

The Enlightenment

Overview

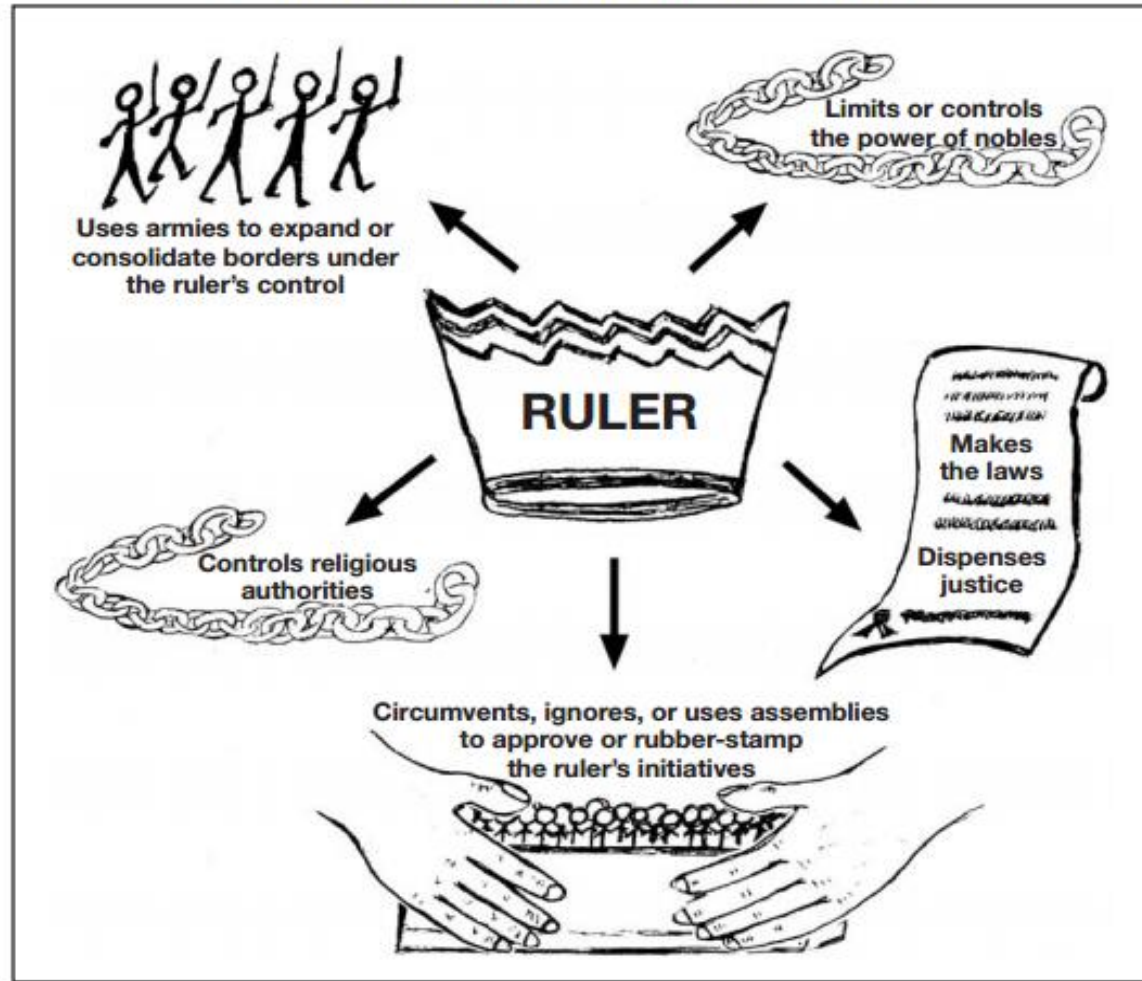
Enlightenment (17th-18th century)

- era in which philosophers and writers applied the scientific idea of reason to answer political questions
 - What is the purpose of government?
 - What is the best way for government to rule?
 - Are people born with rights?
 - Are these rights protected by the government?

