



# Introduction to the Enlightenment

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MRS. MAJASK  
GLOBAL HISTORY



# The Enlightenment: 1600-1700s

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- Also known as the **Age of Reason**
- It was a time of intellectual debate and growth
- It increased the study of individual rights (it was believed *all* should have individual rights)

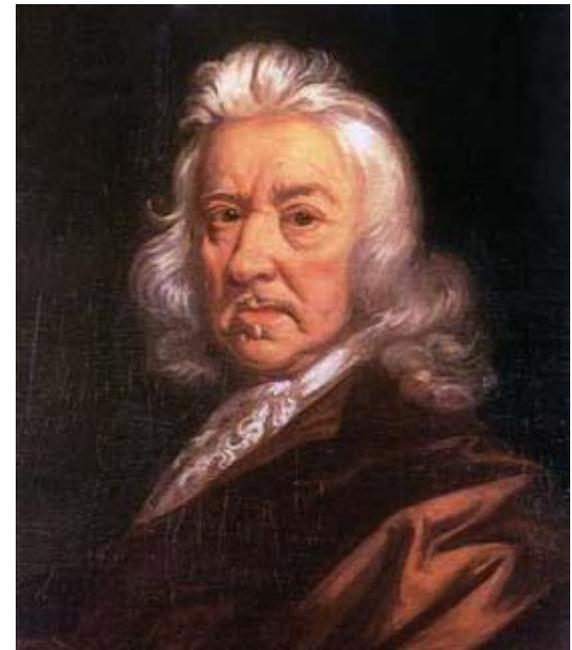
# Enlightenment Thinkers

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# Thomas Hobbes

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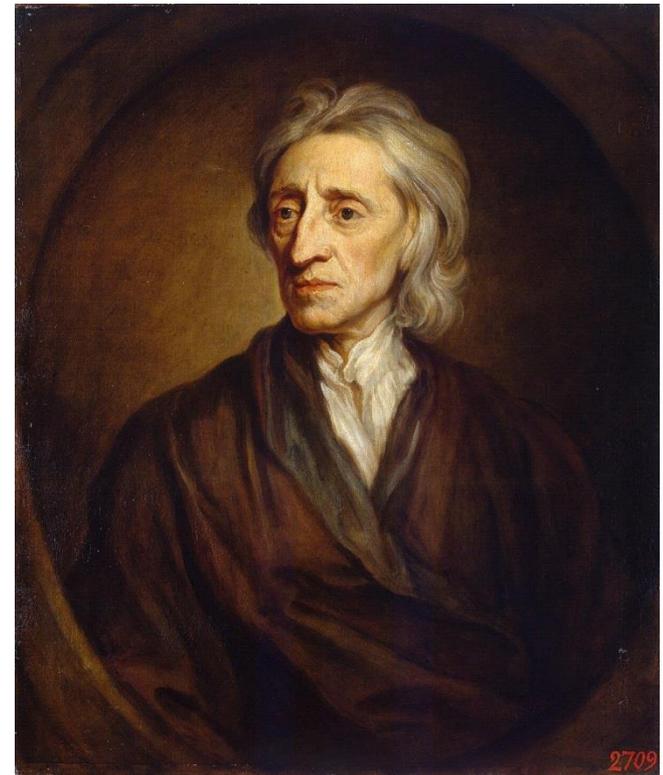
- English philosopher
- Believed in the idea of a social contract
  - This meant people gave up their freedoms for an organized society
- He believed a powerful government was necessary to maintain an orderly society
- Favored an absolute monarchy
- Famous for writing Leviathan



