

Documents of the United States of America



It was a hot day in Philadelphia. It was July 4, 1776. It was a meeting of the Continental Congress.

The people there are famous now—people like George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Jefferson. But back then, they felt disrespected. They were about to change history.



Complete

1. Who met on July 4, 1776 in Philadelphia?
2. Why did these people meet? (What did they want from England?)
3. What document did they create?
4. What intellectual movement influenced them? (keep reading before you call me)

The Enlightenment was an intellectual movement. Intellectual movements are a change in thinking. People during the Enlightenment changed the way they thought about government and people's "natural state."



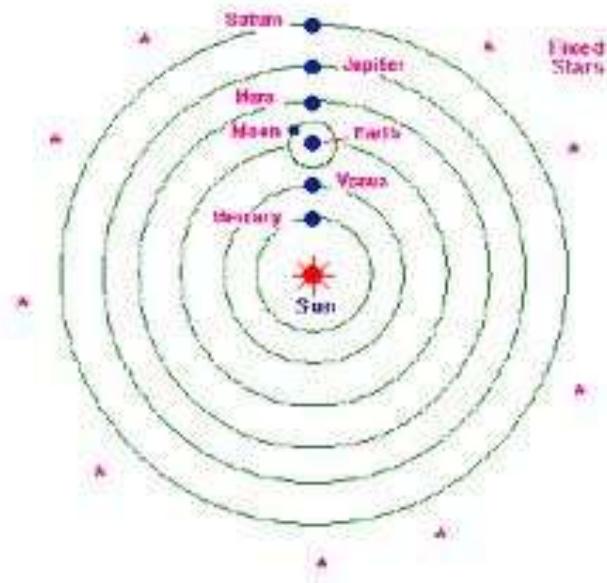
Rewrite

1. The Enlightenment was an artistic movement.
2. Enlightenment philosophers changed the way people thought about art.

Complete

3. What do you think natural state means?

The Enlightenment came right after the Scientific Revolution. During the Scientific Revolution people used experiments and facts to prove ideas. They didn't just invent things or explain things with religion and superstition. During the Enlightenment, people tried to figure out what kind of government is “scientifically” the best for human beings.



The people who did this are called Enlightenment Philosophers. These philosophers talked a lot about the “natural state” of humans. Are people born good or evil? If people are born good, then why do they become evil? If people are evil, how can you force them to be good? The main question was—what is the best government for people to be the best that they can be?

Rewrite

1. The Enlightenment is connected to the Renaissance because both movements tried to prove ideas scientifically.

Complete

2. In your own words or language, what is NATURAL STATE mean?

They looked at government as a contract. A contract is like a deal. So, they believed government was a contract between the people and the government.

In a monarchy, the king has a contract with the people. If he is a good king, the people give up their freedom to be part of his country.

In a democracy, the people make a contract with each other to vote for laws that help everybody.

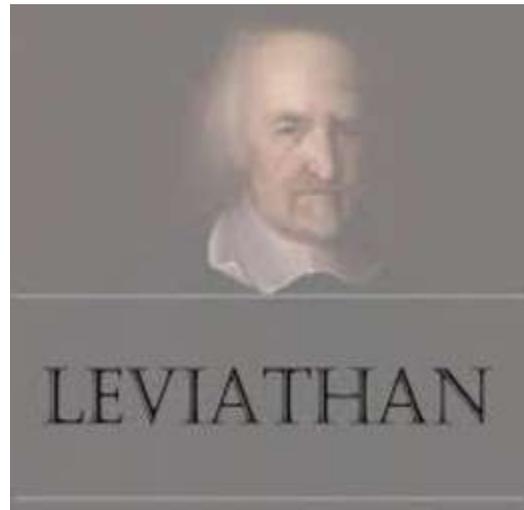
FILL IN

1. Enlightenment thinkers looked at the _____ between government and people.

COMPLETE

2. What is a contract?

Thomas Hobbes was an Enlightenment Philosopher who was pessimistic about human nature. Hobbes did not trust people; their natural state is evil. He said humans “exist in a primitive state of nature.” Primitive is like a caveman or a wild animal. People make a contract with the government. The government needs to protect them from each other.



