

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...

