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Class: 10th grade honors world history, Woodside High School

Lesson: Major Enlightenment Thinkers

Length: 90 minutes

Context

The following lesson is designed to get students acquainted with the main ideas and works of some of the major thinkers of the Enlightenment period in Europe. The lesson will use both the character quotes and jigsaw strategies to achieve this end. A character quotes activity is a strategy that aims to prepare students for a text by introducing significant quotes before they read it. These quotes will hopefully arouse the students' interest in both the text and author as well as allow them to make a few generalizations about the author. In this case, the chosen text is part of Immanuel Kant's 1784 writing *What is Enlightenment*. Though students have almost certainly heard the term "Enlightenment" before, Kant's writing can give students a sense of what the Age of Enlightenment meant to the thinkers of the day and why we continue to use the term today. However, Kant's and other Enlightenment thinkers' works are frequently so dense that they can frustrate even the most avid readers. By using the character quotes strategy to introduce some of Kant's main ideas, his work may become more accessible to these high school students.

The second part of the lesson will use a jigsaw strategy to teach students about the major contributions of several other influential Enlightenment thinkers. In the jigsaw lesson, students will divide into groups, with each group assigned a particular enlightened figure. Each group will complete an information sheet on that thinker based on the short biography they have been given. The groups will then break up and go to new groups so that each new group has one representative from each of the first groups. They will then teach each other about the thinker that they have learned about in their first group. At the end, groups of students will use this knowledge from the jigsaw activity to make educated guesses on a series of quotes to match the right quote with the right author.

Objectives:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

Explain the term "Enlightenment," as described by Immanuel Kant

Identify the major works and ideas of Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Denis Diderot, Baron de Montesquieu, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Adam Smith, Voltaire, and Mary Wollstonecraft.

Match excerpts of these authors' works with the right author by explaining how the quote reflects the ideas of the author.

Sol Objectives:

WHII.6 The student will demonstrate knowledge of scientific, political, economic, and religious changes during the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries by:

d) explaining the political, religious, and social ideas of the Enlightenment and the ways in which they influenced the founders of the United States;

NCSS Standards:

Strand 2: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of the ways human beings view themselves in and over time.

Strand 3: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of people, places, and environments

Stand 6: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of how people create and change structures of power, authority, and governance.

Resources:

Character quotes handout on Kant

Kant's "What is Enlightenment" excerpts

Biographies of 8 Enlightenment thinkers

Worksheet on the 8 thinkers

Assessment

There is no formal assessment for this lesson. The worksheets that students fill out on these thinkers are intended to be used as notes, and their knowledge of these thinkers and other aspects of the Enlightenment period will be assessed on a unit test. There will be an additional formative assessment at the end of the lesson in the form of a key quotes identification game. The group that wins this activity may be given extra participation points as a reward.

Content and Instructional Strategies

1. Break students into groups. The number of people in each group will vary according to class size. There will be 6 groups, and students should be spread roughly equally among these groups.

2. Each group will be given one quote from Immanuel Kant's *What is Enlightenment*. The students will brainstorm as many ideas they can about the author of this quote. What is the author trying to say? What does the quote say about the author? Can we generalize any characteristics about him? What do we think the whole of this text is about?

3. After each group has brainstormed, ask a member of each group to read their quote aloud to the class. Then they will state the ideas they came up with, and the teacher will write these ideas on the board. When each group has contributed, inform the class that they should be getting some sort of general idea about what this text is going to say. Ask if there are any more predictions they can make now that they have seen all 6 of the quotes.

4. Give the students a copy of *What is Enlightenment*. The handout does not contain the entire body of the text, but it is a substantial portion that allows readers to get the main message. The teacher will then ask for volunteers to read the passage aloud. At various points in the reading, the teacher may stop the students and ask them questions about the author and the text. Some of Kant's points may rather vague for a 10th grade audience, so it may help their comprehension if the teacher encourages brief discussions for clarification as the students are reading rather than afterwards.

5. Now that students have seen what Enlightenment meant in the eyes of Immanuel Kant, the teacher should give a short lecture on the conditions in Europe around the Enlightenment. They know what the term enlightenment means, and they will soon see some of the arguments of the most important thinkers of the age, yet they may have little concept of historical context. The teacher will orally outline the areas and times in which the Enlightenment spread as well as the

political and social conditions of these areas before and during the time period. Students should be taking notes at this time, and the lecture should last no more than 10-15 minutes.