Thomas Hobbes wrote about “primitive,” evil humans in his book *Leviathan*. He said that you couldn’t trust people, so you needed an Absolute Monarch to command people. He supported kings like Louis XIV and Charles I. He recommended that people give up their rights and consent to be governed.

**"THE LIFE OF MAN,
SOLITARY, POOR,
NASTY, BRUTISH,
AND SHORT."
- THOMAS HOBBES**



Rewrite

1. Thomas Hobbes believed that people were naturally good.
2. Thomas Hobbes trusted people.
3. Thomas Hobbes supported democracy as the best government.

Fill In

4. Thomas Hobbes believed people were evil and _____.
5. Thomas Hobbes wrote _____.

John Locke disagreed with Hobbes. He believed that people were good in their natural state. He also believed that every single human being has natural rights.



Every person has a right to **life**. You can't just murder people because you are the king or rich. You have a right to live your life as long as you don't infringe on other people's rights. Infringe means get in the way of... This is something a lot of people agreed with... maybe even Hobbes.

Hobbes

pessimistic view of
human nature
people are barbaric, selfish,
greedy, violent
people cannot rule themselves

Strong leader is needed
That leader (Leviathan)
has absolute power

govt is
necessary

No divine right

LOCKE

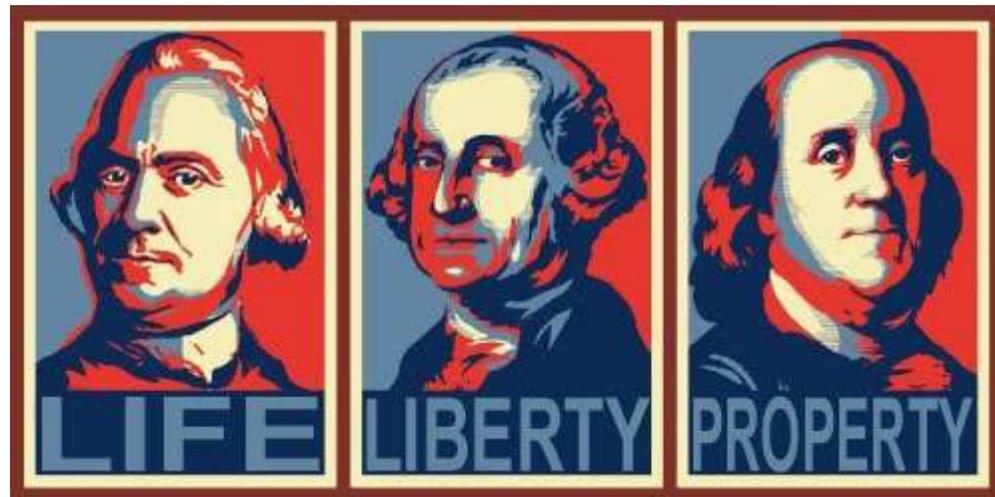
optimistic view of human
nature
people have potential
tabula rasa

people have rights
(life, liberty, property)

self-governing
govt protects natural rights
(limited)

people should overthrow
a govt that does not protect
natural rights

Locke also believed every person has the right to **liberty** and **property**. This was more radical. Liberty is another word for freedom. Locke believed that if a king was not letting people have liberty, they could have a revolution. They could remove or even kill the king. The same could happen if the king took away their property.



John Locke's ideas were in *Two Treatises on Government*. People had a right to life, liberty, and property. People are sovereign. This word sovereign usually we use to describe a country, like, Canada is sovereign. It is not part of the USA. It has its own government.



Rewrite

1. John Locke believed that people were evil.
2. John Locke's most radical idea was the right to life.
3. John Locke probably supported Absolute Monarchies.

Complete

4. How did John Locke disagree with Hobbes?
5. What did John Locke write?

Jean-Jacques Rousseau was another Enlightenment Philosopher. He expanded these ideas of John Locke. For Rousseau, people made a contract with the government. If they didn't get life, liberty, and property, they could end the contract. They could have a revolution and change the government. The idea of This is called the **social contract**. This idea has influenced every revolution.

