



The Age of Enlightenment/Rationalism

1700-1820

Pre-Write

"If a nation values anything more than freedom, it will lose its freedom; and the irony of it is that if it is comfort or money that it values more, it will lose that, too."

-- Somerset Maugham

Consider the above quote. Do you believe the following quote is true? Do you think it applies to the U.S.? What, if anything, might Americans value more than freedom?



American Revolution Review: Causes



- French & Indian Wars left Britain in **debt**
- Britain looked to the colonists to help pay that debt
- Colonists were forced to pay **taxes** on everyday items
- The lack of colonial representation in British Parliament violated the colonists' **rights**

The Declaratory Act

British Parliament had full power and authority to “...Make laws and statutes of sufficient **force** and validity to bind the colonies and people of America, subjects of the crown of Great Britain in all cases whatsoever.”



The Boston Tea Party



- On the evening of December 16, 1773, a group of men calling themselves the "Sons of Liberty" went to the Boston Harbor.
- The men were dressed as Mohawk Native Americans.
- They boarded three British ships and dumped 45 tons of tea into the Boston Harbor.

Boston Massacre

- British **soldiers** were sent to the colonies to help enforce the acts
- March 5, 1770 workers on the streets were jostled by British soldiers patrolling the streets
- Arguments broke out
- Anger and **resentment** exploded in the colonies
- Growing mob of boys and men surrounded the soldiers, backed them against a wall and pelted the Redcoats with snowballs and chunks of **ice**
- Soldiers opened fire, **five dead**

Choosing Sides

Loyalists (Tories)

Tens of thousands of Americans opposed the Revolution.

They called themselves the Loyalists; the Patriots called them **Tories**

Patriots

Patriots were people who wanted the American colonies to gain their **independence** from Britain

Change of Heart

First Continental Congress stated their loyalty to the crown and **appealed** to the king to stop the Parliament.

Second Continental Congress voted for independence from Britain



Soldiers

British (Red Men)



Colonial Militia (Minutemen)



British soldiers were highly trained professionals; the colonists were farmers and craftsmen-**inexperienced** and outnumbered.

The Age of Enlightenment

Enlighten: The idea of shedding **light** on something, illuminating it, making it clear.

The Age of Enlightenment is an historical period characterized by a change **away** from traditional religious sources of authority and a move **towards** science and rational thought.

Also called the “**Age of Reason.**” Writers of this movement are often called “**rationalists.**”

Major Causes

By the end of the 17th century, **REASON** began to present a challenge to the unshakable faith and inflexible customs of the Puritans

Reaction to the Salem Witch Trials - The witch trials ended--namely because individual voices of reason forced the community to wake up.

Modern Science and the Scientific Method

Scientific discoveries such as Newton's motion of the planets and gravitational force suggested:

- The nature of the world could be explored and understood

- Nature was governed by underlying laws

- For every effect there was an identifiable cause

- For every natural **phenomenon** there was an explanation.

Effects

American Revolutionary War

Enlightenment thinkers believed freedom and democracy were the **rights** of all people.



Common Themes/Topics in rationalist literature

Emphasis on logic and reason for solutions to human problems.

Distrust of the mystical and disbelief in the supernatural

Faith in the senses

Sense of nationalism (**patriotism**)

Belief in progress through education

Belief in basic human **goodness**

Authority is meant to be **questioned**

Through the use of reason, everyone is capable of finding **truths** about the universe

God created the universe but does not interfere in its workings (a religious belief called Deism)

Deism

Deism was a belief that emerged in the 17th and 18th centuries that humans can **know God** through reason and the observation of nature, rather than by revelation, the supernatural, or miracles.

Believed God created the earth and scientific law, and that studying nature and serving fellow man through **public service** was to honor His creations.

Rejected the Puritan idea of **predestination** - believed humans, not God, made their own destinies.

Rationalist Literature

Genre/Style of literature:

Mostly devoted to philosophy, ethics, science, and politics (like the [Declaration of Independence](#))

Persuasive essays and pamphlets

Speeches

Journals

Biographies

Benjamin Franklin

Only had two years of formal education

At 12, began working as an apprentice in a **printing shop** owned by one of his brothers.

At 17, escaped from his apprenticeship, which was **against the law**.

In England, he learned more about printing and at 23, Franklin became the publisher of the Philadelphia Gazette.

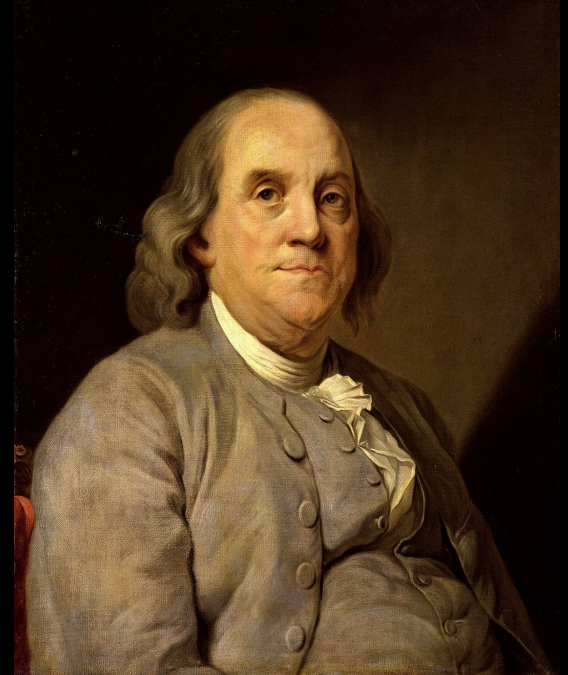
At 27, in December 1732, the first editions of the publication that would make him a wealthy man rolled off his printing press: ***Poor Richard's Almanac***, which Franklin would publish annually for the next 25 years.

Franklin's *Poor Richard's Almanac*

Published originally in 1759, Franklin's Poor Richard's Almanac is a humorous piece published yearly that consisted entirely of **aphorisms**

Aphorism: a statement of **truth** or opinion expressed in a concise and witty manner. Statements must be **brief** and contain a truth.

Example: "The man who removes a mountain begins by carrying away small stones." -William Faulkner



Aphorisms

The early bird get's the worm.

All that glitters is not gold.

Franklin's *Poor Richard's Almanac*

Choose three aphorisms from Franklin's work. For each, answer the following questions:

1. What is the meaning behind Franklin's aphorism? What's he really trying to say?
2. What characteristic(s) of the Enlightenment Period is reflected? (use your notes!)

Note: You can do a fourth aphorism for 2 bonus points if you finish early!