Chapter 17
The Eighteenth Century: An Age of Enlightenment

Learning Objectives

In this chapter, students will focus on:
- The intellectual developments that allowed the Enlightenment to emerge
- The leading figures of the Enlightenment, and their main contributions
- The social environment of the philosophers, and the role of women in that environment
- The innovations in art, music, and literature
- The differences between popular culture and high culture
- How popular religion differed from institutional religion in the 18th century
- The relationship between the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment

Lecture Outline

I. The Enlightenment
   A. Paths to Enlightenment
      1. Popularization of Science
         a. Bernard de Fontenelle (1657 – 1757), Plurality of Worlds
      2. A New Skepticism
         a. Attacked superstition, religious intolerance, and dogmatism
         b. Skepticism about religion and growing secularization
         c. Pierre Bayle (1647 – 1706)
      3. The Impact of Travel Literature
         a. Travel books became very popular
         b. Captain James Cook
         c. Cultural relativism

II. The Legacy of Locke & Newton
   A. Newton
      1. Reason could discover natural laws that govern politics, economics, justice, religion, and the arts
   B. Locke, Essay Concerning Human Understanding
      1. Knowledge derived from the environment
      2. Denied Descartes’ belief in innate ideas
III. The *Philosophes* and their Ideas
   A. Came from all walks of life
   B. Paris was the “capital”
   C. Desire to change the world
   D. Call for a spirit of rational criticism
   E. 3 French Giants: Montesquieu, Voltaire, and Diderot

IV. Montesquieu and Political Thought
   A. Charles de Secondat, baron de Montesquieu (1689-1755)
      1. *Persian Letters*, 1721
      2. Attacks traditional religion, advocacy of religious toleration, denunciation of slavery, use of reason

V. Voltaire and the Enlightenment
   A. Francois-Marie Arouet, Voltaire (1694-1778)
   B. Criticism of Traditional Religion
   C. *Philosophic Letters on the English*, 1733
   D. *Treatise on Toleration*, 1763
   E. Deism

VI. Diderot and the Encyclopedia
   A. Denis Diderot (1713-1784)
   B. Encyclopedia, 28 volumes
   C. Attacked religious superstition and advocated toleration
   D. Lowered price helped to spread the ideas of the Enlightenment

VII. The New “Science of Man”
   A. David Hume (1711 – 1776)
      1. *Treatise on Human Nature*
   B. Physiocrats
      1. François Quesnay (1694-1774)
         a. Leader of the Physiocrat – natural economic laws
         b. Rejection of mercantilism
         c. Supply and demand

VIII. Adam Smith & *Laissez-Faire* Economics
   A. Adam Smith (1723-1790)
      2. Advocate of free trade
      3. Government has only three basic functions
         a. Protect society from invasion
         b. Defend individuals from injustice and oppression
         c. Keep up public works

IX. The Later Enlightenment
   A. Baron Paul d’Holbach (1723 – 1789)
      1. *System of Nature*, 1770
   B. Marie-Jean de Condorcet (1743 – 1794)
      1. *The Progress of the Human Mind*

X. Rousseau and the Social Contract
A. Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778)
   1. Discourse on the Origins of the Inequality of Mankind; preservation of private property had enslaved the mass of society
   2. Social Contract, 1762; Tried to harmonize individual liberty with governmental authority
   3. Concept of General Will
   4. Emile, 1762; important work on education
   5. Major influence on the development of Romanticism

XI. The “Woman’s Question” in the Enlightenment
A. Most philosophes agreed that the nature of women make them inferior
B. Mary Astell (1666-1731)
   1. A Serious Proposal to the Ladies, 1697
   2. Better education and equality in marriage
C. Mary Wollstonecraft
   1. Vindication of the Rights of Woman, 1792
   2. Subjection of women by men wrong

XII. Social Environment of the Philosophes
A. Salons
B. The Influence of Women
   1. Marie-Thérèse de Geoffrin (1699 – 1777)
   2. Marquise du Deffand (1697 – 1780)
C. Other social centers of the Enlightenment: coffeehouses, cafes, clubs, libraries, societies

