

Western Civilization II: Scientific Revolution and Enlightenment DBQ

CONTEXT / HISTORICAL SETTING:

The ideas of the Scientific Revolution and the focus on reason, along with the growing secular Humanist outlook of the Renaissance led to an intellectual movement called The Enlightenment. Along with these influences, the Enlightenment was also rooted in rational thought of Classical Greece and the Christian tenet (idea) that all were equal in God's eyes. This movement applied ideas of reason to human behavior and relations. It profoundly shaped modern Western political thought.

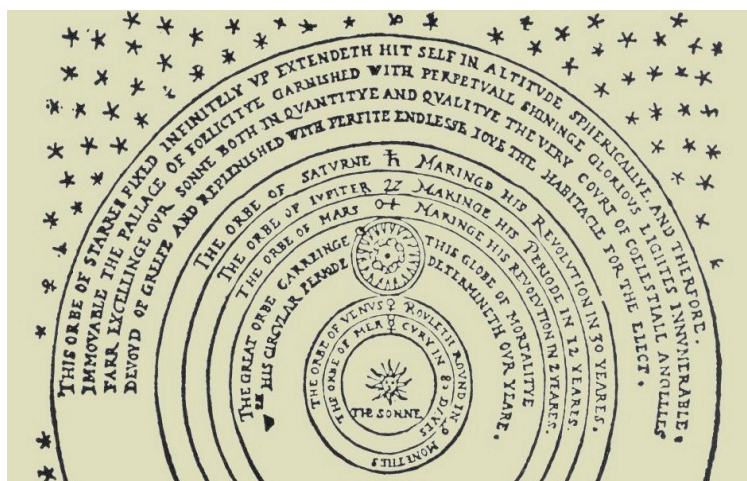
The thinkers of the Enlightenment, or *philosophes*, challenged numerous medieval ideas. Arguing that these relied on superstition, ignorance and/or unchallenged or long-accepted authority, the *philosophes* called for reform. This movement, with its focus on reason, profoundly challenged the Christian or Medieval outlook, with its focus on revelation or religious dogma (teachings/doctrines). To some, it constituted nothing short of an "intellectual revolution."

TASK: Use your knowledge of this time period, and the documents provided, to answer the following question.

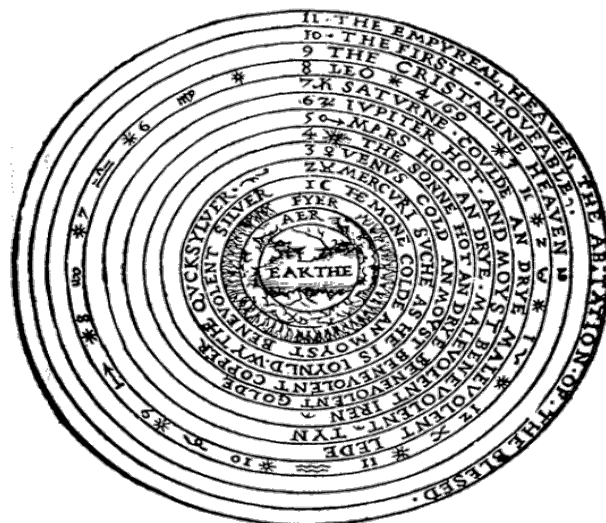
Question: To what extent were the ideas of the Scientific Revolution and Enlightenment "revolutionary"?

- Your answer should be written in a full essay with an introduction, body and conclusion.
- Your introduction should include your thesis.
- Use as many of the documents as possible in your answer.
- You must use outside information to justify your response
- Make sure to cite the documents in the form of parenthetical references (i.e. (Document A)). Avoid "according to Document A" or "Document A states" as in-text citations.

Doc A:



Thomas Digge (1576)



Andrew Borde, *The First Booke of the Introduction of Knowledge*, 1542.

1. How do these charts reflect the changes in science during the scientific Revolution?

Doc B: “And since it is no less contradictory that the more perfect should result from, and depend on, the less perfect than that something should proceed from nothing, it is equally impossible I should receive it from myself. Thus we are committed to the conclusion that it has been placed in me by a nature which is veritably more perfect than I am, and which has indeed within itself all the perfections of which I have any idea, that is to say, in a single word, that is God:

-Rene Descartes, *Philosophical Writings*

2. How does Descartes argue for God? What is his basis for God existing?

Doc C: “...it is manifest that during the time men live without a common power to keep them all in awe, they are in that condition which is called war; and such a war as is of every man against every man. The only way to erect...a Common Power, as may be able to defend them from the invasion of [foreigners] and the injuries of one another, and thereby to secure them,... is to conferre all their power and strength upon one Man, or upon one Assembly of men, that may reduce all their Wills, unto one Will...and therein to submit their Wills... and their Judgements, to his Judgement...and he that carryeth this Person, is called SOVERAIGNE [Monarch] ...