# John Locke

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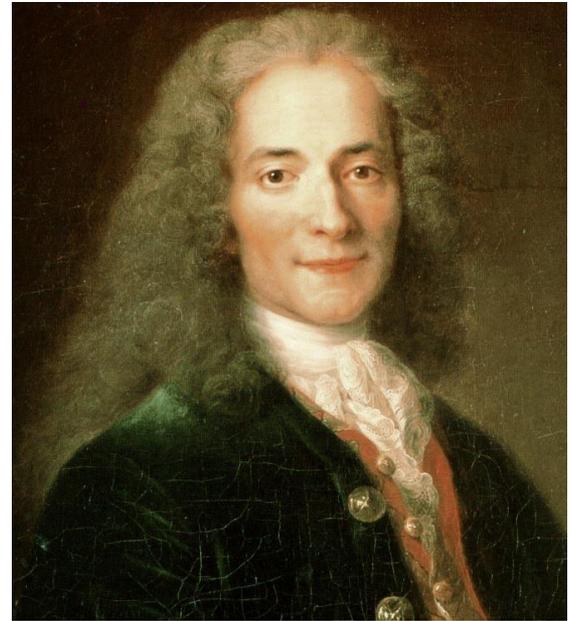
- English philosopher
- Advocated natural rights—those that belonged to all humans at birth: the right to life, liberty, and property
- Wrote *Two Treatises of Government*
  - Stated people formed governments to protect their natural rights
- Favored a government based on the consent of the people
  - He disliked absolute monarchies



# Baron de Montesquieu

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- French philosopher
- Wrote the *Spirit of the Laws*
- Believed government should have a separation of powers and 3 branches of government
  - Legislative
  - Executive
  - Judicial
- Believed each branch of government should check and balance the other two



# Voltaire

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- French author and philosopher
- Advocated freedom of speech
- A very outspoken individual who was very critical of French government and Catholic Church
- Wrote *Candide* which describes the adventures of an inexperienced young man as he travels around the world

# Denis Diderot

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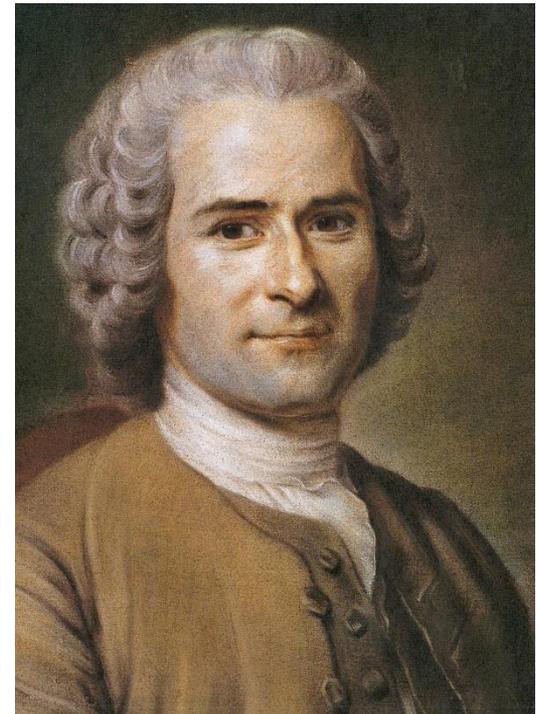


- French philosopher
- Famous for the *Encyclopedia*, a 28-volume set of books
  - Included articles by the leading thinkers of the day
  - More than 4,000 copies were printed
    - Helped to spread the ideas of the Enlightenment beyond Europe

