

# Enlightenment research paper examples

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Since civilization of man and as far as man's existence can be traced, his intelligence has been found to surpass that of all the other living beings. Man has also been found to be the most curious of all the rest based on his brain capacity and intelligence quotient. For this reason therefore, he is the fastest to learn cognitively and intellectually compared to all the other living beings. The Enlightenment therefore, is the period when man started applying his knowledge, intelligence and reasoning to discover the world, what exists in it and also how he can make his life better by utilizing all the resources, knowledge and available raw materials to improve his life as well as the quality of living. This period started bearing fruits when he started overcoming his fears and uncertainties to discover what had not been discovered before.

## **Origins of enlightenment**

Enlightenment can be subdivided into two main eras, the ancient eras and the early modern era. This is because it took two distinct phases, whereby the first phase happened during the civilization of man and this is when man started discovering the world around him, what goes around other parts of

the world where he has never been to and of what benefit these places could be to him, once he is able to access them. The second phase of enlightenment took place in the early modern era especially between the fifteenth and the nineteenth centuries, and this is after development of the human life. This is when man started feeling the need to socially interact with other people through various forms of relationships, and these were based on political, economical and social aspects of his life. This assignment will assess both of these enlightenment eras, with particular emphasis on the second era of enlightenment (Gay 38).

Various factors led to the initial activities in the enlightenment era. For example, man started getting curious on how he could improve his life from the one he was living into a more qualitative life taking the advantage of all the available resources he came across. Secondly, the monotony of life made him want to look out for new adventures that would make life more reasonable, enjoyable and fulfilling. He believed that other places must be different from the usual life he is used to, and for this reason curiosity gradually came into the picture, leading to his interest in finding out more about the world in which he lives. Exhaustion and depletion of the immediate resources was another factor that led to curiosity in man. This is because the less the readily available resources went into extinction, the more the problems facing him emerged. For this reason therefore, man saw it as important to venture into discovering other places where similar or alternative resources were still in abundance.

Development was yet another reason that led to this enlightenment revolution, and this is where both economical and technological advances

led to man's interest in some of the resources that he wasn't using prior to these changes in development. For this reason, man started looking out for more resources across the world especially in the immediate area of residence to keep up with the development taking place around him. Changes in the environmental patterns too led many people to start discovering new places for example to look for supplementary food or resources that would assist them to survive. Lastly, population growth was another factor that led to enlightenment. From the increase in population, various changes started taking place all across the world (Porter 49).

### **Modern day enlightenment**

Over time, after formation of centralized form of administration, many people were able to see the changes in their lives and more so the positivity that the developments across the world came with. However, man still had more room for expansion and growth, especially due to the fact that whereas some regions' resources had been fully exploited and exhausted, others were still rich in resources and minerals. Other areas too did not have any forms of governance and various political organizations and affiliations started getting interested in such areas, in the view of expanding their territories by making the unexploited areas their protectorates. These administrators had other interests in such areas, for example they also eyed the rich minerals which were yet to be exploited and saw them as sources of wealth which could in fact assist them in administration of these new protectorates.

Otherwise referred to as the Age of reason, the enlightenment reached its peak in the eighteenth century; it was spearheaded by a royal cultural

movement comprising of thinkers, philosophers and other scholars who came up with various ways of defining development and discoveries, and one such philosopher was Immanuel Kant whose motto and signature, “ Dare to Think”, was applied by many consequent thinkers and philosophers in their works. During this period of enlightenment, many discoveries were made in many fields and disciplines, including science, politics, economy, sociology, philosophy as well as geography.

Philosophers such as Hackett Lewis argued that to understand humanity and the world around people, a lot of discoveries had to be made in various areas that affected the lives of these people and for this reason, after explaining various phenomena that affect them, it will be easier for them to relate with others, themselves and also with their immediate environment. This meant that people had to think out of their ordinary ways of life, and a nineteenth century philosopher Thomas Paine called this the Age of Reason. This led to the emergence of thinkers and scientists such as Sir Isaac Newton (1643-1747) who discovered the law of gravity, Voltaire (1694-1778), Spinoza amongst others. With every valid philosopher’s outlooks towards various phenomena, a lot of research was launched in these fields and this led to increase in knowledge concerning the areas (Porter 155).

France, Germany, Scotland, Poland, Spain and Russia were the main areas of concern especially when it came to enlightenment. This was because there were many scholars who wished to explain various areas including medicine, science, engineering and various fields which affected man in his day to day activities. Religion was one of the areas that had acquired a lot of criticism and difference in outlook over time, and various scholars tried categorizing it

under the enlightenment. However, this was received with a lot of criticism especially based on the fact that many scientists of the time believed and insisted that for knowledge to be viable and proven, it had to be based on facts. They therefore concluded that many religious explanations were beliefs which lacked the factual context, and for this reason they didn't consider religious education and discoveries as the enlightenment (Gay 57). One of the most important things to note about the enlightenment is that it involved a lot of interrelationships between various disciplines, as many philosophers understood the fact that no single discipline can stand on its own. This was derived from the fact that every discipline that philosophers, thinkers and scholars researched upon directly or indirectly affected man, his existence and the quality of living that he had, and therefore man being the connection between all these disciplines meant that they had to be interrelated between themselves, and this would make their study and analysis easier. This was for example evident in sociology and economy, whereby the relationship between the two disciplines was interrelated. Art was another tool that was used by many philosophers to promote the enlightenment. Various people had different perspectives towards art, as different artistic works brought out different meanings and implications in life. Art had a big impact on the enlightenment era, since it successfully managed to draw out the different relations of various countries and regions with specific aspects about them. Through this conviction, people were able to relate different aspects across the world with specific regions. For example, France has over time been seen to be rebellious with anti-governmental mindsets as a result of the numerous rebellions that it has had

before it finally achieved the democratic state in which it is today. The worst rebellion ever experienced in the country was the Napoleon war, which left many soldiers and civilians not only from France but also other countries dead. Germany on the other hand was seen to be the middle class country where unlike France (which was seen to have anti-church radicalism), had a spiritual touch. This was applied even in the artistic works of various artists and played a major role in trying to explain various phenomena affecting these particular regions (Jacob 66).

## **Conclusion**

The enlightenment is seen to be one of the most important periods of life as it played a major role in curving out the society to what it is today. Through its emphasis and encouragement on knowledge, education and discoveries, various steps were made which molded a platform for the modern day philosophers, scientists, politicians and even activists to turn out to be what they are today. Various theories that were made during this time have been developed and assisted scholars in the modern days to explain many aspects and also apply the knowledge to provide solutions to problems that affect man in day to day lives.

## **Works cited**

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