-Thomas Hobbes, “Leviathan” (1651)

3. According to Hobbes, what is the character or nature of man? What is the purpose of government, according to Hobbes? What type of government does he propose? Is it enlightened?

Doc D: “....Political power is that power, which every man having in the state of nature, has given up into the hands of the society, and therein to the governors, whom the society hath set over itself, with this express or tacit trust, that it shall be employed for their good, and the preservation of their property...

These are the bounds...set to the legislative power: first, they are to govern by promulgated established laws...secondly, these laws also ought to be designed for no other end ultimately, but the good the people. Thirdly, They must not raise taxes on the property of the people, without the consent of the people, given by themselves, or their deputies...Whenever the legislators endeavor to take away, and destroy the property of the people, or to reduce them to slavery under arbitrary power, they put themselves into a state of war with the people... Whensoever therefore the legislative shall...endeavor to grasp themselves...an absolute power over the lives, liberties, and estates of the people; by this breach of trust they forfeit the power the people had put into their hands...and it devolves to the people, who have a right to resume their original liberty, and, by the establishment of a new legislative, provide for their own safety and security, which is the end for which they are in society.”

- John Locke, “Second Treatise on Government.”

4 A. According to Locke, what rights do men possess? What is the purpose of government? What type of government does he propose?

4 B. In what ways is Locke’s view fundamentally different from that of Hobbes?

Doc E: “What is tolerance?...We are all full of weakness and errors; let us mutually pardon our follies. This is the last law of nature....Of all religions, the Christian ought doubtless to inspire the most tolerance, although hitherto the Christians have been the most intolerant of all men. Tolerance has never brought civil war; intolerance has covered the earth with carnage...Fanaticism is to superstition what delirium is to fever, what rage is to anger. What is a persecutor? He whose wounded pride and furious fanaticism arouse princes and magistrates against innocent men, whose only crime is that of being of a different opinion.”

-Voltaire, “Treatise on Tolerance” (1763)

5. Why does Voltaire view intolerance as such a problem? Why would his ideas be viewed by some as a threat?

Doc F: “Consider--I address you as a legislator--whether, when men contend for their freedom, and to be allowed to judge for themselves respecting their own happiness, it be not inconsistent and unjust to subjugate women, even though you firmly believe that you are acting in the manner best calculated to promote their happiness? Who made man the exclusive judge, if woman partake with him of the gift of reason?...The adoption of this system of inequality never was the result of deliberation, or forethought, or any social ideas, or any notion whatever of what conduced to the benefit of humanity or the good order of society. It arose simply from the fact that from the very earliest twilight of human society, every woman (owing to the value attached to her by men, combined with her inferiority in muscular strength) was found in a state of bondage to some man... Under whatever conditions, and within whatever limits, men are admitted to the suffrage, there is not a shadow of justification for not admitting women under the same. ..”

-Mary Wollstonecraft, “Vindication of the Rights of Woman” (1792)

6. What arguments does Wollstonecraft present for women’s rights? Which are most persuasive?

Doc G: “In every government there are three sorts of power: the legislative; the executive, in respect to things dependent on the law of nations; and the executive, in regard to things that depend on the civil law. By virtue of the first, the prince or magistrate enacts temporary or perpetual laws...By the second, he makes peace or war, sends or receives embassies; establishes the public security, and provides against invasions. By the third, he punishes criminals, or determines the disputes that arise between individuals. The latter we shall call the judiciary power, and the other simply the executive power of the state. There would be an end of everything, were the same man, or the same body, whether of the nobles or of the people to exercise those three powers....”

-Baron de Montesquieu, “The Spirit of the Laws,” (1777).

6. Why does Montesquieu argue for this division of power? In what ways would this have been seen as radical?

Doc H: “[Despite] the productive enlightenment of this age...very few persons have studied and fought against the cruelty of punishments and the irregularities of criminal procedures... Is the death penalty really useful and necessary for the security and good order of society? Are torture and torments just, and do they attain the end for which laws are instituted? No man can be called guilty before a judge has sentenced him, nor can society deprive him of public protection before it has been decided that he has in fact violated the conditions under which such protection was accorded him. What right is it, then, if not simply that of might, which empowers a

judge to inflict punishment on a citizen while doubt still remains as to his guilt or innocence? The sensitive innocent man will then confess himself guilty when he believes that, by so doing, he can put an end to his torment. ..”

-Caesare Beccaria, “On Crime and Punishments.”

7. What problems in the legal system is Beccaria addressing? In what ways were these ideas radical?

Background Information/Outside Information

Thomas Hobbes	John Locke
Voltaire	Mary Wollstencraft
Baron de Montesquieu	Caesare Beccaria