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Teacher Overview

[Go directly to student-facing materials!](#)



SQ 2. What historical circumstances led to the Enlightenment?



Unit Essential Question(s): How do new ideas spark change? Do these changes last? [Link to Unit](#)



Supporting Question(s): What historical circumstances led to the Enlightenment?

Objective(s):

- **Describe** what the Enlightenment was and the historical context in which it took place.

Vocabulary

The following words are introduced or reinforced in this lesson. Reference the unit vocabulary tracker for more information. [Click here](#) for the New Visions Global History glossary.

Word/Phrase (part of speech)	Definition
absolute monarch (n.)	a king or queen with complete control
Catholic Church (n.)	the organized Christian church led by Pope centered in Rome
government (n.)	the group of people that has power to make laws and important decisions for a community, state, or nation

intellectual (n.)	a well-educated person
literacy rate (n.)	the percentage of people who are able to read
philosopher (n.)	one who thinks about, questions, and studies the nature of life, truth, knowledge, and other important human matters
reason (n.)	the power of the mind to think, understand, and make sense of the world
rights (n.)	something you are allowed to do because you are a person
Scientific Revolution (n.)	a period of time from the 1500s through the 1700s in which scholars started to question their beliefs about the world and base their conclusions on observation and reason rather than spiritual belief or what organizations like the Catholic Church told them. Scholars who studied the natural world were often called “natural philosophers” during the Scientific Revolution.
scholar (n.)	someone that specializes in a branch of study
urbanization (n.)	the process of making an area more city-like, usually through an increase in population

Formative Assessment Possible Responses

These responses represent possible answers to the formative assessment tasks in this lesson. They are not the only correct answers. Create your own list of possible responses before using this resource with students to anticipate student misconceptions and adjust your instruction.

Event: The Enlightenment

Who?

individuals, groups of people, regions, nations involved

philosophers, absolute monarchs, Catholic Church

When?

date, year, era, “before __,” “after __”

Mid-1600s to late 1700s

Where?

continents, regions, countries, geographic features nearby, describe the geography if relevant

Europe

Why?

use words and phrases like “led to,” “because,” and “so” to show connections between events and to explain why

Absolute monarchs had too much power and abused it
 Scientific Revolution influenced philosophers to question
 Philosophers met and discussed ideas in coffeehouses and salons
 More people read and more books were published, so philosophers' ideas spread



Combined Contextualization
Why did it happen **when** and **where** it happened?

The Enlightenment took place in the mid-1660s to late 1700s in Europe. Because of the influence from the Scientific Revolution, philosophers started to question whether absolute monarchs should have as much power as they did and if there were better types of governments. Philosophers started to meet together in coffeehouses and other places to discuss their ideas which they wrote down in books. Those ideas spread around Europe because literacy rates increased and more books were published.

NYS Social Studies Framework

Key Idea	Conceptual Understandings	Content Specifications
10.2: ENLIGHTENMENT, REVOLUTION, AND NATIONALISM: The Enlightenment called into question traditional beliefs and inspired widespread political, economic, and social change. This intellectual movement was used to challenge political authorities in Europe and colonial rule in the Americas. These ideals inspired political and social movements. (Standards: 2, 3, 5; Themes: MOV, TCC, GEO, SOC, GOV, CIV)	10.2a Enlightenment thinkers developed political philosophies based on natural laws, which included the concepts of social contract, consent of the governed, and the rights of citizens.	Students will examine at least three Enlightenment thinkers, including John Locke, Baron de Montesquieu, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and key ideas from their written works.

Social Studies Practices

NYS Social Studies Practices	New Visions Student Social Studies Practices
Gathering, Using and Interpreting Evidence (A1, A5) Chronological Reasoning and Causation (B1, B3)	 <p>Contextualize</p>  <p>Connect Cause and Effect</p>

NYS Common Core Learning Standards

Reading	Writing	Speaking and Listening
Craft and Structure: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.	Text Types & Purposes: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.1: Write arguments focused on <i>discipline-specific content</i> .	Comprehension and Collaboration: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Drawings

The following Google Drawings are used in this lesson. We often place uneditable versions of these drawings in lesson resources because they are better image quality. If you would like to change the images, edit the drawings below and replace the images in the following pages.



Associated Classroom Posters

[Student Social Studies Practices Poster](#)

What historical circumstances led to the Enlightenment?

Objective:

- **Describe** what the Enlightenment was and the historical context in which it took place.

Introduction

➡Directions: Match the vocabulary word with the definition.

