

DBQ Essay #1 Western Foundations

The Social Contract is an idea that defines the relationship between people in a society and their obligations to their government. The Enlightenment was an argument between Philosophes and Absolute Monarchs about the best form of government, and an argument Philosophes had with each other about human nature.

For your essay you will need to utilize the documents provided in the DBQ, class notes, the Philosophe chart and website power-points to thoroughly answer the prompt below.

Prompt:

Locke and his fellow philosophes felt that man could be free to govern himself while others led by Hobbes believed man needed a strong hand to keep him in line. Compare and contrast both views on human nature and how human behavior effects the purpose of government.

Documents supporting Absolute Monarchy and the Hobbesian view.

Document 1

The quote below is from King James I of England. He gave this speech to Parliament so he could explain to them his beliefs on the powers of kings and their rights.

“First, that you do not meddle with the main points of government; that is my craft. I am now an old king; for six and thirty years have I governed in Scotland personally, and now have I accomplished my apprenticeship of seven years here ; and seven years is a great time for a king's experience in government ; therefore there should not be too many Phormios to teach Hannibal : I must not be taught my office.

Secondly, I would not have you meddle with such ancient rights of mine as I have received from my predecessors, possessing them, *more majorum* ; such things I would be sorry should be accounted for grievances. All novelties are dangerous as well in a politic as in a natural body, and therefore I would be loath to be quarreled in my ancient rights and possessions; for that were to judge me unworthy of that which my predecessors had and left me.

And, lastly, I pray you beware to exhibit for grievance anything that is established by settled law, and whereunto (as you have already had a proof) you know I will never give a plausible answer; for it is an undutiful part in subjects to press and harass their king, wherein they know beforehand he will refuse them.”

Document 2

The following are quotes from *The Leviathan* by Thomas Hobbes. These quotes explain his belief that a strong hand or authority is needed to keep the peace between mankind.

“Hereby 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 every man against every man.”

“To this war of every man against every man, this also is consequent; that nothing can be unjust. The notions of right and wrong, justice and injustice, have there no place. Where there is no common power, there is no law; where no law, no injustice. Force and fraud are in war the two cardinal virtues. Justice and injustice are none of the faculties neither of the body nor mind.”

“The passions that push men to peace are: fear of death; desire of such things as are necessary to commodious living; and a hope by their industry to obtain them.”

Document 3

The following quote about the nature of man and how the leader should rule them is from Machiavelli's *The Prince*.

“ For all men in general this observation may be made: they are ungrateful, fickle, and deceitful, eager to avoid dangers, and avid for gain, and while you are useful to them they are all with you, but when it [danger] approaches they turn on you. Any prince, trusting only in their works and having no other preparations made, will fall to ruin, for friendships that are bought at a price and not by greatness and nobility of soul are paid for indeed, but they are not owned and cannot be called upon in time of need. Men have less hesitation in offending a man who is loved than one who is feared, for love is held by a bond of obligation which, as men are wicked, is broken whenever personal advantage suggests it, but fear is accompanied by the dread of punishment, which never relaxes.”

Document 4

This quote from King Frederick II of Prussia was advice to his fellow kings on ways in which they should act for the good of their people.

“A sovereign must possess an exact and detailed knowledge of the strong and of the weak points of his country. He must be thoroughly acquainted with its resources, the character of the people. and the national commerce. Rulers should always remind themselves that they are men like the least of their subjects. The sovereign is the foremost judge, general, financier, and minister of his country, not merely for the sake of his prestige. Therefore, he should perform with care the duties connected with these offices. He is merely the principal servant of the State. He must act with honesty, wisdom, and complete disinterestedness in such a way that he can render an account of his stewardship to the citizens at any moment. The king is guilty if he wastes the money of the people, the taxes which they have paid, in luxury, pomp and debauchery. He who should improve the morals of the people, be the guardian of the law, and improve their education should not pervert them by his bad example.”