XIII. Innovations in Art
A. Rococo Art
B. Antoine Watteau (1684-1721)
   1. Fragility and transitory nature of pleasure, love, and life
C. Baroque-Rococo architectural style
   1. Balthasar Neumann (1687-1753)
   2. Secular and spiritual interchangeable
D. Continuing Popularity of Neoclassicism

XIV. Innovations in Music and Literature
A. Baroque Music
   1. Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)
   2. George Frederick Handel (1685-1759)
   3. Franz Joseph Haydn (1756-1809)
   4. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)
B. The Development of the Novel
   1. Samuel Richardson (1689 – 1761)
   2. Henry Fielding (1707 – 1754)
C. The Writing of History
   1. A broader scope
   2. Weakness of philosophe-historians

XV. The High Culture of the Eighteenth Century
A. High Culture Versus Popular Culture
B. Expansion of Publishing and Reading Public
   1. Development of magazines and newspapers for the general public
C. Education and Universities
   1. Secondary schools
      a. Curriculum

XVI. Crime and Punishment
A. Punishment in the Eighteenth Century
B. Cesare Beccaria (1738-1794), *On Crimes and Punishments*
   1. Punishment should serve only as deterrent
C. Punishment moved away from spectacle towards rehabilitation

XVII. The World of Medicine
A. Hierarchy of Practitioners
   1. Physicians
   2. Surgeons
   3. Apothecaries
   4. Midwives
   5. Faith healers

XVIII. Popular Culture
A. Nature of Popular Culture
   1. Collective and public
B. Carnival
   1. Indulgence and release
C. Taverns and Alcohol
   1. Community centers
   2. Cheap alcohol
D. Literacy and Primary Education
   1. Chapbooks
   2. Literacy rates
   3. Primary education

XIX. Religion and the Churches
A. The Institutional Church
   1. Conservative nature of mainstream churches
   2. Church-state relations
   3. “Nationalization” of the Catholic church
B. Toleration and Religious Minorities
   1. Toleration and the Jews
      a. Experiences of Ashkenazic Jews
      b. Experiences of Sephardic Jews
      c. Some Enlightenment thinkers favored acceptance of the Jews
   2. Joseph II
      a. Limited reforms toward the Jews

XX. Popular Religion in the Eighteenth Century
A. Catholic Piety
   1. Centrality of the local parish
   2. Popular devotion
B. Protestant Revivalism
   1. Pietism
   2. John Wesley (1703-1791)
      a. Methodist societies
Lesson Plan

AP Standards
1. Intellectual and Cultural History
   - Changes in religious thought and institutions
   - Secularization of learning and culture
   - Scientific and technological developments and their consequences
   - Major trends in literature and the arts
   - Relationship to social values and political events
   - Developments in social, economic, and political thought, including ideologies characterized as “-isms,” such as socialism, liberalism, and nationalism
   - Developments in literacy, education, and communication
   - The diffusion of new intellectual concepts among different groups
   - Developments in elite and popular culture: religion, family, work, and ritual

2. Political and Diplomatic History
   - The extension and limitation of rights and liberties

3. Social and Economic History
   - The shift in social structures, and changing distribution of wealth and poverty
   - Changing definitions and attitudes toward social groups, classes, races, and ethnicities within and outside Europe
   - Gender roles, and their influence on work, social, and family structure

Suggested Time
2 traditional classes or 1 block — The entire chapter covers AP material.

Assessment
See Tutorial Quiz for Chapter 17 at www.academic.cengage.com/history/spielvogel.

Glossary

**Cultural relativism:** the belief that no culture is superior to another because culture is a matter of custom, not reason, and derives its meaning from the group holding it.

**Deism:** belief in God as the creator of the universe who, after setting it in motion, ceased to have any direct involvement in it and allowed it to run according to its own natural laws.
**Enlightenment**: an eighteenth-century intellectual movement, led by the philosophes, that stressed the application of reason and the scientific method to all aspects of life.