6. Students will now form into 4 groups again. Each group will be given a short biography of two Enlightenment authors as well as a worksheet with blanks for their two thinkers and 6 others. The groups are responsible for reading the biographies of their two thinkers and filling out the attached worksheet. Most of the information they need will be included in the biography, though they will have to summarize the authors' main ideas in their own words. There is also a blank for "key quotes" under each author; the students will not fill this part out at this time.

7. When each group is done, they will switch groups. Each of the new groups must contain one member from each of the four former groups. After they have done this, each student will explain to the new group members what their first group found for their two thinkers, thus enabling the rest of the group to fill in the rest of the information on their worksheets.

8. Then, gathering the attention of the class as a whole once more, the teacher will begin a key quotes exercise. For this last activity, each group will serve as a team to guess at the key quotes. One by one, the teacher will present a quote from one of the authors' major works, and students will use their knowledge of each thinker's major ideas to identify to which author the quote belongs. The groups will debate the authors of each quote amongst themselves and then write down an answer that they will then show to the teacher. The teacher will keep tally on the board of which group is in the lead with correct identifications. After the author of each quote has been revealed, the students should be directed to paraphrase that quote in the 'key quotes' section of their worksheet under the appropriate author.

Differentiation:

Given the nature of these two classes, there should need to be no significant differentiation for students with exceptionalities. There are no students in either section of the class that have IEPs or 504 plans necessitating differentiation for this lesson.

Adaptations:

The 2 classes for whom this lesson is designed do not have any disabilities serious to need adaptations beyond extra time for completing assignments and quizzes in the resource room (if desired by the student). Furthermore, the toughest reading selection in this lesson, Kant's *What is Enlightenment*, will be read slowly and with frequent discussion, hopefully enabling the one student with a learning disability to follow along adequately.

Supporting Documents

Character quotes for Kant

"Have courage to use your own reason!"

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.

After the guardians have first made their domestic cattle dumb and have made sure that these placid creatures will not dare take a single step without the harness of the cart to which they are tethered, the guardians then show them the danger which threatens if they try to go alone.

Therefore, there are few who have succeeded by their own exercise of mind both in freeing themselves from incompetence and in achieving a steady pace.

The Officer says: "Do not argue but drill!" The tax collector: "Do not argue but pay!" The cleric: "Do not argue but believe!"

We have clear indications that the field has now been opened wherein men may freely deal with these things and that the obstacles to general enlightenment or the release from self-imposed tutelage are gradually being reduced.

Philosopher	Nation	Time Period	Major Works	Major Ideas	Key Quote
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Thomas Hobbes					
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John Locke					
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Denis Diderot					
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Montesquieu					
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Voltaire

Rousseau

Smith

Wollstonecraft

Key Quotes

Rousseau

So long as men remained content with their rustic huts, so long as they were satisfied with clothes made of the skins of animals and sewn together with thorns and bones, adorned themselves only with feathers, and continued to paint their bodies different colours, to improve and beautify their bows and arrows and to make with sharp-edged stones fishing boats or clumsy musical instruments; in a word, so long as they undertook only what a single person could accomplish, and confined themselves to such arts as did not require the joint labour of several hands, they lived free, healthy, honest and happy lives, as long as their nature allowed, and as they continued enjoy the pleasures of mutual and independent intercourse.ⁱ

Adam Smith

The actual price at which any commodity is commonly sold is called its market price. It may either be above, or below, or exactly the same with its natural price. The market price of every particular commodity is regulated by the proportion between the quantity which is actually brought to market, and the demand of those who are willing to pay the natural price of the commodity, or the whole value of the rent, labor, and profit, which must be paid in order to bring it thither. When the quantity of any commodity which is brought to market falls short of the effectual demand, all those who are willing to pay the whole value of the rent, wages, and profit, which must be paid in order to bring it thither, cannot be supplied with the quantity which they want. Rather than want it altogether, some of them will be willing to give more. A competition will immediately begin among them, and the market price will rise more or less above the natural price, according as either the greatness of the deficiency, or the wealth and wanton luxury of the competitors, happen to animate more or less the eagerness of the competition.ⁱⁱ

Voltaire

England is properly the country of sectarists. *Multae sunt mansiones in domo patris mei* (in my Father's house are many mansions). An Englishman, as one to whom liberty is natural, may go to heaven his own way.

