

CHAPTER
17
SECTION 1

Note Taking Study Guide

PHILOSOPHY IN THE AGE OF REASON

Focus Question: What effects did Enlightenment philosophers have on government and society?

As you read this section in your textbook, complete the following table to summarize each thinker's works and ideas.

Thinkers' Works and Ideas	
Hobbes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Leviathan</i> • _____
Locke	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ • _____ • _____
Montesquieu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ • _____ • _____
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ • _____ • _____
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ • _____ • _____
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ • _____ • _____
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ • _____ • _____

In the 1500s and 1600s, the Scientific Revolution introduced reason and scientific method as the basis of knowledge, changing the way people looked at the world. In the 1700s, scientific successes, such as a vaccine against smallpox, convinced educated Europeans of the power of human reason. **Natural law**—rules discovered by reason—could be used to study human behavior and solve society's problems. In this way, the Scientific Revolution sparked another revolution in thinking, known as the Enlightenment.

The ideas of **Thomas Hobbes** and **John Locke**, two seventeenth-century English thinkers, were key to the Enlightenment. Hobbes argued that people are "brutish" by nature, and therefore need to be controlled by an absolute monarchy. According to Hobbes, people enter into a **social contract** with their government, giving up their freedom in exchange for an organized society. In contrast, Locke thought that people are basically reasonable and moral. He also believed that people have certain **natural rights**, including the right to life, liberty, and property. Locke rejected absolute monarchy, believing that the best kind of government had limited power. In fact, Locke felt that people could overthrow a government if it violated their natural rights.

In France, Enlightenment thinkers called *philosophes* believed that the use of reason could lead to reforms in government, law, and society. Baron de **Montesquieu** proposed the ideas of separation of powers and of checks and balances as a way to protect liberty. His ideas would deeply affect the Framers of the United States Constitution. With his biting wit, **Voltaire** exposed abuses of power and defended the principle of freedom of speech. Denis **Diderot** edited a 28-volume *Encyclopedia*. This work included articles on human knowledge, explaining new ideas on topics such as government, philosophy, and religion. **Jean-Jacques Rousseau** believed that the good of the community should be placed above individual interests. However, the Enlightenment slogan "free and equal" did not apply to women. Other thinkers, including **Adam Smith**, focused on using natural laws for economic reform. They rejected government regulation of the economy and instead urged the policy of **laissez faire**.

Review Questions

1. How did the Scientific Revolution lead to the Enlightenment?

2. Identify three major ideas developed by Enlightenment thinkers.

READING CHECK

Who were the *philosophes* and what did they believe?

VOCABULARY STRATEGY

What does the word *philosophy* mean in the underlined sentence? It comes from a Greek word that means "love of wisdom." Use this word-origin clue to help you figure out what *philosophy* means.

READING SKILL

Summarize What ideas did Thomas Hobbes and John Locke have about human nature and the role of government?