Document 5

Gin Lane painted by Hogarth 1751. The print shows the effects of the “gin drinking craze” on London in the 1750’s. The alcohol gin became so cheap that huge numbers of people began drinking and over consuming gin. It is estimated that during the craze 9,000 infants were poisoned by mothers who gave the liquor to their children or who died due to neglect.



This picture shows many aspects of the effects of the gin craze. In the foreground, a mother is busy gathering a pinch of snuff and is too drunk to care that her baby is falling out of her arms. The pamphlet-seller sits on the steps with her, starving and maybe dead, with the unsold pamphlet, "The Downfall of Mrs Gin", in his basket next to a bottle of gin. The entry to the gin cellar, has the inscription above the lintel "Drunk for a penny, Dead drunk for two pence, Clean straw for nothing." A pawnbroker buys a carpenter's saw and a woman's cooking utensils so they can buy more gin. To the right of the picture, a mother is pictured pouring the liquid into the mouth of her baby. The houses are in decay and ruin, and a person's body is visible through an upstairs window of one house. In the background, there is a baby impaled on a spike, a woman's body being loaded into a coffin, and a brawl in the street.

Document 6

The crime stories below come from London newspapers in 1730 during the time of the “Age of Enlightenment” They come from a book by Rictor Norton, *Early Eighteenth-Century Newspaper Reports: A Sourcebook*, "Murder", 18 March 2002

27 June 1730 Last Tuesday a cobbler and a taylor, having been drinking and playing at cards together most part of the night before, quarrel'd and box'd one another in Bartholomew-Close so violently that the latter was kill'd, whereupon the former ran away. [*Weekly Journal, or The British Gazetteer*]

1 April 1731 Norwich, March 27. Mary Taylor on Thursday last was burnt to ashes at Lynn, for being concened in the murder of her mistress; and at the same time one Smith, who murdered her, was hanged. She denied to the last her being any way guilty, seemed very penitent, and declared she died in charity. Smith was very drunk, behaved like a mad man; and when the cart was drawing away, called out to have it stop, and then pull'd off his shoes, saying, my mother always told me I should die in my shoes, but I will make her a lyar.

[*Grub-street Journal*]

9 September 1731 On Sunday Mr. Longley, a cornfactor at the White-hart Inn in Southwark, (who about 6 weeks ago marry'd the widow who kept the Pine-apple, a noted eating house, the corner of S. Martin's-court in Castle-street) died, under violent suspicions of being poison'd, his body having swell'd that it burst. *Daily Journal*. He dy'd on Tuesday morning: there had been a great difference between them ever since the unhappy marriage: it is reported, that she was much vex'd to find his circumstances not so agreeable; and he was uneasy to find that she kept company with another man, whom he found one night in her chamber: she then said she would give him a pill for it; and accordingly sent a servant for some poison, and under some pretence gave it him in a cup, immediately after which

he fell into violent disorders, and in a little time died. On Thursday night between 11 and 12 the Coroner's inquest brought in their verdict Wilful murder. Some of the poison dregs, lodg'd in the body, were given to a dog, which expir'd as soon as he eat it. Dorothy Longley is in custody in the New Jail in Southwark. [*Grub-street Journal*] [Soon after, the servant maid and brother of Dorothy Longley were also committed to gaol.]

16 September 1731 Stafford, Aug.30. This day John Naden, who murdered his Master, Mr. Brough, was carried on a horse, having his legs ty'd and hand-cuft, to Leek. The next morning he was carried to the highest hill on Gun-heath, within a quarter of a mile of his Master's house, where, in the presence of some thousands of spectators, he confessed the facts for which he died. The gibbet is 21 foot high, and may be seen 5 miles round the country. The chains which were made by one of Birmingham, are made in so curious a manner, that they will keep his bones together 'till they turn to powder, if the iron will last so long. [*Grub-street Journal*]

2 September 1731 On Wednesday last as a sand cart was passing the turnpike at Kent-street end, Southwark, it was met by a coach, in the passage thro;' the gate, and rubbing against the coach a Gentleman in it jumpt out, drew his sword, and wounded the driver in several parts of his body, then got into his coach and drove furiously away, without being known who he was. The poor man was just able to drive home his cart, and coming into the yard, laid himself down and died. [*Grub-street Journal*]

Documents supporting Democracy and the Lockean view.