Nevertheless, though every one is permitted to serve God in whatever mode or fashion he thinks proper, yet their true religion, that in which a man makes his fortune, is the sect of Episcopalians or Churchmen, called the Church of England, or simply the Church, by way of eminence. No person can possess an employment either in England or Ireland unless he be ranked among the faithful, that is, professes himself a member of the Church of England. This reason (which carries mathematical evidence with it) has converted such numbers of Dissenters of all persuasions, that not a twentieth part of the nation is out of the pale of the Established Church. The English clergy have retained a great number of the Romish ceremonies, and especially that of receiving, with a most scrupulous attention, their tithes. They also have the pious ambition to aim at superiority.ⁱⁱⁱ

Diderot

“The first state that man acquires by nature and that is esteemed the most precious of all his possible possessions is the state of liberty. He can neither exchange himself for another, nor sell himself, nor be enslaved, for all men are naturally born free...
By virtue of this state, all men hold from nature itself the power to do what seems right to the mand to regulate their actions and their property at will, provided they do not act against the laws of the government...”^{iv}

Montesquieu

When the legislative and executive powers are united in the same person, or in the same body of magistracy, 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 be then the legislator. Were it joined to the executive power, the judge might behave with all the violence of an oppressor.^v

Thomas Hobbes

Whatsoever therefore is consequent to a time of war, where every man is enemy to every man, the same is consequent to the time wherein men live without other security than what their own strength and their own invention shall furnish them withal. In such condition there is no place for industry, because the fruit thereof is uncertain: and consequently no culture of the earth; no navigation, nor use of the commodities that may be imported by sea; no commodious building; no instruments of moving and removing such things as require much force; no knowledge of the face of the earth; no account of time; no arts; no letters; no society; and which is worst of all, continual fear, and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.^{vi}

John Locke

The reason why men enter into society is the preservation of their property; and the end while they choose and authorize a legislative is that there may be laws made, and rules set, as guards and fences to the properties of all the society,...

Whensoever, therefore, the legislative shall transgress this fundamental rule of society, and 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 for quite contrary ends, and it devolves to the people; who have a right to resume their original liberty, and by the establishment of a new legislative (such as they shall think fit), provide for their own safety and security....^{vii}

Wollstonecraft

My own sex, I hope, will excuse me, if I treat them like rational creatures, instead of flattering their fascinating graces, and viewing them as if they were in a state of perpetual childhood, unable to stand alone. I earnestly wish to point out in what true dignity and human happiness consists. I wish to persuade women to endeavour to acquire strength, both of mind and body, and to convince them that the soft phrases, susceptibility of heart, delicacy of sentiment, and refinement of taste, are almost synonymous with epithets of weakness, and that those beings who

are only the objects of pity, and that kind of love which has been termed its sister, will soon become objects of contempt.^{viii}

Enlightenment biographies

Voltaire:

François-Marie Arouet (21 November 1694 – 30 May 1778), better known by the pen name Voltaire, was a French Enlightenment writer, essayist, deist and philosopher known for his wit, philosophical sport, and defense of civil liberties, including freedom of religion and the right to a fair trial. He was an outspoken supporter of social reform despite strict censorship laws and harsh penalties for those who broke them. A satirical polemicist, he frequently made use of his works to criticize Christian Church dogma and the French institutions of his day.

Many of Voltaire's prose works and romances, usually composed as pamphlets, were written as polemics [heated arguments]. *Candide* attacks religious and philosophical optimism; *L'Homme aux quarante ecus*, certain social and political ways of the time; *Zadig* and others, the received forms of moral and metaphysical orthodoxy; and some were written to deride the Bible. In these works, Voltaire's ironic style, free of exaggeration, is apparent, particularly the restraint and simplicity of the verbal treatment. Voltaire never dwells too long on a point, stays to laugh at what he has said, elucidates or comments on his own jokes, guffaws over them or exaggerates their form. *Candide* in particular is the best example of his style.^{ix}

Adam Smith:

Adam Smith (June 16, 1723 – July 17, 1790) was a Scottish moral philosopher and a pioneering political economist. He is a major contributor to the modern perception of free market economics. One of the key figures of the intellectual movement known as the Scottish Enlightenment, he is known primarily as the author of two treatises: *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), and *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776). The latter was one of the earliest attempts to systematically study the historical development of industry and commerce in Europe, as well as a sustained attack on the doctrines of mercantilism. Smith's work helped to build the foundation of the modern academic discipline of free market economics and provided one of the best-known intellectual rationales for free trade, capitalism, and libertarianism.^x

Rousseau:

The most controversial philosophe, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, was a strange, difficult man. Coming from a poor family, he never felt comfortable in the glittering social world of Enlightenment thinkers. Rousseau believed that people in their natural state were basically good. This natural innocence, he felt, was corrupted by the evils of society, especially the unequal distribution of property. This view was later adopted by many reformers and revolutionaries. In 1762, Rousseau set forth his ideas about government and society in *The Social Contract*. Rousseau felt that society placed too many limitations on people's behavior. He believed that some controls were necessary, but that they should be minimal. Additionally, these controls should be disposed only by governments that had been freely elected.

Rousseau put his faith in the “general will,” or the best conscience of the people. The good of the community as a whole, he said, should be placed above individual interests. Thus, unlike many Enlightenment thinkers who put the individual first, Rousseau felt that the individual should be subordinate to the community.

Rousseau has influenced political and social thinkers for more than 200 years. Woven through his work is a profound hatred of all forms of political and economic oppression. His bold ideas would help fan the flames of revolt in years to come.^{xi}

Diderot

Another philosophe, Denis Diderot, labored for some 25 years to produce a 28 volume *Encyclopedia*. As the director of this huge work, Diderot did more than just gather articles on human knowledge. His purpose was “to change the general way of thinking” by explaining the new ideas on topics such as government, philosophy, and religion. Diderot’s *Encyclopedia* included articles by leading thinkers of the day, including Montesquieu and Voltaire.

In their *Encyclopedia* articles, the philosophes denounced slavery, praised freedom of expression, and urged education for all. They attacked divine right theory and traditional religions. Critics raised an outcry. The French government argued that *Encyclopedia* was an attack on public morals, and the pope threatened to excommunicate Roman Catholics who bought or read the volumes.

Despite these and other efforts to ban the *Encyclopedia*, as many as 20,000 copies were printed between 1751 and 1780. When translated into other languages, it helped spread Enlightenment ideas throughout Europe and across the Atlantic to the Americas.^{xii}

Montesquieu

Charles-Louis de Secondat, baron de La Brède et de Montesquieu (before January 18, 1689 in Bordeaux – February 10, 1755), was a French social commentator and political thinker who lived during the Era of the Enlightenment. He is famous for his articulation of the theory of separation of powers, taken for granted in modern discussions of government and implemented in many constitutions throughout the world. He was largely responsible for the popularization of the terms feudalism and Byzantine Empire.

Montesquieu's most influential work, *The Spirit of the Laws*, divided French society into three classes: the monarchy, the aristocracy, and the commons. Montesquieu saw two types of governmental power existing: the sovereign and the administrative. The administrative powers were the legislative, the executive, and the judiciary. These should be separate from and dependent upon each other so that the influence of any one power would not be able to exceed that of the other two, either singly or in combination. This was radical because it completely eliminated the three Estates structure of the French Monarchy: the clergy, the aristocracy, and the people at large represented by the Estates-General, thereby erasing the last vestige of a feudalistic structure.^{xiii}

Hobbes

Thomas Hobbes (5 April 1588 – 4 December 1679) was an English philosopher, whose famous 1651 book *Leviathan* established the agenda for nearly all subsequent Western political philosophy.

Although Hobbes is today remembered for his work on political philosophy, he contributed to a diverse array of fields, including history, geometry, theology, ethics, general philosophy, and what would now be called political science.

Leviathan was written during the English Civil War; much of the book is occupied with demonstrating the necessity of a strong central authority to avoid the evil of discord and civil war. Any abuses of power by this authority are to be accepted as the price of peace. In particular, the doctrine of separation of powers is rejected: the sovereign must control civil, military, judicial and ecclesiastical powers.^{xiv}

In Leviathan, Hobbes explicitly states that the sovereign has authority to assert power over matters of faith and doctrine, and that if he does not do so, he invites discord. Hobbes presents his own religious theory, but states that he would defer to the will of the sovereign (when that was re-established: again, Leviathan was written during the Civil War) as to whether his theory was acceptable. Tuck argues that it further marks Hobbes as a supporter of the religious policy of the post-Civil War English republic, Independency.^{xv}

Locke

John Locke, (August 29, 1632 – October 28, 1704) was an English philosopher. Locke is considered the first of the British Empiricists, but is equally important to social contract theory. His ideas had enormous influence on the development of epistemology and political philosophy, and he is widely regarded as one of the most influential Enlightenment thinkers and contributors to liberal theory.