# Jean-Jacques Rousseau

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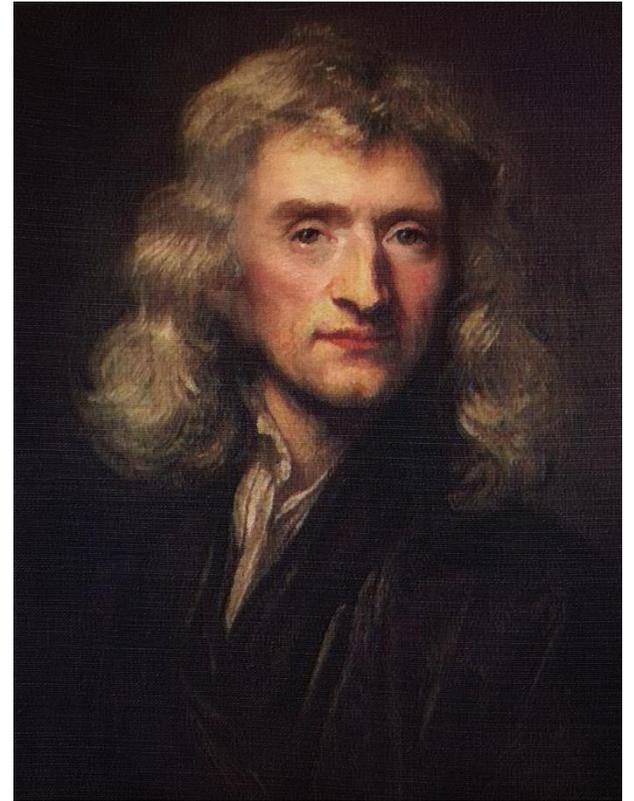
- French philosopher
- Believed that people were basically good but could be corrupted by the evils of society
- Wrote *The Social Contract*
- Put his faith in the “general will” of the people
  - Believed the good of the community should be placed above individual interests



# Isaac Newton

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- English scientist, astronomer, and mathematician
  - Invented calculus
- Wrote *Principia Mathematica*
- Famous for theory of gravitation and for theories regarding light and color



# David Hume

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- Scottish philosopher
- Differentiated between impressions and ideas to come up with empirical thought
- Believed that basic choices were determined, not by reason, but by desires and passions that used reason as a tool to attain their goals



# Immanuel Kant

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- German philosopher
- Wrote *Critique of Pure Reason* which discussed the nature and limits of human knowledge

# Johannes Kepler

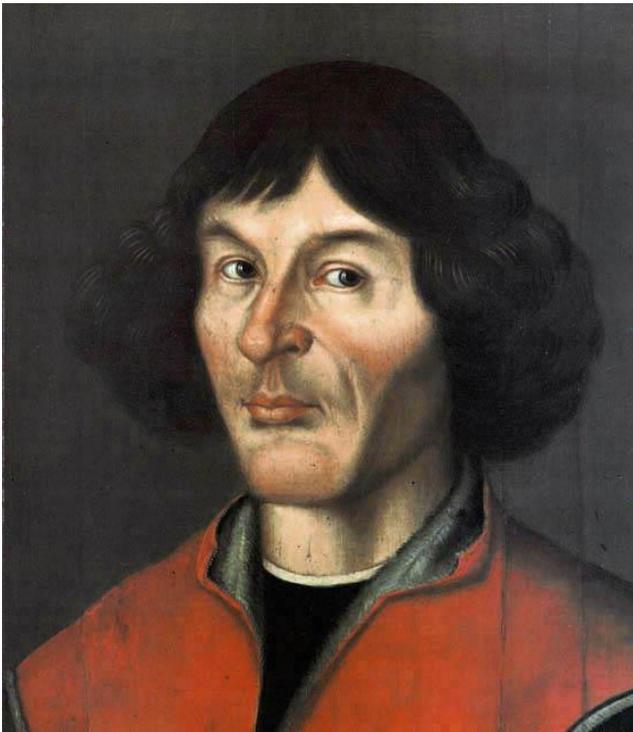
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- German astronomer and mathematician
- Discovered three laws of planetary motion
  - Kepler's laws describe the motions of the planets around the sun



# Nicolaus Copernicus

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- Polish astronomer
- Developed the theory that Earth is a moving planet
  - Claimed that Earth and the other planets revolve around the sun
- He is considered the founder of modern astronomy

# Rene Descartes

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- French philosopher, mathematician, and scientist
- Often called the father of modern philosophy
- Invented analytic geometry
- Developed a detailed account of the physical universe in terms of matter and motion



# Desiderius Erasmus

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- Dutch priest and scholar
- Supported Martin Luther and other leaders of the Reformation but did not support the establishment of a separate church



