

Name: _____ Block: _____ Date: _____

Rationalist Literature: Historical Context

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

Read the above quote and take five minutes to respond to the following prompt in the space below. *Do you believe the above 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 and Indian Wars left Britain in _____
- Britain looked to the colonists to help pay that debt
- Colonists were forced to pay _____ on everyday items
- The lack of colonial representation in the British Parliament violated the colonist's _____

The Declaratory Act

- British Parliament had full power and authority to "...Make laws and statutes of sufficient _____ 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 _____ 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 _____ 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 _____.
- Soldiers opened fire, five dead

Choosing Sides

Loyalists

- Tens of thousands of American opposed the Revolution.
- They called themselves Loyalists; the Patriots called them _____.

Patriots

- Patriots were people who wanted the American colonies to gain their _____ from Britain.

Change of Heart

- First Continental Congress stated their loyalty to the crown and _____ to the king to stop the Parliament
- The Second Continental Congress voted for Independence from Britain.

Soldiers

- British (Redmen) vs. Colonial Militia (Minutemen)
- British soldiers were highly trained professionals; the colonists were farmers and craftsmen-_____ and outnumbered.

Age of Enlightenment

Enlightenment

- Enlighten: the idea of shedding _____ on something, illuminating it, making it clear.
- The Age of Enlightenment is an historical period characterized by a change _____ from traditional religious sources of authority and a move _____ science and rational thought.

- Also called the “_____.” Writers of this movement are often called “rationalists.”

Note: A movement is a group of writers, musicians, and other artists (generally from the same _____) who share a reason for writing. Usually these authors are considered a part of a “**movement**” because they have similar ideas about something.

Major Causes

- By the end of the 17th century, _____ began to present a challenge to the unshakable faith and inflexible customs of the Puritans:
- Reaction to the _____ - The witch trials ended - namely, because individual voices of reason forced the community to wake up.
- _____
Scientific discoveries such as Newton’s motion of the planets and gravitational force suggested:
 - The natural world could be explored and understood
 - Nature was governed by underlying law
 - For every effect there was an identifiable cause
 - For every natural _____ there was an explanation

Effects

- American Revolutionary War: Enlightenment thinkers believed freedom and democracy were the _____ of all people.

Characteristics of American Thought During the Age of Reason (Common Rationalist/Themes and Topics)

- Emphasis on Logic and Reason for solutions to human problems
- Distrust of the Mystical and _____ in the supernatural
- Faith in the senses
- Senses of nationalism (_____)
- Belief in progress through education
- Belief in basic human goodness
- Authority is meant to be _____
- Through the use of reason, everyone is capable of finding _____ about the universe.
- God created the universe but does not interfere in its workings (a religious beliefs called Deism)

Deism

- _____ was a belief that emerged in the 17th and 18th centuries that humans can _____ 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 _____ was to honor His creations
- Rejected the Puritan idea of _____ - believed humans, not God, made their own destinies.

Rationalist Literature

Genre/Style of Literature

- Mostly devoted to philosophy, ethics, science, and politics (like the _____!)
- 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 _____ shop owned by one of his brothers
- At 17, escaped from his apprenticeship, which was _____
- 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 publications that would make him a wealthy man rolled off his printing press: _____, which Franklin would publish annually for the next 25 years.
- He also invented bifocals, the franklin stove, lightning rod, odometer, and other interesting things!

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.

Now, on your own sheet of paper...

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 saying?
2. What characteristic(s) of the Enlightenment period is reflected? (look at your notes!)