**Feminism**: the belief in the social, political, and economic equality of the sexes; also, organized activity to advance women’s rights.

**High culture**: the literary and artistic world of the educated and wealthy ruling classes.

**Laissez-faire**: “to let alone.” An economic doctrine that holds that an economy is best served when the government does not interfere but allows the economy to self-regulate according to the forces of supply and demand.

**Natural laws**: a body of laws or specific principles held to be derived from nature and binding upon all human society even in the absence of positive laws.

**Natural rights**: certain inalienable rights to which all people are entitled; include the right to life, liberty, and property, freedom of speech and religion, and equality before the law.

**Neoclassicalism**: artistic and architectural style that imitated the dignity and simplicity and classical Greece and Rome.

**Philosophes**: intellectuals of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment who believed in applying a spirit of rational criticism to all things, including religion and politics, and who focused on improving and enjoying this world, rather than on the afterlife.

**Pietism**: European religious movement in the eighteenth century that emphasized the need for individuals to establish a more emotional connection with God.

**Popular culture**: as opposed to high culture, the unofficial, written and unwritten culture of the masses, much of which was passed down orally; centers on public and group activities such as festivals.

**Rococo**: artistic movement that began to flourish in the 1730s; emphasized grace and gentle action and often made use of natural objects.

**Romanticism**: literary movement that dominated Europe at the start of the nineteenth century; placed significant emphasis on the role of emotion and sentiment in the search for truth.

**Salons**: gatherings of philosophes and other notables to discuss the ideas of the Enlightenment; so-called from the elegant drawing rooms (salons) where they met.
Separation of powers: Montesquieu asserted that the separation of executive, legislative, and judicial powers provided important checks and balances on governmental authority; adopted by the framers of the United States constitution.

Skepticism: a doubtful or questioning attitude, especially about religion.

See interactive Flashcards for Chapter 17 at www.academic.cengage.com/history/spielvogel.

Lecture and Discussion Topics

1. The Ideas of the Philosophes.
2. Women and the Enlightenment.

Group Work Suggestions and Possible Projects

1. Have individual students or groups focus upon the background, ideas and actions of Locke, Montesquieu, Voltaire, and Diderot and develop presentations for the rest of the class, or possibly a debate between the characters.

2. Suggest students examine the ideas and actions of Rousseau, and then have them discuss or debate whether Rousseau was “enlightened” according to the standards and characteristics of the eighteenth century Enlightenment or was he something else?

3. Have students explore the connections, if any, between the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment.

4. Ask students to examine whether the views of the philosophes and other intellectuals of the eighteenth century were generally a step forward for European society, or were they actually little more than an attempt to advance their personal interests or the interests of their classes through less intrusive government.
5. Have students explore the nature of popular culture in the eighteenth century and then compare it to popular culture of the early twenty-first century, searching for continuities as well as differences.

6. Students could do the same with one of the great eighteenth-century composers, tracing his musical development and influence. The published letters of Haydn or Mozart in English would be excellent sources here.


See online simulations and At the Movies activities in the Western Civilization Resource Center at www.wadsworth.com/history.

Media Menu

See Resource Integration Guide for Chapter 17.

Handout Masters & Black Line Transparency Masters

See Multimedia Manager and Instructor’s Resource CD-ROM with ExamView® Computerized Testing.

Test Bank

For an online Test Bank, see Chapter 17 in Instructor Resources at www.academic.cengage.com/history/spielvogel.

Suggested Readings

See comprehensive list of suggested readings at the end of Chapter 17.

Web Exercises

See Internet Exercises for Chapter 2 at www.academic.cengage.com/history/spielvogel.
Document Based Questions

Directions: The following question is based on the listed documents, available on the corresponding pages in your textbook. Some of the documents have been edited or excerpted. You will be graded based upon the Advanced Placement European History standards for Document Based Questions (DBQs). According to the College Board, DBQs are designed to test your ability to:

…understand some of the principal themes in modern European history, analyze historical evidence and historical interpretation, and express historical understanding in writing.

