**The Enlightenment (reached maturation by 1750)**

A. A **secular world** view emerged for the first time in human history.

1. The fundamental notion was that natural science and reason could explain all aspects of life.

2. A new belief saw the autonomy of man’s intellect apart from God.

3. The most basic assumption: faith in human reason rather than faith in revelation

4. **Deism**: the religious arm of the Enlightenment

a. The existence of God was a rational explanation of the universe and its form.

b. **God was a deistic Creator**—a **cosmic clockmaker**— who created the universe and then stepped back and left it running like a clock.

c. The **universe** was **governed by “natural law**”, **not by a personal God**.

 Some called it the “ghost in the machine.”

 The supernatural was not involved in human life.

d. **Deism grew out of** **Newton’s theories** regarding **natural law**.

B. The principles of the **Scientific Revolution** were **applied to human society and institutions**.

1. Progress in society was possible if natural laws and how they applied to society could be understood.

2. Education was seen as a key towards helping society to progress.

C. **John Locke** (1632-1704) – greatest of the Enlightenment thinkers

1. T***wo Treatises of Civil Government***, 1690

a. It was a philosophical defense for the “**Glorious Revolution**” in England.

b. Humans in a **state of nature**: Locke believed humans are basically good but lack protection.

 This **contrasts with Hobbes’** view of humans in a state

 c. **tabula rasa**: the human mind was born as a blank slate and registered input from the senses passively.

2. **Social contract**

D. The ideal of **religious toleration** was popularized by many scholars who made the Enlightenment accessible to the public.

E. The **Philosophes**

1. Notable **18th-century French philosophers** were committed to fundamental **reform** in **society**.

a. They were extremely successful in popularizing the Enlightenment, though they were not professional philosophers (like Descartes and Locke).

 By 1775, much of western Europe’s educated elite had embraced the Enlightenment.

b. They believed in progress through discovering the natural laws governing nature and human existence.

c. They were radically optimistic about how people should live and govern themselves.

2. **Voltaire** (1694-1778)

a. He was perhaps the most influential of all Enlightenment philosophers.

 He wrote his criticisms with a sharp sarcasm that ridiculed those with whom he disagreed.

b. He **challenged traditional Catholic theology**.

 Strong **deist** views

 Believed prayer and miracles did not fit with natural law

 Believed that human reason was the key to progress in society, not religious faith

c. His social criticism inspired a call for change, setting the stage for the French Revolution later in the century.

 He hated bigotry and injustice and called for **religious toleration**.

d. He advocated “**enlightened despotism**” (a more benevolent form of absolutism) believing that people were incapable of governing themselves.

e. His views influenced several “Enlightened Despots” including Frederick the Great of Prussia (who invited Voltaire to live in his court in Berlin), Catherine the Great of Russia, Joseph II of Austria and Napoleon of France.

3. Baron de **Montesquieu** (1689-1755)

a. He was a French noble who **hated the absolutism of Louis XIV**.

b. Spirit of the Laws (1748): He called for the **separation of powers in government into three branches**

* The principle of **checks and balances** would ensure that no single branch of gov’t became too powerful as the other two branches could check excess power.

4. **Jean-Jacques Rousseau** (1712-1778)

a. **Social Contract** (1762)

 He believed that too much of an emphasis on property, and not enough consideration of people, was a root cause of social injustice.

 The general will, a consensus of the majority, should control a nation. This strongly implied democracy.

Though these ideas seem to support democracy, the **ambiguous** nature of “**general will**” was l**ater manipulated** by dictators to rationalize extreme nationalism and tyranny (**e.g. Robespierre**).

b. Though considered part of the Enlightenment, Rousseau is more accurately seen as a **founder of the Romantic movement.**

 After the French Revolution, the Enlightenment’s emphasis on reason gave way to a glorification of emotion.

c. Rousseau believed that man in a simpler state of nature was good—a “**noble savage**”—and was corrupted by the materialism of civilization.

d. **Emile** (1762)

 Supported progressive education; learning by doing; self-expression was encouraged.

 However, he **argued against equality for women in society** and in educational opportunity.

5. **Denis Diderot** (1713-1784): The ***Encyclopedia*** (completed in 1765)

a. The multi-volume tome was perhaps the greatest and most **representative work of the philosophes.**

b. The Encyclopedia was **banned in France**; the Pope placed it on the I**ndex of Prohibited Books**.

6. **Beccaria**: On ***Crimes and Punishment*** (1764)

a. He sought to **humanize criminal law** based on Enlightenment concepts of reason and equality before the law.

 Punishment for a crime should be based rationally on the damage done to society; it should not be linked

 b. **Opposed death penalty**

 c. His views **influenced** the **Enlightened Despots**:

 Frederick the Great of Prussia banned torture.

 Catherine the Great restricted the use of torture.

 Joseph II of Austria banned torture and the death penalty (but not other harsh punishments

 F. **Economic Theory in the Enlightenment**

1. **Mercantilist theory** and practice were **challenged** by new economic ideas espousing **free trade** and a **free market**.

 a. They sought to reform the existing agrarian system by instituting laissez faire in agriculture.

2. **Adam Smith** (1727-90): *Wealth of Nations* (1776)

a. The **book** is considered the “Bible” of **capitalism**.

b. It refined and expanded the **laissez-faire** philosophy of the physiocrats.

c. Smith believed the economy is governed by the natural laws of **supply and demand**.

 In a **free market economy**, competition will encourage producers to manufacture most efficiently in order to sell higher quality, lower cost goods than competitors.

 Gov’t regulation only interferes with this natural self-governing style.

 The “**invisible hand of the marketplace**”—the laws of **supply and demand**—will dictate the price at which society benefits the most.

G. **Women in the Enlightenment**

1. Women played a major role in the **salon movement**.

a. Many of the brightest minds of the Enlightenment assembled in salons to discuss the major issues of the day.

b. This represented a major example of how **new venues** in civic society **disseminated information to society**, a **break away from** the **traditional venues of the Church or government**

* + Enlightenment culture was also spread through other venues such as **coffeehouses, academies, lending libraries, and Masonic lodges.**

2. In England, **Mary Wollstonecraft** (1759-1797) promoted political and educational equality for women.

a. She argued women should receive similar educational opportunities as men as they are essential to the nation for they **educate their children** and they can be companions to their husbands, rather than ornaments.

3. **Olympe de Gouges** (1748-1793): ***Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen*** (1791)

a. She demanded that French **women** be given the **same rights as French men** during the **early years of the French Revolution**.

b. For her criticism of the French Revolutionary government, she was **beheaded in 1793**.

**J. Impact of the Enlightenment on society**

1. Emergence of a **secular world view of the universe** (for the first time in Western history)

2. **Enlightened despotism** in Prussia, Russia, Austria and France (Napoleon) (see section below)

3. **American and French Revolutions** (as a result of classical liberalism)

4. **Educational reform** in various countries

5. Growth of ***laissez faire* capitalism** in the 19th century during the early industrial revolution in England and in 19th-century America

6. **New public venues and print media emerged**.