Enlightenment Thinkers

**Standard 10.2.1**: Compare the major ideas of philosophers and their effects on the democratic revolutions in England, the United States, France, and Latin America (e.g., John Locke, Charles-Louis Montesquieu, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Simón Bolívar, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison).
The shift from the idea of Divine Right of Kings to the Social Contract Theory was influenced by the Enlightened Philosophers.
IT'S A "CONSTITUTION," SIRE --- THINK OF IT AS A "REIGN CHECK."
Thomas Hobbes

- People need authority of the state as protection from one another.
- Early state of nature: nasty, brutish, and short.
- Individuals surrender freedom in return for a government that provided order.
- Human beings need an authoritarian leader to produce harmony and safety.
- Known as the rule of law.
- He believed that the authority must be put in a body of laws and must be applied equally.
- People’s relationship with another seen as a “war of all against all... a desire of power after power, that stops only with death.”
John Locke

- Rejected Hobbes’ theory
- Government existed to preserve the rights already present in society under nature
- All individuals must be equally subject to the laws between all citizens under government
- He believed that government should be limited
- Powers of the government should be clearly defined
- Believed in the right to create government and protect property
- Believed in a strong legislature
- Citizens had the right to revolt against an unjust government
- Protection of life, liberty, and the pursuit of property
Locke
Baron de Montesquieu

People in power will try to increase their power

Tyranny: government in which a single ruler is vested with absolute power

Separation of powers needed to guard against tyranny

Wrote *Spirit of the Laws* (1748)

Believed in separation of powers

Direct Impact on US Constitution

Legislative Branch
- Makes the Laws

Executive Branch
- Enforces the Laws

Judicial Branch
- Interprets laws
Montesquieu
18th century French writer and historian

Voltaire

"it is clear that the individual who persecutes a man, his brother, because he is not of the same opinion, is a monster"

Proposed tolerance, freedom of religion, and free speech

Wrote the Social Contract (1762)

Jean Jacques Rousseau

Advocated democracy

Consent of the governed

People give the Government the right to rule over them

"Compact" agreed to among men that sets the conditions for membership in society
Voltaire

Rousseau
Major Ideas from the Enlightenment

• **Social Contract** - An agreement among the members of an organized society or between the governed and the government defining and limiting the rights and duties of each.

• **Natural Rights** - theory that individuals have basic rights given to them by nature or God that no individual or government can deny.

• **Consent of the governed** - the authority of a government should depend on the consent of the people, as expressed by votes in elections.

• **Rule of Law** - government by law: adherence to due process of law.

• **Limited Government** - a type of government in which its functions and powers are prescribed, limited, and restricted by law.

• **Separation of Powers** - allocation of the legislative, executive, and judicial powers among the three branches of government.

• **Freedom of Religion** - to practice one's religion or exercise one's beliefs without intervention by the government and to be free of the exercise of authority by a church through the government.

• **Freedom of Speech** - the right to express information, ideas, and opinions free of government restrictions based on content and subject only to reasonable limitations.