

Section 2

# The Enlightenment in Europe

A revolution in intellectual activity changes Europeans' view of government and society.

# Two Views on Government

## New Ways of Thinking

- Scientific Revolution spurs reassessment of many prevailing ideas
  - Europeans seek insights into society during 1600s, 1700s
- Leads to the **Enlightenment**—a movement stressing reason and thought

## Hobbes's Social Contract

- Hobbes distrusts humans, favors strong government to keep order
- Promotes **social contract**—getting order by giving power to monarch

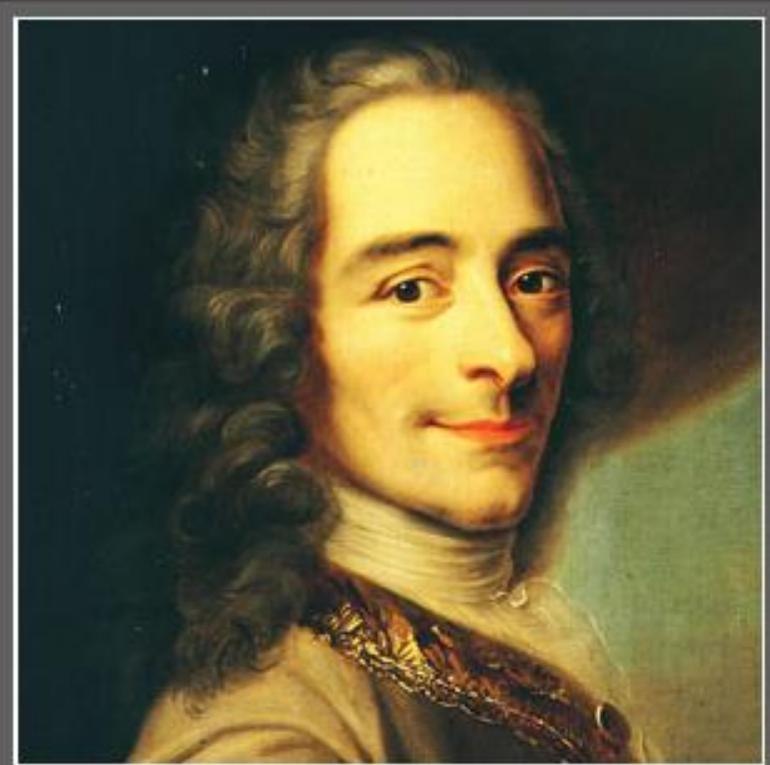
# The Philosophes Advocate Reason

## Beliefs of the Philosophes

- The **philosophes** are French social critics in the mid-1700s
- Value reason, nature, happiness, progress, liberty

## Voltaire Combats Intolerance

- **Voltaire**—influential philosophe, pen name of François Marie Arouet *[Visual]*
- Publishes many works arguing for tolerance, reason
- Makes powerful enemies and is imprisoned twice for his views



Portrait of French author Voltaire, assumed name of François-Marie Arouet (1694–1778).

# The Philosophes Advocate Reason

## Montesquieu and the Separation of Powers

- **Montesquieu**—French writer who admires Britain's government system
- Favors separation of powers to keep one body from running government

## Rousseau: Champion of Freedom

- **Rousseau**—philosophe who favors individual freedom, direct democracy
- Views social contract as agreement by free people to form government

## Beccaria Promotes Criminal Justice

- Italian philosopher Cesare Beccaria works to reform justice system
- Calls for speedy trials, greater rights for criminal defendants

# Women and the Enlightenment

## Views on Women's Education Change

- Many Enlightenment thinkers take traditional views of women's role
- Prominent writer **Mary Wollstonecraft** urges greater rights for women:
  - argues women need quality education to be virtuous and useful
  - urges women to go into traditionally male professions like politics
- Some wealthy women use their status to spread Enlightenment ideas

# Legacy of the Enlightenment

## Role of the Philosophes

- The philosophes are not activists, but inspire major revolutions

## Belief in Progress

- Scientific breakthroughs show human capacity to improve society

## A More Secular Outlook

- New knowledge of the world leads people to question religious ideas
- Voltaire and others criticize beliefs and practices of Christianity

# Legacy of the Enlightenment

## Importance of the Individual

- People place more emphasis on individual rights, abilities
- Reason becomes a central concept for philosophers, rulers

Thanks for  
**listening**  
to me...

