

American enlightenment

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The paper "The Central Ideas of the American Enlightenment" is an excellent example of an essay on social science. American enlightenment was an era where religious supremacy, church, and superstition were replaced with reason. The thinkers in this period emphasized religious tolerance, liberty, democracy, and free trade. Among the central ideas of this period were liberalism, republicanism and religious tolerance. These views formed the basis for the American Revolution and were associated with the drafting of the Declaration of Independence as well as the United States constitution. Liberalism was a central idea to American enlightenment. This idea follows that human beings have natural rights and the government's authority is not absolute but is founded on the consent and will of the people. Liberalism did not discriminate based on class or race and advocated for freedom of expression and movement, separation of the state from the church and the right to petition the government. The idea of liberalism originated from John Locke who claimed that individuals have fundamental rights, which include the right to property, liberty, life, and pursuit of happiness. These ideas were adopted by Thomas Jefferson and included in the Declaration of Independence. Another central idea to American enlightenment is republicanism. This idea was committed to the understanding that a nation should be ruled as a republic where the selection of public officials is determined through a general election as opposed to a hereditary right. Values associated with republicanism include property-based personality, civic patriotism, and virtuous citizenship. As contrasted to liberalism where rights were thought to be granted by God in a state of nature, this idea viewed rights as a product of living in political society (Kloppenber 12).

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Toleration was also an important aspect of American enlightenment. This idea developed in parallel with liberalism reflected the belief that hatred for other creeds or races was an obstacle to trade, freedom of thought and expression, and resulted in war and persecution. Toleration in America resulted in the emergence of tolerant institutions such as the secular public schools and the formation of a democratically organized religion. John Locke observed that the government was ill-equipped to judge the right and wrong of opposing religions and that if faith was coerced the result would be greater political and religious disagreement. Many thinkers including Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and Benjamin Franklin endorsed these ideas. The idea was that America was a nation where individuals had the right to worship as they chose or the right not to worship. The idea led to the rise of deism, which based religion on reason, and the observation of the world. Deists believed that God was reasonable and endowed humans with rationality to make sound and wise judgments. Deists engaged in scientific inquiry and led to the advancement in scientific knowledge (Ferguson 48). Among notable American enlightenment thinkers was Benjamin Franklin who led America through colonial politics and revolutionary war. His ideas of reason and free trade served as guides to foster peaceful relations. In his view, independent entrepreneurs were good citizens because they follow goals, which are attainable and are able to achieve useful and dignified lives. Thomas Jefferson was another notable American thinker during the enlightenment era. Jefferson was a diplomat and a political leader who was recognized for drafting the Declaration of Independence. He was also influential in the creation of the United States Constitution. James Madison was also an influential figure during this era. He was the most important

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drafter of the U. S constitution. Another figure who contributed to American enlightenment was John Adams who was a diplomat and a president. His political writings influenced political setup in the nation (Aldridge 21).

The American enlightenment was important to American politics because it provided the philosophical foundation for the American Revolution. The American Revolution served as a starting point for the concept of democracy in America. The revolution provided an enlightened model of government with the Declaration of Independence and the U. S Constitution being the most prominent documents. The enlightenment resulted in the evolution of politics, which gave rise to the formation of the modern republic. Politically, the enlightenment focused on concepts of democracy, liberty, religious tolerance, and republicanism. The enlightenment age also had a significant effect on the economy. The concept of free trade was first developed during this period. Additionally, as people migrated from rural America to cities, there was a shift from agricultural activities to nonagricultural activities. Merchants and traders flourished which occasioned the transformation of the economy (Outram 24).

The central ideas of the American enlightenment included liberalism, republicanism, religious tolerance, and deism. Among the notable thinkers associated with the enlightenment were Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and John Adams. The enlightenment era had an impact on American politics as it introduced the ideas of democracy and a representative form of government. The economy was also affected by the introduction of free trade and rural to urban migration.