

# The Enlightenment

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1600s

1700s

- ☞ Intellectual movement of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries which sought to replace “faith” and apply “reason” to society.
- ☞ People began to analyze government and politics and question the way things had been run for hundreds of years.
- ☞ **Reason-** the use of scientific and logical *thinking*.

# Absolutism

- ❧ Absolutism – a form of unlimited government that places all power in the hands of the king.
- ❧ Divine Right - Kings received their power directly from God.
- ❧ No protection of individual rights.



☞ Rousseau believed that society was corrupt, so government should protect the “general will” of the people.

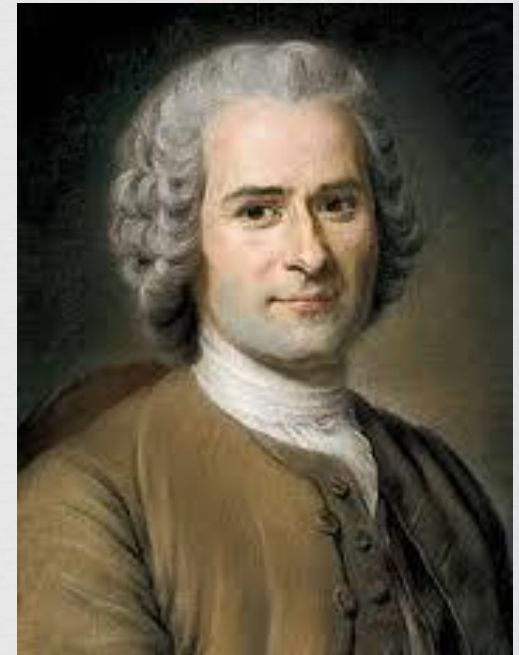
☞ The government should implement policies beneficial to all people by basing decisions on majority rule.

☞ The social contract should create a government limited by what the majority of the people want.

☞ This idea forms the foundation of “popular sovereignty” – government gets its power from what the people want.

☞ Ideas are largely rejected by the writers of the U.S. Constitution.

## The Philosophers: Jean Jacques Rousseau (France)



# The Philosophers: Baron de Montesquieu (France)

- ☞ Focused on the organization of government by creating a separation of powers that allowed each branch to check the other's powers. (Checks and balances)
- ☞ Had the idea for the three branches of government: executive (monarch), legislative (Parliament), and judicial (courts).
- ☞ Influenced the U.S. Constitution.



- ☞ Pen name of Françoise-Marie Arouet.
- ☞ He was concerned about the rights of citizens - focused on the freedom of speech and freedom of religion.
- ☞ He advocated for the separation of church and state, meaning religion should be kept out of all government affairs, and government should stay out of religion. (This is because of the power of the Catholic Church (pope) in European govt.
- ☞ Directly influences the creation of the U.S. Bill of Rights.

## The Philosophers: Voltaire (France)



# The Philosophers: John Locke (England)

- ☞ “natural rights”: rights belonging to all people.
- ☞ “Tabula Rasa: Individuals are born with a blank slate, a person’s thoughts are shaped by experience.
- ☞ Locke believed the social contract was an agreement between the citizens and their government, and the government’s responsibility is to protect the rights of the people.
- ☞ Locke said that if government did not protect these rights, then people had the right to abolish government and create a new one.
- ☞ Locke believed in “consent of the governed,” or the belief that govt. gets its approval from the people.
- ☞ Inspired Thomas Jefferson in the writing of the Declaration of Independence.

