

Cesare Beccaria was born in Milan, Italy. He studied the writers of the eighteenth-century French Enlightenment, especially the words of Baron de Montesquieu.

Beliefs:

Beccaria believed that people who were accused of a crime should have rights. He did not like the death penalty and believed torture was wrong. He believed that education would reduce the crime rate. The right to a fair and speedy trial was one of his ideas. He also believed that the punishment should be the same for everyone who commits the same crime. His ideas led to changes in European and American criminal laws.

Lesson 3***Student Handout 3.4*****Baron de Montesquieu (1689-1755)****Education:**

College of Juilly, France.

Early Life:

He was born in France. His uncle died in 1714 and left Montesquieu his riches and his title. He became a lawyer and was famous as a writer who criticized the French king and the Catholic Church. His most famous book was *The Spirit of Laws*. It explained how the government should be organized.

Beliefs:

He agreed with Locke in many ways about the role of government. Montesquieu admired the system in England that limited the power of the king. He said the government should be broken into different sections and that each should have some power to control the others. He wanted government to split into three branches. One branch would make laws, another would interpret the laws, and the third would enforce the laws. This system is called separation of powers, and was the model for the US government.

One of the most important ideas from his system is that each branch has some control over another branch. For example, the legislature makes laws, but the head of state (president) enforces them. Montesquieu believed this system would prevent a leader from becoming a tyrant.

Lesson 3***Student Handout 3.5*****Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778)****Education:**

Self-educated; also served an apprenticeship as engraver and notary.

Early Life:

He was born in Geneva, Switzerland. His mother died when he was born, so he was raised by an aunt. When Rousseau turned thirteen, he worked as an apprentice for an engraver but ran away after three years. He became a secretary for a wealthy woman, who subsequently had much influence on his life. He moved to Paris where he became a music teacher.

Beliefs:

He believed that individuals should have certain rights. His ideas supported the French revolution. Rousseau felt that whatever the majority of the people wanted should become law. Rousseau's ideas of individual freedom spread throughout Europe and the United States. He was against the absolute power or control of the Church and government, and he believed that the government should do what the majority of the people wanted. He also argued that if the people were in control, then the rules should be strictly enforced. Rousseau felt that education needed to be changed. He believed that children should be allowed to show their emotions in order to become well-rounded and freethinking individuals. Rousseau supported the ideals of the Enlightenment by defending the importance of reason and individual rights. Individuals, according to Rousseau, should be allowed to experience and explore life.

Lesson 4

Student Handout 4.1—Frederick the Great

Frederick II ruled Prussia (roughly present-day Germany and Poland). He called himself the first servant of the state. He studied with Voltaire for three years beginning in 1749. Voltaire is credited with giving him the name Frederick the Great. Under his rule there was more religious toleration and greater freedom of the press. He also outlawed torture. This excerpt is from a book he wrote in 1752.

Rise of the Great Powers

Politics is the science of always using the most convenient means in accord with one's own interests. In order to act in **conformity** with one's interests, one must know what these interests are, and in order to gain this knowledge, one must study their history and application. ... One must attempt ... to know the ... people which one wants to govern in order to know if one must treat them **leniently** or severely. ...

[The Prussian nobility] has sacrificed its life and goods for the service of the state; its loyalty and merit have earned it the protection of all its rulers, and it is one of the duties [of the ruler] to aid those noble families which have become **impoverished** in order to keep them in possession of their lands. ...

A well-conducted government must have an underlying concept ... that it could be likened to a system of philosophy. All actions taken must be well-reasoned, and all financial, political, and military matters must flow towards one goal, which is the strengthening of the state and the furthering of its power. ... A **sovereign** is not elevated to his high position; supreme power has not been confined to him in order that he may live in lazy luxury, enriching himself by the labor of the people, being happy while everyone else suffers. The sovereign is the first servant of the state. He is well-paid ... but one demands that he work efficiently for the good of the state, and that he ... pay personal attention to the most important problems. ...

You can see, without doubt, how important it is that the King of Prussia govern personally. ... All parts of the government are ... linked with each other. Finance, politics, and military affairs are inseparable; ... a Prince who governs personally, who has formed his [own] political system, will not be handicapped when occasions arise where he has to act swiftly. ...