Part A: Answer the questions that pertain to each document. The questions are designed to help build your understanding of the documents and develop your ability to analyze documents during the beginning of the course. Some of the questions ask you to utilize knowledge outside of the documents. Although you are not required to use outside knowledge on the exam, outside historical context may earn you a higher score. The Advanced Placement examination and DBQs in later chapters will not contain these questions.

Part B: The Advanced Placement examination will require you to write an essay based on a series of documents. You will see the following instructions on the examination:

Write an essay that:
• Has a relevant thesis and supports that thesis with evidence from the documents.
• Uses a majority of the documents.
• Analyzes the documents by grouping them in as many appropriate ways as possible.
• Does not simply summarize the documents individually.
• Takes into account both the sources of the documents and the authors’ points of view.

You may refer to relevant historical information not mentioned in the documents.

Question: Using the documents and illustrations, examine the emergence of the Enlightenment. To what extent was the Enlightenment a major intellectual shift in the European mindset? Was there a corresponding shift in popular culture and religion?

Background: The Scientific Revolution’s emphasis on empiricism influenced political philosophy during the 18th century. European intellectuals proposed that rationalism could be applied to deduce the best political ideas. The Enlightenment spread throughout Europe but was not always reflected in the popular culture of the time.
Part A Questions

A. Illustration: The Popularization of Science: Fontenelle and the *Plurality of Worlds*
   - Who were the main characters in *Plurality of Worlds*?
   - What role did “popularizers,” like Fontenelle, play in spreading the ideas of the Scientific Revolution?

B. Map 17.1: The Enlightenment in Europe
   - What countries and regions were at the center of the Enlightenment?
   - What might account for this concentration in these regions?

C. Document: The Separation of Powers
   - Into what three categories does Montesquieu divide governmental powers?
   - Who should hold these powers?
   - What reasoning does Montesquieu use to justify his conclusions?
   - In what ways are these ideas a departure from earlier European theories of authority and political power?

D. Document: The Attack on Religious Intolerance
   - Why does Voltaire say “we should frequently take a view” of religious intolerance?
   - How does Voltaire make his point in the second passage?
   - To what extent could this be seen as an attack on traditional religious institutions?

E. Document: Diderot Questions Christian Sexual Standards
   - What challenges does Diderot make to Christian sexual mores?
   - What evidence is there that these ideas were part of or outside of the European mainstream during this time?
   - What other contribution did Diderot make to the Enlightenment?

F. Document: A Social Contract
   - To what problem does Rousseau claim the social contract holds the solution?
   - How does Rousseau justify forcing an individual to obey the general will?
   - Why are Rousseau’s writings so controversial?

G. Document: The Rights of Women
   - According to Wollstonecraft, how do women contribute to their own oppression?
   - How would the liberation of women benefit society, according to Wollstonecraft?
   - What role does class play in Wollstonecraft’s assessment of women’s oppression?
   - To what extent was Wollstonecraft typical or unique among philosophes in her conclusions?

H. Illustration: The Salon of Madame Geoffrin
   - What were salons?
• What role did salons play in the Enlightenment?
• What role did upper-class women play in salons?

I. Illustrations: Antoine Watteau, *The Pilgrimage to Cythera* and Jacques-Louis David, *Oath of the Horatii*
• What different styles and ideals do these paintings reflect?

J. Document: Gibbon and the Idea of Progress
• What does Gibbon blame for the fall of Rome in this passage?
• According to Gibbon, how might Europe avoid Rome’s fate?

K. Document: The Punishment of Crime
• What does the author witness?
• What were the opinions of the philosophes about this type of punishment?
• To what extent were the philosophes successful in changing the views of their contemporaries on the subject of punishment?

L. Document: The Conversion Experience in Wesley’s Methodism
• What does the author witness?
• How did Protestant Revivalists respond to the rationalism of the Enlightenment?
• To which class did Methodism primarily appeal?