

AIM: How did the Enlightenment impact Europe and the world?

DO NOW: Please answer the question in the space provided on your notes sheet.

Q: If you were the King or Queen of a European country in the 1700s, how would you feel about the new Enlightenment ideas that were spreading around Europe? Explain your answer.

Q1: Who were enlightened despots?

The Enlightenment spirit also swept through Europe's royal courts. Many philosophes, including Voltaire, believed that the best form of government was a monarchy in which the ruler respected the people's rights. Some monarchs embraced the new ideas and made reforms that reflected the Enlightenment spirit. They became known as **enlightened despots**.

Q2: Take notes on your assigned enlightened despot using the chart provided.



Frederick the Great, the king of Prussia from 1740 to 1786, committed himself to reforming Prussia. He granted many religious freedoms, reduced censorship, and improved education. He also reformed the justice system and abolished the use of torture. Frederick also believed that serfdom was wrong, but he did nothing to end it since he needed the support of wealthy landowners. Perhaps Frederick's most important contribution was his attitude toward being king. He called himself "the first servant of the state." He made it clear that his goal was to serve and strengthen his country.



Joseph II, who ruled Austria from 1780 to 1790, was the most radical royal reformer. He introduced legal reforms and freedom of the press. He also supported freedom of worship for Protestants, Orthodox Christians, and Jews. In his most radical reform, Joseph abolished serfdom and ordered that peasants be paid for their labor with cash. Not surprisingly, the nobles firmly resisted this change. Like many of Joseph's reforms, it was undone after his death.



Another ruler influenced by Enlightenment ideas was **Catherine the Great**, who ruled Russia from 1762 to 1796. She read the works of philosophes, and exchanged many letters with Voltaire. In 1767, Catherine recommended allowing religious toleration and abolishing torture and capital punishment. She also favored an end to serfdom. Catherine put in place limited reforms, but she did little to improve the life of the Russian peasants. A massive uprising of serfs in 1773 convinced her that she needed the nobles' support to keep her throne.

Q3: Take notes on your assigned art form using the chart provided.

European art of the 1600s and early 1700s had been dominated by the style called **baroque**, which was characterized by a grand, ornate design. Under the influence of the Enlightenment, styles began to change. Artists and architects worked in a simple and elegant style that borrowed ideas and themes from classical Greece and Rome. The artistic style of the late 1700s is therefore called **neoclassical** (“new classical”).

Music styles also changed to reflect Enlightenment ideals. The music scene in Europe had been dominated by such composers as Johann Sebastian Bach of Germany and George Friedrich Handel of England. These artists wrote dramatic organ and choral music. During the Enlightenment, a new, lighter, and more elegant style of music known as classical emerged. Three composers in Vienna, Austria, rank among the greatest figures of the **classical** period in music. They were Franz Joseph Haydn, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, and Ludwig van Beethoven. Haydn was particularly important in developing new musical forms, such as the sonata and symphony.



Writers in the 18th century also developed new styles and forms of literature. A number of European authors began writing novels, which are lengthy works of prose fiction. Their works had carefully crafted plots, used suspense, and explored characters’ thoughts and feelings. These books were popular with a wide middle-class audience, who liked the entertaining stories written in everyday language. Writers, including many women, turned out a flood of popular novels in the 1700s. One of the most popular works was *Robinson Crusoe*, by Daniel Defoe, an exciting tale about a sailor shipwrecked on a tropical island. Through hard work, his own wits, and the help of an islander, Crusoe survives his ordeal.

Q4: Use information from these two paragraphs to complete the chart on the back of your notes sheet.

Enlightenment writers challenged long-held ideas about society. They examined such principles as the divine right of monarchs, the union of church and state, and the existence of unequal social classes. They held these beliefs up to the light of reason and found them in need of reform. The theories they popularized eventually inspired the American and French revolutions and other revolutionary movements in the 1800s.

Enlightenment thinking produced three other long-term effects that helped shape Western civilization. The first effect was a belief in progress. Galileo, Newton, and others had discovered the key for unlocking the mysteries of nature in the 1500s and 1600s. With the door thus opened, the growth of scientific knowledge seemed to quicken in the 1700s. A second outcome was the rise of a more secular, or non-religious outlook. Before the Scientific Revolution, people accepted the mysteries of the universe as the workings of God. One by one, scientists discovered that these mysteries could be explained mathematically. Faith in science and in progress produced a third outcome, the rise of individualism. The philosophes encouraged people to use their own ability to reason in order to judge what was right or wrong. They also emphasized the importance of the individual in society. Government, they argued, was formed by individuals to promote their welfare.