Catholics, Lutherans, ... Jews, and other Christian sects live in this state, and live together in peace. If the sovereign ... declares himself for one religion or another ... heated **disputes ensue** and, in the end, the religion **persecuted** will leave the fatherland, and millions of subjects will enrich our neighbors.

It is of no concern in politics whether the ruler has a religion or whether he has none. All religions ... are founded on **superstitious** systems. ... It is impossible for a man of good sense

... not to see their error; but these prejudices ... were made for men, and one must know enough to respect the public and not to outrage its faith, whatever religion be involved.

Source: "Frederick II, Political Testament," in Dennis Sherman, ed., *Western Civilization: Sources, Images, and Interpretations*, Vol. II (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1995), 41-2.

Lesson 4

Student Handout 4.2—Catherine the Great

Catherine II, known as Catherine the Great, ruled Russia from 1762 to 1796. She believed in Enlightenment ideas and set guidelines based on the theories of Montesquieu. She opened hospitals and schools, including one for girls, and supported the arts. When serfs (farmers who were not allowed to leave the estate on which they worked) rebelled, she took away the reforms and gave the nobles absolute power over the serfs.

Proposals for a New Law Code

11. Every other Form of Government whatsoever [other than monarchy] would not only have been **prejudicial** to Russia, but would even have proved its entire Ruin.
12. Another Reason is: That it is better to be subject to the Laws under one Master, than to be **subservient** to many.
13. What is the true End of Monarchy? Not to deprive People of their natural Liberty; but to correct their Actions, in order to attain the supreme Good.
14. The Form of Government, therefore, which best attains this End, and at the same Time sets less Bounds than others to natural **Liberty**, is that which coincides with the Views and Purposes of rational Creatures, and answers the End, upon which we ought to fix a steadfast Eye in the Regulations of **civil Polity**.
15. The Intention and the End of Monarchy, is the Glory of the Citizens, of the State, and of the Sovereign.
16. But, from this Glory, a Sense of Liberty arises in a People governed by a Monarch; which may produce in these States as much Energy in transacting the most important Affairs, and may contribute as much to the Happiness of the Subjects, as even Liberty itself. ...
33. The Laws ought to be so framed, as to secure the Safety of every Citizen as much as possible.
34. The Equality of the Citizens consists in this, that they should all be subject to the same Laws.
35. This Equality requires Institutions so well adapted, as to prevent the Rich from oppressing those who are not so wealthy as themselves, and converting all the Charges and Employments entrusted to them as **Magistrates** only, to their own private **Emolument**. ...
37. In a State or **Assemblage** of People that live together in a Community, where there are Laws, Liberty can only consist in doing that which every One ought to do, and not to be **constrained** to do that which One ought not to do.
38. A Man ought to form in his own Mind an exact and clear Idea of what Liberty is. Liberty is the Right of doing whatsoever the Laws allow: And if any one Citizen could do what the Laws forbid, there would be no more Liberty; because others would have an equal Power of doing the same.

Source: "Proposals for a New Law Code," *Internet Modern History Sourcebook*, Paul Halsall, ed., <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/18catherine.html>

Lesson 4

Student Handout 4.3—Joseph II

Joseph II ruled Austria from 1780 to 1790. He was influenced by the Enlightenment ideals of equality and freedom, and he made numerous reforms during his rule. He outlawed torture, abolished the death penalty, and allowed freedom of both religion and the press.

I determined from the very **commencement** of my reign to **adorn** my **diadem** (crown) with the love of my people, to act in the administration of affairs according to just, **impartial**, and liberal principles; consequently, I granted toleration [in 1781], and removed the **yoke** which had oppressed the Protestants for centuries.

Fanaticism shall in future be known in my states only by the **contempt** I have for it; nobody shall any longer be exposed to hardships on account of his **creed**; no man shall be **compelled** in future to profess the religion of the state if it be *contrary* to his persuasion. ...

Tolerance is an effect of the increase of knowledge which now enlightens Europe and which is owing to philosophy and the efforts of great men; it is a convincing proof of the improvement of the human mind, which has boldly reopened a road ... which, fortunately for mankind, has now become the highway of monarchs.

Source: "Letters of Joseph II," *Internet Modern History Sourcebook*, Paul Halsall, ed.,
<http://web.archive.org/web/20000623132851/www.humanities.ccny.cuny.edu/history/reader/josef2ideal.htm>