

ENLIGHTENMENT QUOTES

Purpose

The Enlightenment can be a difficult movement to fully understand. By analyzing a set of quotes from authors who were either inspirations for, or products of, the Enlightenment, you'll learn more about their perspectives, which will help you understand the viewpoint of people who lived during that time. Quote analysis is an important analytical skill, and will help you see how different types of evidence can help us better understand the past. In this case, the analysis will help you understand how this movement inspired the revolutionary period that followed. In addition, you'll connect these quotes to current events to evaluate how these ideas still influence society today.

Process

In this activity, you'll work together to analyze a set of quotes from seventeenth- and eighteenth-century authors to determine how each quote is both symbolic of the Enlightenment, and an indication of the Enlightenment's impact today.

First, your teacher will either hand out or have you download the Enlightenment Quotes worksheet. Then, your teacher will break the class into small groups and assign each group two or three quotes. Read each of your group's assigned quotes and answer the questions at the end of the worksheet for each of these quotes. Be sure to read them carefully and look up any words you don't know.

After all groups have answered the questions for each of the quotes, you and your group members will choose one quote to present to the class. Your group's presentation should be about two minutes long and in it you'll present your group's analysis of the quote.

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Directions: Read your group's assigned quotes and answer the questions at the end of this worksheet for each of your assigned quotes.

1. "Whosoever, therefore, the legislative shall...either by ambition, fear, folly, or corruption, endeavor to grasp themselves, or put into the hands of any other, 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, *The Second Treatise on Civil Government* (1689)
2. "...men are equal all; From virtue only true distinction springs..." Voltaire, *Mahomet* (1741)
3. "...till women are more rationally educated, the progress of human virtue and improvement in knowledge must receive continual checks." Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792)
4. "Woman is born free and remains equal to man in rights...Oh women! Women, when will you cease to be blind? What advantages have you gathered in the revolution?" Olympe de Gouges, *Declaration of the Rights of Woman and of the Female Citizen* (1791)
5. "In free governments, the rulers are the servants and the people their superiors and sovereigns." Benjamin Franklin, from a debate at the Constitutional Convention (1787)
6. "When we are planning for posterity, we ought to remember that virtue is not hereditary." Thomas Paine, "Common Sense" (1776)
7. "Political liberty is to be found only in moderate governments; and even in these it is not always found. It is there only when there is no abuse of power: but constant experience shows us that every man invested with power is apt to abuse it, and to carry his authority as far as it will go. To prevent this abuse, it is necessary, from the very nature of things, that power should be a check to power...When the legislative and executive powers are united in the same person...there can be no liberty...there is no liberty if the judicial power be not separated from the legislative and executive." Montesquieu, *Spirit of the Laws* (1748)
8. "The very right to vote imposes on me the duty to instruct myself in public affairs, however little influence my voice may have in them." Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract* (1762)

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Author of assigned quote: _____

Do you agree or disagree with this argument? Explain your reasoning.

How does this quote exemplify Enlightenment ideals?

What connections do you see to current events? Be as specific as possible.

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