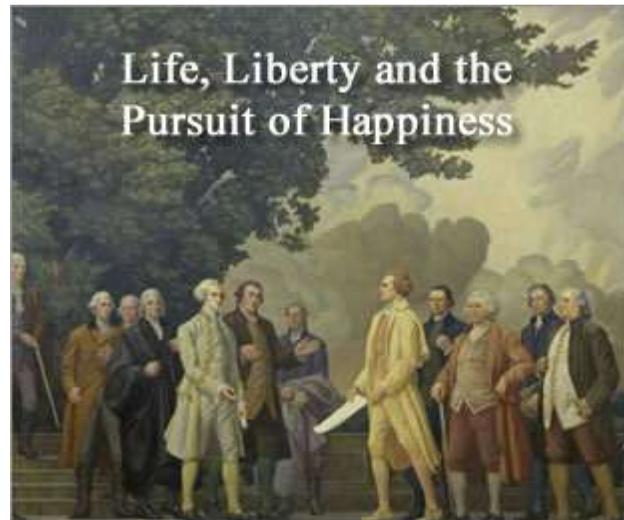


The social contract is
between people and
the government.

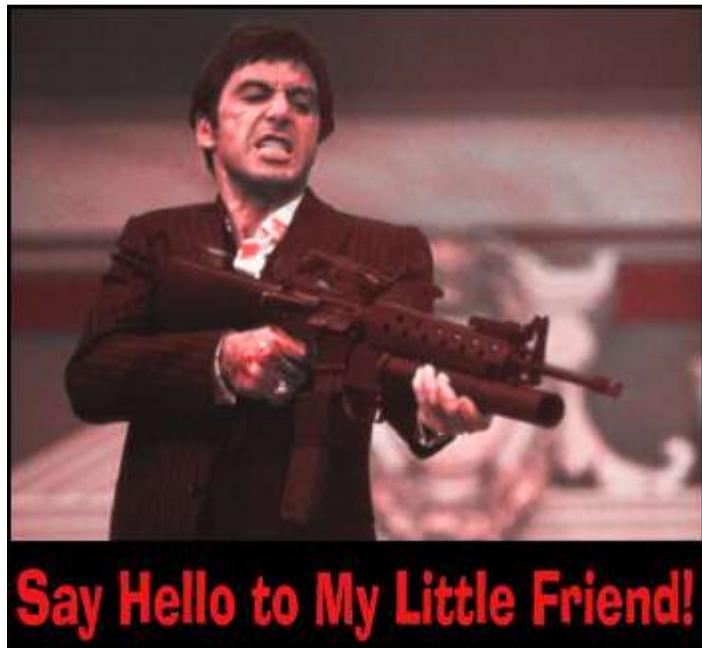
Complete

1. What is Jean-Jacques Rousseau famous idea?
2. What is the Social Contract in your own words or language?
3. If the king breaks the social contract, what can people do?
4. By the way, how can they break the social contract? (What can they NOT give?)

If we go back to the United States in 1776, we can see how Locke and Rousseau's ideas work. The Americans are writing the Declaration of Independence. It is a letter to the King of England. Thomas Jefferson is writing it. He says we have "The Right to Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness." (see how it changes from Locke.)



He writes: “You are the King of England, our leader. But you are a bad leader. You are taking our property with taxes. You are getting in the way of our liberty with colonialism. You are infringing on our rights. We don’t want you anymore. The contract is broken. If you have any problems, you can say help to my little friend.”



Complete

1. Who writes the Declaration of Independence?
2. What does Thomas Jefferson write?
3. How does England break the Social Contract?
4. What do I mean by “say hello to my little friend.”?

The King of England laughs at the Thomas Jefferson and his Declaration of Independence. The American Revolution starts. It's a war between England and this new country, which will become the USA. It takes a long time, but the USA wins. England goes home. Now the Americans have to make a government. Americans have to make their own rules or Constitution.