- | | | | |
|-----------|-----------------------|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. _____ | absolute monarch | A. | the percentage of people who are able to read |
| 2. _____ | Catholic Church | B. | the process of making an area more city-like, usually through an increase in population |
| 3. _____ | government | C. | the organized Christian church led by Pope centered in Rome |
| 5. _____ | literacy rate | E. | something you are allowed to do because you are a person |
| 6. _____ | philosopher | F. | the power of the mind to think, understand, and make sense of the world |
| 7. _____ | reason | G. | the group of people that has power to make laws and important decisions for a community, state, or nation |
| 8. _____ | rights | H. | a king or queen with complete control |
| 9. _____ | Scientific Revolution | I. | one who thinks about, questions, and studies the nature of life, truth, knowledge, and other important human matters |
| 10. _____ | urbanization | K. | a period of time from the 1500s through the 1700s in which scholars started to question their beliefs about the world and base their conclusions on observation and reason rather than spiritual belief or what organizations like the Catholic Church told them |



Contextualize

What was the Enlightenment?

➡ **Directions:** Read the text and watch the video linked below, then respond to the accompanying questions

In Europe, in the mid-1600s to late 1700s scholars inspired by the Scientific Revolution started to ask questions like, “*What is the purpose of government?*,” “*What is the best way for a government to rule its people?*,” and “*Are people born with rights? If so, should they be protected by a government?*” The philosophers writing about these questions were part of the Enlightenment.

The Enlightenment

a period of time (mid-1600s to the late 1700s) in **Western Europe** when **philosophers** and **writers** applied the scientific idea of **reason to answer political questions**. The Enlightenment is sometimes known as the **Age of Reason**.

The writers who took part in the Enlightenment are called **Enlightenment Thinkers**, sometimes known as *philosophes*, the French word for philosophers. Just as scientists challenged the claims of the Catholic Church, Enlightenment Thinkers often challenged the claims of absolute monarchs. We study them because of the actions that their ideas inspired later in history.



Watch a clip from [Heroes of the Enlightenment, Episode 2 \(0:00-1:22\)](#) and read the transcript below, then answer the questions to the right.

Transcript:

The Age of Enlightenment began in Europe in the late 17th century. It would bring about fundamental changes in the way the world was understood and how societies were organized. Until then, the church had dictated [told people] what to think and how to live. Dissent [disagreeing with those in power] was punished even by death. But with the Enlightenment, people began to embrace new ideas about freedom of expression and new rational methods to investigate the world. In England, Newton made the foundations of science as we know it by showing that the universe was governed by physical laws that could be discovered using observation and reason. In philosophy, Enlightenment thinkers like Voltaire and Diderot argued that man, not God, was at the center of the world. Ideas were beginning to change, but in the 18th century most of Europe was still [ruled by] absolute monarchs. Empowered by Enlightenment thinking in both Europe and America, people began to demand real change.

1. Based on the video and transcript, what organization had the most influence on how people in Europe lived and what they thought?

2. What changes came about as a result of the Enlightenment?

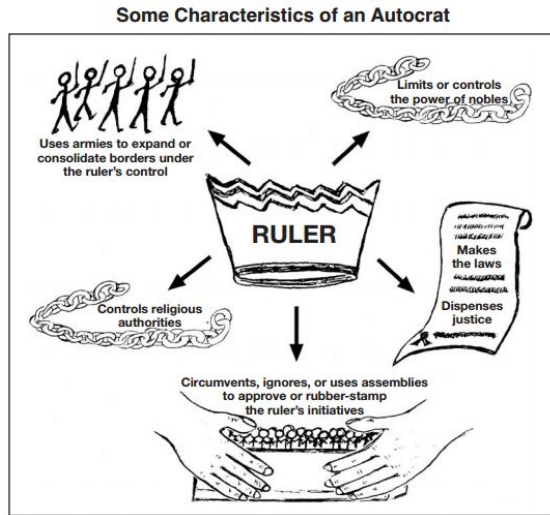


Contextualize

What historical circumstances led to the Enlightenment?

➔ **Directions:** Read each of the events that contributed to the start of The Enlightenment below, then respond to the accompanying question.

1. Power of Absolute Monarchs



Source: NYS Global History and Geography Regents Exam, June, 2012.

In the 1500s, 1600s and 1700s, some monarchs in Europe became very wealthy. As a result, they were able to pay for large and powerful armies and expand their land and power. These kings and queens are known as **Absolute Monarchs**. Most of the countries in Europe were ruled by absolute monarchs in the 17th and 18th centuries. **Louis XIV of France** and **Peter the Great of Russia** were examples of absolute monarchs.

Many absolute monarchs consolidated and maintained their power by punishing those who opposed them and questioned their right to rule.