Document 7

Jean-Jacques Rousseau stresses the idea of a social contract as the basis of society. For Rousseau the social contract was between all members of society, and essentially replaced "natural" rights as the basis for human claims.

How is a method of associating to be found which will defend and protect-using the power of all-the person and property of each member and still enable each member of the group to obey only himself and to remain as free as before?" This is the fundamental problem; the social contract offers a solution to it.

People always desire what is good, but they do not always see what is good. You can never corrupt the people, but you can often fool them, and that is the only time that the people appear to will something bad....If, assuming that the people were sufficiently informed as they made decisions and that the citizens did not communicate with each other, the general will would always be resolved from a great number of small differences, and the deliberation would always be good.

Document 8

Immanuel Kant was a German philosophe and lecturer. His most enduring contribution was to developing a system of ethics that were potentially secular. A good part of his ideas are based on each individuals responsibility to himself and to others.

Have courage to use your own reason!"- that is the motto of enlightenment. Laziness and cowardice are the reasons why so great a portion of mankind, after nature has long since discharged them from external direction, nevertheless remains under lifelong tutelage, and why it is so easy for others to set themselves up as their guardians. It is so easy not to be of age. If I have a book which understands for me, a pastor who has a conscience for me, a physician who decides my diet, and so forth, I need not trouble myself. I need not think, if I can only pay - others will easily undertake the irksome work for me. ...But that the public should enlighten itself is more possible; indeed, if only freedom is granted enlightenment is almost sure to follow.

For this enlightenment, however, nothing is required but freedom, and indeed the most harmless among all the things to which this term can properly be applied. It is the freedom to make public use of one's reason at every point. But I hear on all sides, "Do not argue!" The Officer says: "Do not argue but drill!" The tax collector: "Do not argue but pay!" The cleric: "Do not argue but believe!" Only one prince in the world says, "Argue as much as you will, and about what you will, but obey!" Everywhere there is restriction on freedom.

Document 9

John Locke wrote extensively about his view of the most appropriate form of government based on his view of human nature as a 'Tabula Rasa'. The excerpt below comes from his consideration on education.

I confess, there are some men's constitutions of body and mind so vigorous, and well fram'd by nature, that they need not much assistance from others; but by the strength of their natural genius, they are from their cradles carried towards what is excellent; and by the privilege of their happy constitutions, are

able to do wonders.

But examples of this kind are but few; and I think I may say, that of all the men we meet with, nine parts of ten are what they are, good or evil, useful or not, by their education. 'Tis that which makes the great difference in mankind. The little, or almost insensible impressions on our tender infancies, have very important and lasting consequences: and there 'tis, as in the fountains of some rivers, where a gentle application of the hand turns the flexible waters in channels, that make them take quite contrary courses; and by this direction given them at first in the source, they receive different tendencies, and arrive at last at very remote and distant places....I imagine the minds of children as easily turn'd this or that way, as water itself...

Document 10

This excerpt is from the Declaration of Independence.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, — That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

Document 11

This cartoon comes from the period of the late-Enlightenment. Consider the view of common people here with respect to the authority figures of Monarchy, Religion, and Aristocracy.



Document 12

This excerpt is from the United States Constitution.

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Document 13

John Locke was the leading philosophe of his era in advocating for democratic government based on an optimistic view of human nature. The following are short quotes that support this idea.

“Men living according to reason, without a common superior on earth, to judge between them, is properly the state of nature.”

“We are like chameleons, we take our hue and the color of our moral character, from those who are around us.”

“Being all equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty, or possessions.”