Causes of the Enlightenment

Power of Absolute Monarchs

Some Characteristics of an Autocrat



Religious and Scientific Changes

Protestant Reformation

- challenged power of the Catholic Church

Scientific Revolution

- undermined claims of the Catholic Church



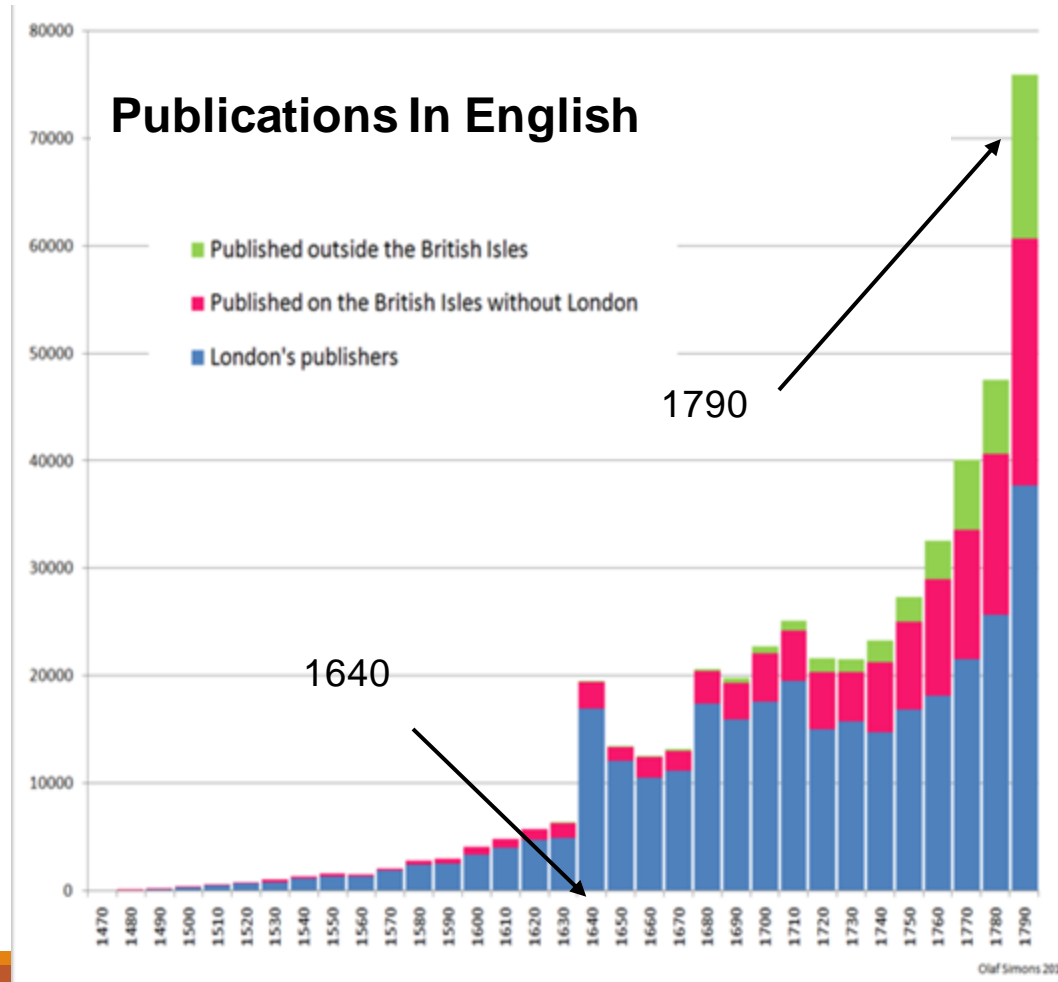
Martin Luther



Isaac Newton

Increased Book Production and Literacy

printing press



Urbanization and Coffeehouses



- more people in cities
- opportunity to socialize and share ideas



- coffee = newly popular drink in Europe
- intellectuals discuss new ideas



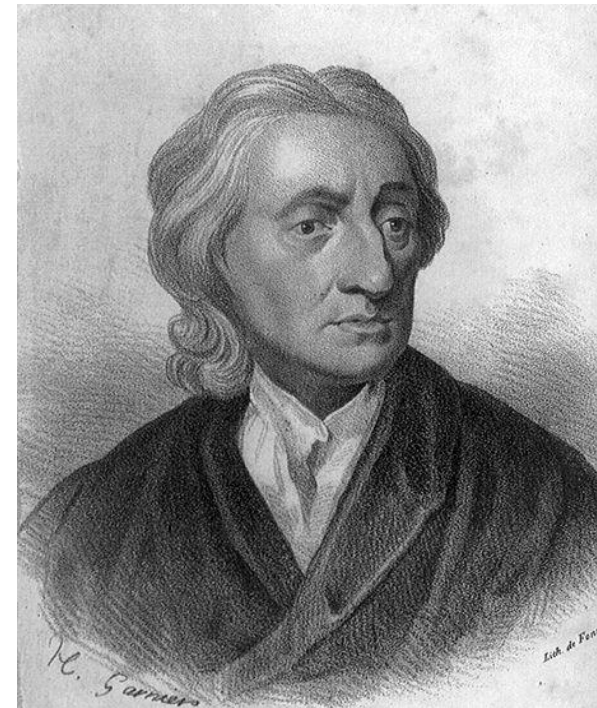
- gatherings at homes
- to listen to readings and discuss ideas

Enlightenment Views on Government

John Locke

Two Treatises of Government

- explains view on government and natural rights
- influenced Declaration of Independence



Baron de Montesquieu

The Spirit of the Laws

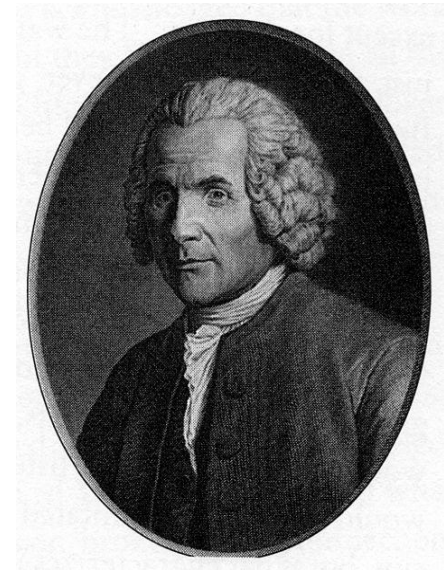
- critical of absolute monarchy
- separation of powers
 - there should be three branches of government
 - one that makes laws, one that enforces laws, one that interprets laws



Jean-Jacques Rousseau

The Social Contract

- members of a society enter an agreement (the social contract)
 - promise to follow the “general will” of the society as expressed by government laws
 - in exchange, liberty is given as long as laws are followed



Mary Wollstonecraft

A Vindication of the Rights of Woman

- *argues women are not naturally inferior*
- *imagined a social order based on reason*