1. How might the power of absolute monarchs have contributed to the start of the Enlightenment?

2. Protestant Reformation and Scientific Revolution Influence



Martin Luther



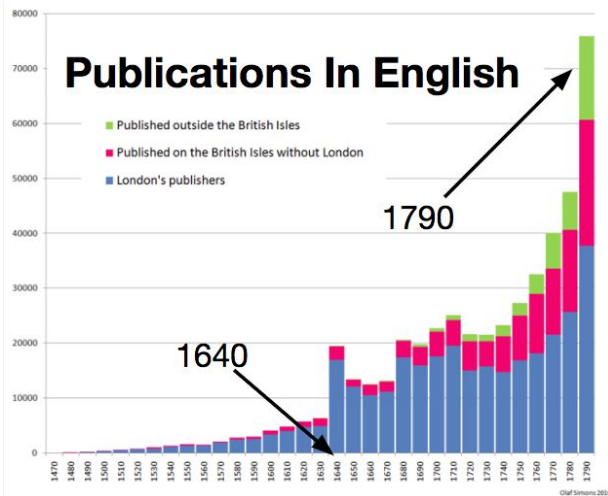
Isaac Newton

Martin Luther's actions in the Protestant Reformation challenged the Catholic Church's hold on power by translating the Bible into common languages and encouraging people to read it for themselves instead of having priests translate it for them.

Isaac Newton and other scientists used observation and reason to explain the true nature of the world which often proved the Catholic Church's claims wrong.

2. How might the influence of the Protestant Reformation and the Scientific Revolution have contributed to the start of the Enlightenment?

3. Increased Book Production and Literacy



Source: English Short Title Catalogue title count, numbers of titles per decade 1477-1799. See Olaf Simons, *The English market of books: title statistics and a comparison with German data*, at Critical Threads (2013) for data and details.

Johannes Gutenberg invented his printing press around 1440. That invention made it easier and less expensive to produce books. It was very important in spreading Martin Luther's ideas during the Protestant Reformation.

During the Enlightenment, book production increased even more and **literacy** rates, the percentage of people who are able to read, also increased.

3. How might increased book production and literacy have contributed to the start of the Enlightenment?

4. Urbanization, Salons, and Coffeehouses



The picture shows a gathering of Enlightenment thinkers in the salon of French hostess Marie-Thérèse Rodet Geoffrin (1699-1777) for a reading of one of Voltaire's writings. Voltaire was in exile in England so he is represented by the statue in the center-left of the painting.

Source: Anicet-Charles-Gabriel Lemonnier, 1812.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Salon_de_Madame_Geoffrin.jpg

During the 1700s, the process of **urbanization** (people moving to cities and the growth of those cities) increased in Europe. As more people moved to cities they found places to socialize and discuss ideas.

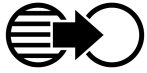
Coffee was a newly popular drink in Europe and intellectuals from the upper and middle classes like the **philosophes** came to coffee houses to drink it and discuss politics and religion.

Upper class philosophers also exchanged ideas in **salons**, gatherings, usually at someone's home where the guests came to listen to readings and discuss a specific topic.

4. How might urbanization, salons, and coffeehouse have contributed to the start of the Enlightenment?

FA

SQ 2: What historical circumstances led to the Enlightenment?



Connect Cause and Effect



Contextualize

➔ **Directions:** Based on what you have learned, complete the task below.

Example: *Fall of the Roman Empire*

Who?

individuals, groups of people, regions, nations involved

Roman Empire

When?

date, year, era, "before __," "after __"

476 CE

Where?

continents, regions, countries, geographic features nearby, describe the geography if relevant

Europe and North Africa

Why?

use words and phrases like "led to," "because," and so to show connections between events and to explain why

political turmoil, invasions, introduction of Christianity

How did this event lead to a turning point in history?/How is this event a turning point?

the end of a 500 year empire, the splitting into western Europe and Byzantine empire, birth of the dark ages

Combined Contextualization Example 1

In 476 CE, the Roman Empire which stretched across Europe and North Africa, collapsed because of political turmoil, invasions, and tensions caused by the introduction of Christianity. The fall of the Roman Empire ended a 500 year empire, birthing the dark ages and a Europe divided between the West and the Byzantine empire.

Writing Strategies Used:

Prepositional phrase (*In 476 CE*)
Conjunctions (*because, and*)

Combined Contextualization Example 2

The Roman Empire, *an expansive state that stretched across Europe and North Africa*, collapsed in 476 CE due to political turmoil, invasions, and tensions caused by the introduction of Christianity. The fall of the Roman Empire ended a 500 year empire, birthing the dark ages and a Europe divided between the West and the Byzantine empire.

Writing Strategies Used:

Appositives (*...an expansive state that stretched across Europe and North Africa...*)
Conjunctions (*due to, and*)

Content and Vocabulary Checklist

Use the checklist below to assess the use of important content and vocabulary in the unit.

Self Yes/No	Teacher Yes/No	Did you use the content and vocabulary below in your response?
		philosophers
		absolute monarch
		literacy rate
		government
		Scientific Revolution

Event: The Enlightenment

Who?

individuals, groups of people, regions, nations involved

When?

date, year, era, "before __," "after __"

Where?

continents, regions, countries, geographic features nearby, describe the geography if relevant

Why?

use words and phrases like "led to," "because," and so to show connections between events and to explain why

Combined Contextualization

Why did it happen **when** and **where** it happened?
