



Speaker 1: The 18th century, the 1700s is an era of huge change and these changes occurred much more rapidly than any of the previous eras we have studied in this course. At the beginning of the 1700s absolute monarchs and their authority were commonplace. By the end of the century, the era of the monarch was crumbling forever changed by the shot that was heard around the world, the American revolution which was then followed quite closely by the French revolution with the greater availability of books and access to education as well as expansion of the knowledge of the physical world.

An era of reason and intellect was ushered in and this era of the 18th century is called the Enlightenment. Philosophers and writers placed an emphasis on the capacity and ability of the human mind. Reason and intellect dominated philosophy. In turn, this placed an emphasis on secular concerns which are concerns of the mind rather than religious concerns which are concerns of the spirit. The focus on the mind inspired yearnings for freedom. Monarchs and church leaders were no longer to be followed simply because they were in power. Religion was viewed by some as superstition.

Hypocrisy was attacked at all levels in government, religious authority and in social practices. The notion of mankind as an inherent sinner shifted to a more elevated station of mankind placing an emphasis on man's capacity for goodness no matter how base his station. From this an idea flowered that even the poorest man had the capacity to develop his intellect and a spotless character.

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