

Enlightenment DBQ

Historical Context

The discoveries made in science during the 1500s and 1600s led European thinkers to raise questions about the conditions of human life itself. Many of the thinkers of the European Enlightenment moved away from medieval thinking toward more modern thoughts regarding government and the role of women in society.

Document 1

Second Treatise on Government - John Locke

. 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 preservation of their property...

. . . So that the end and measure of this power, when in every man's hands in the state of nature . . . it can have no other end or measure, when in the hands of the magistrate, but to preserve the member of that society in their lives, liberties, and possessions; and so cannot be absolute, arbitrary power over their lives and fortunes...

- 1. Based on this document, what is the reason for political power? What does Locke say political power cannot be? How is this a change from past governments in Europe?**

Document 2

The Spirit of the Laws, Montesquieu

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, and amends or abrogates those that have been already enacted. 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.

The political liberty of the subject is a tranquility of mind, arising from the opinion each person has of his safety. In order to have this liberty, it is requisite the government be so constituted as one man need not be afraid of another.

When the legislative and executive powers are united in the same person, or in the same body of magistrates, there can be no liberty; because apprehensions may arise, lest the same monarch or senate should enact tyrannical laws, to execute them in a tyrannical manner.

Again, there is no liberty, if the power of judging be not separated from the legislative and executive powers. Were it joined with the legislative, the life and liberty of the subject would be exposed to arbitrary control, for the judge would then be the legislator. Were it joined to the executive power, the judge might behave with all the violence of an oppressor.

- 2. How does Montesquieu believe government should be divided? Why does he believe this is necessary? How is this different than previous ideas?**

Document 3

The Social Contract, Jean Jacques Rousseau

The social contract's terms, when they are well understood, can be reduced to a single stipulation: the individual member alienates himself totally to the whole community together with all his rights. This is first because conditions will be the same for everyone when each individual gives himself totally, and secondly, because no one will be tempted to make that condition of shared equality worse for other men....

Once this multitude is united this way into a body, an offense against one of its members is an offense against the body politic. It would be even less possible to injure the body without its members feeling it. Duty and interest thus equally require the two contracting parties to aid each other mutually. The individual people should be motivated from their double roles as individuals and members of the body, to combine all the advantages which mutual aid offers them....

- 3. According to Rousseau, when individuals agree to the social contract, what happens to their rights? What is the motivation of the people when they submit to the social contract? Do you believe this type of setting will benefit people overall?**

Document 4

A Treatise on Toleration, Voltaire

It does not require great art, or magnificently trained eloquence, to prove that Christians should tolerate each other. I, however, am going further: I say that we should regard all men as our brothers. What? The Turk my brother? The Chinaman my brother? The Jew? The Siam? Yes, without doubt; are we not all children of the same father and creatures of the same God?

- 4. What is Voltaire advocating in *A Treatise on Toleration*? How is this a departure from previous attitudes throughout the world? Do you think we as a world are any closer to his vision today than we were 500 years ago? Why?**