Rewrite

1. England wins the Revolutionary War.
2. After the war, American uses the Constitution of England.

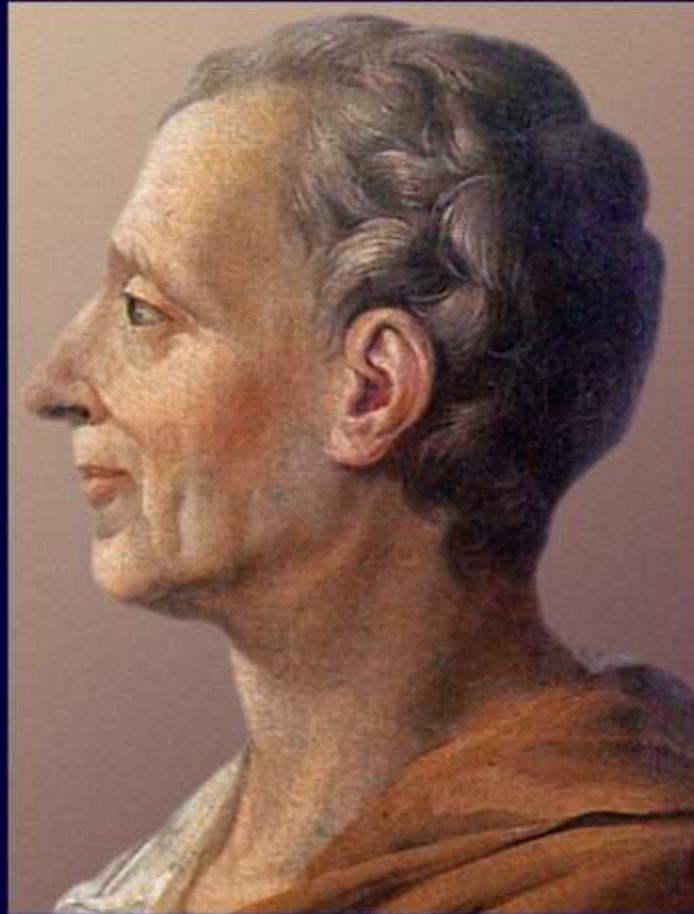
The Americans look to the Enlightenment Philosophers again for ideas. How do we make a government that gives natural rights and protects the social contract? First, they look at a philosopher named Montesquieu. He only has one name, like Ronaldinho.



Montesquieu believed in natural rights. But he also knew that usually, when people try to make a popular government, it ends up becoming a dictatorship. Popular government means democracy. So, whenever people try to make a government with voting and equal rights, it always fails: Someone steals all of the power.

There is no
greater tyranny,
than that which is
perpetrated under
the shield of law
and in the name
of justice

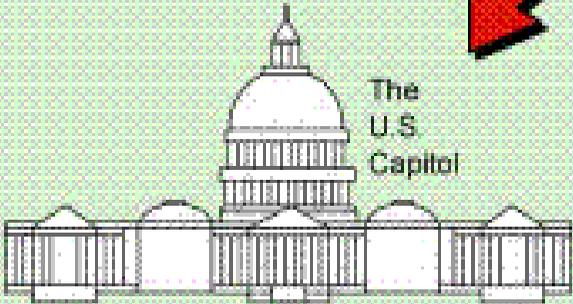
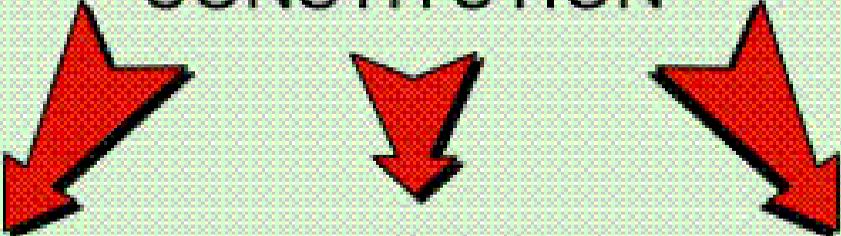
- Montesquieu