Unlike Thomas Hobbes, Locke believed that human nature is characterized by reason and tolerance. Like Hobbes, Locke believed that human nature allowed men to be selfish. In a natural state all people were equal and independent, and none had a right to harm another's "life, health, liberty, or possessions." Locke also advocated governmental checks and balances and believed that revolution is not only a right but an obligation in some circumstances. These ideas would come to have profound influence on the Constitution of the United States and its Declaration of Independence.

In *Two Treatises of Government*, Locke argued that people formed governments to protect their natural rights. The best kind of government, he said, had limited power and was accepted by all citizens. Thus, unlike Hobbes, Locke rejected absolute monarchy. Locke then set out a radical idea. A government, he said, has an obligation to the people it governs. If a government fails its obligations or violates people's natural rights, the people have the right to overthrow that government.^{xvi}

Mary Wollstonecraft

Mary Wollstonecraft (27 April 1759 – 10 September 1797) was an eighteenth-century British writer, philosopher, and feminist. During her brief career, she wrote novels, treatises, a travel narrative, a history of the French Revolution, a conduct book, and a children's book.

Wollstonecraft is best known for *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), in which she argues that women are not naturally inferior to men, but appear to be only because they lack education. She suggests that both men and women should be treated as rational beings and imagines a social order founded on reason.

After Wollstonecraft's death, Godwin published a *Memoir* (1798) of her life, revealing her unorthodox lifestyle, which inadvertently destroyed her reputation for a century. However, with

the emergence of the feminist movement at the turn of the twentieth century, Wollstonecraft's advocacy of women's equality and critiques of conventional femininity became increasingly important. Today Wollstonecraft is regarded as one of the founding feminist philosophers and feminists often cite both her life and work as important influences.^{xvii}

Immanuel Kant's "What is Enlightenment?"

Enlightenment is man's release from his self-incurred tutelage. Tutelage is man's inability to make use of his understanding without direction from another. Self-incurred is this tutelage when its cause lies not in lack of reason but in lack of resolution and courage to use it without direction from another. Sapere aude! "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.

That the step to competence is held to be very dangerous by the far greater portion of mankind (and by the entire fair sex) - quite apart from its being arduous is seen to by those guardians who have so kindly assumed superintendence over them. After the guardians have first made their domestic cattle dumb and have made sure that these placid creatures will not dare take a single step without the harness of the cart to which they are tethered, the guardians then show them the danger which threatens if they try to go alone. Actually, however, this danger is not so great, for by falling a few times they would finally learn to walk alone. But an example of this failure makes them timid and ordinarily frightens them away from all further trials.

For any single individual to work himself out of the life under tutelage which has become almost his nature is very difficult. He has come to be fond of his state, and he is for the present really incapable of making use of his reason, for no one has ever let him try it out. Statutes and formulas, those mechanical tools of the rational employment or rather misemployment of his natural gifts, are the fetters of an everlasting tutelage. Whoever throws them off makes only an uncertain leap over the narrowest ditch because he is not accustomed to that kind of free motion. Therefore, there are few who have succeeded by their own exercise of mind both in freeing themselves from incompetence and in achieving a steady pace.

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.

Which restriction is an obstacle to enlightenment, and which is not an obstacle but a promoter of it? I answer: The public use of one's reason must always be free, and it alone can bring about enlightenment among men.

If we are asked, "Do we now live in an enlightened age?" the answer is, "No," but we do live in an age of enlightenment. As things now stand, much is lacking which prevents men from being, or easily becoming, capable of correctly using their own reason in religious matters with assurance and free from outside direction. But on the other hand, we have clear indications that the field has now been opened wherein men may freely deal with these things and that the obstacles to general enlightenment or the release from self-imposed tutelage are gradually being reduced. In this respect, this is the age of enlightenment, or the century of Frederick.^{xviii}

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