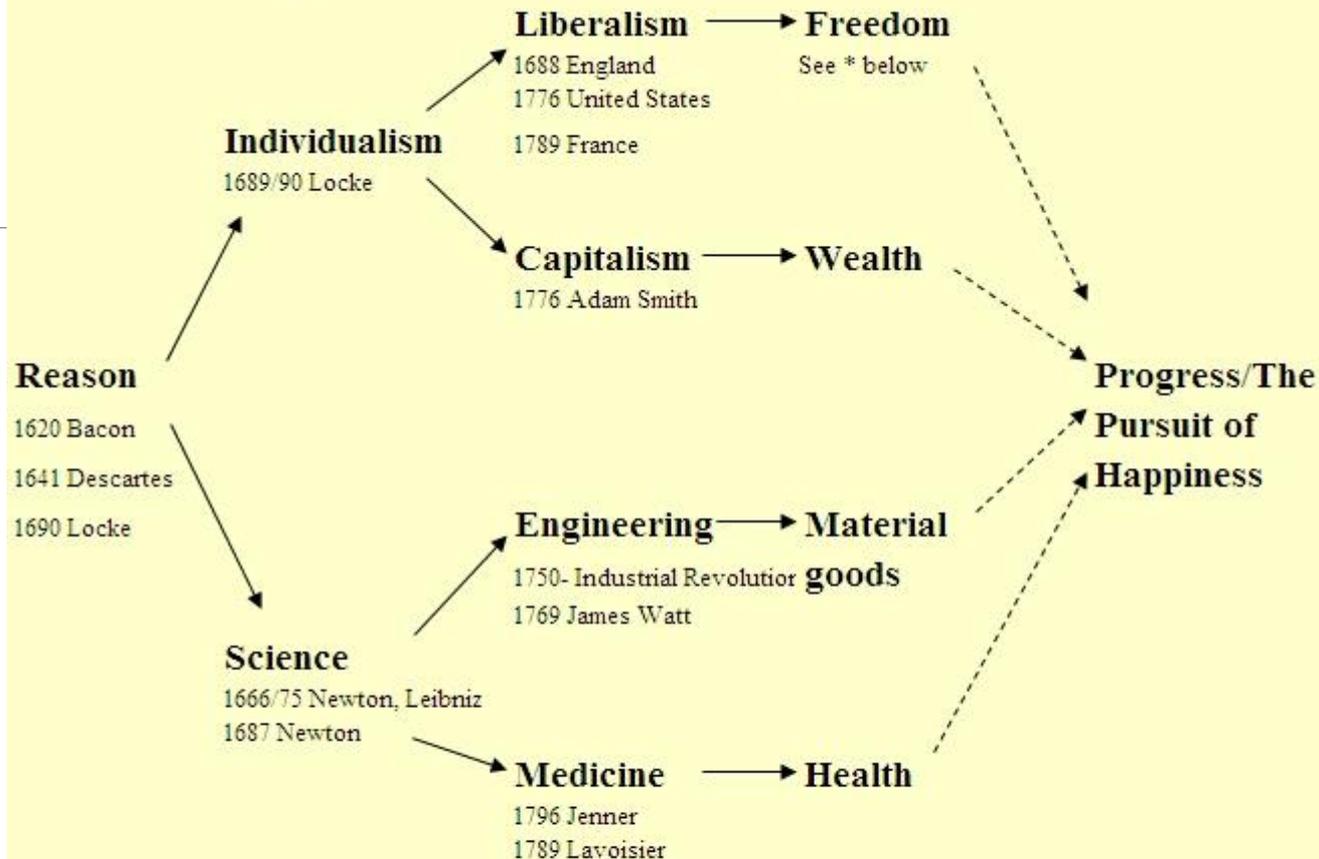
# Impact of Enlightenment Beliefs

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- Later, the American and French Revolutions would be inspired by many of these Enlightenment thinkers to seek independence

# The Enlightenment Vision



- \* 1764 Beccaria, *On Crimes and Punishment*
- 1780s: Last witches legally burned in Europe
- 1784 American Society for Abolition of Slavery
- 1787 British Society for Abolition of Slave Trade
- 1788 French Société des Amis des Noirs
- 1792 Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Women*

Stephen Hicks, 2004

*Explaining Postmodernism: Skepticism and Socialism from Rousseau to Foucault*