Primary Sources of the Enlightenment

Read the [excerpt from John Locke](#).

1. According to John Locke, why do people unite to form communities and governments?
2. When should people disobey or rebel against the government?
3. In what ways do you think the ideas expressed by John Locke influenced Western political thought?

Primary Sources of the Enlightenment

Read the [excerpt from Thomas Hobbes](#).

1. According to Thomas Hobbes, why is war such a bad thing?
2. What type of government do you think Thomas Hobbes would want? Explain, and BE SPECIFIC.

Primary Sources of the Enlightenment

Read the [excerpt from Montesquieu](#).

1. According to Montesquieu, what are the three kinds of power in every government? What does each one of these powers do?
2. In what ways do you think the ideas expressed by Montesquieu influenced Western political thought?

Primary Sources of the Enlightenment

Read the [excerpt from Rousseau](#).

1. According to Rousseau, how does a government created by the Social Contract work?
2. According to Rousseau, how does a man keep his freedom under a government created by the Social Contract

Primary Sources of the Enlightenment

Read the excerpt from [Mary Wollstonecraft](#).

1. What does Wollstonecraft mean when she says, “I do not wish for them to have power over men, but over themselves”? Explain.
2. In what ways do you think the ideas expressed by Wollstonecraft influenced Western political thought?

Effects of the Enlightenment