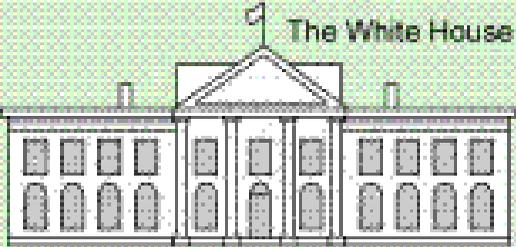
Montesquieu wrote the answer in his *Spirit of Laws*. He wrote that the best government has a separation of powers. There should be:

- *One part of the government that *legislates* the laws (makes laws)
- *One part of the government that *executes* the laws (enforces laws)
- *One part of the government that *judges* the laws

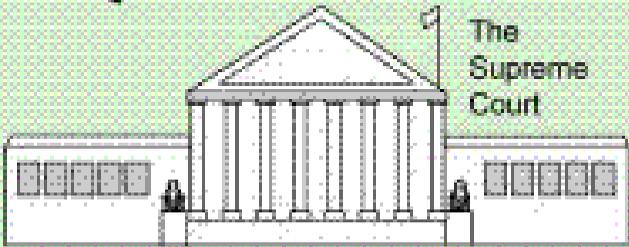
CONSTITUTION



The U.S. Capitol



The White House



The Supreme Court

LEGISLATIVE

EXECUTIVE

JUDICIAL

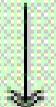
↓
CONGRESS



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



SENATE



PRESIDENT



VICE PRESIDENT



SUPREME COURT

Complete

1. What book does Montesquieu write?

Fill in

2. Montesquieu believes in the _____ of powers

3. He believes there should be ____ branches of government

Complete

4. Why should there be a separation of powers?

The Americans copied this. We have a President who is the leader; A Congress that makes laws; And the Supreme Court that interprets whether they are good laws or not. All of these people work under the Constitution of the United States of America. Our Constitution was ratified in 1789. It is the oldest still-used Constitution in the world.

Complete

1. What are the 3 branches in the USA?
2. Who did the Americans get the idea of separation of powers from?
3. What was ratified in 1789?
4. By the way, what does ratify mean? (Look it up)



Jefferson and the Americans copied another Enlightenment Philosopher about religion. They copied Voltaire, who was a French writer. Voltaire didn't like religious fanaticism. He didn't like all of the wars over religion. He thought religion was kind of a joke, and he made fun of it in his comedy called Candide.

Voltaire wanted religious toleration. He also wanted religious separation. Remember that in many European governments, the king was connected to the religion. Many kings believed they had divine rights. Some believed they were heads of the church and state. Voltaire hated this; he wanted a total separation.



Rewrite

1. Voltaire supported religious fanaticism.
2. Voltaire wanted government and religion to be united.

Complete

3. Why is Voltaire famous? (What idea?)

Voltaire influenced the American Constitution and Thomas Jefferson about how to describe religion in the Constitution. One of the rights that is guaranteed is Freedom of Religion and Freedom of Speech. These rights are guaranteed in the Bill of Rights. The Bill of Rights were added to the end of the Constitution to give extra protection to natural rights.

Complete

1. Voltaire's ideas are in the US Constitution. Where? What ideas?
2. What is the Bill of Rights?
3. What philosophers influenced the American Constitution?
4. What was the first official document to be use Enlightenment ideas?
5. By the way, what did Thomas Jefferson do? (I keep mentioning him)

The United States declared independence in 1776. We ratified our Constitution in 1789. We have had the same government since. We had a political revolution. This revolution is based on Enlightenment ideas. We did NOT have a social revolution. Rich people stayed rich; poor people stayed poor; slaves stayed slaves; it was mostly NOT so violent.

Two countries experienced SOCIAL revolutions: France and Haiti. Unfortunately, these SOCIAL revolutions did not end well. Things got way out of control.

Rewrite

1. The American Revolution was a social revolution.
2. Social Revolutions ended up really well and in control.