

# Thomas Hobbes and John Locke



The new ways of thinking developed during the Scientific Revolution began to extend into other areas of life beyond that of just science. Scholars and philosophers began to re-think the old ideas about religion, economics, and education. This period was called the Enlightenment.

In France, these thinkers were known as “**Philosophes**”. Some of these Philosophes were Voltaire, John Locke, Thomas Hobbes, Mary Wollstonecraft, Cesare Beccaria, and Rousseau.

For the most part, they were not professional thinkers, but people who believed that it was their duty to find new ways to understand the world. These thinkers were optimistic and believed that they lived in an exciting era of great change for humanity.

## Five concepts of Enlightenment thinkers:

The Enlightenment started from key ideas put forth by two English political thinkers of the 1600’s, Thomas Hobbes and John Locke. Both men experienced hardships in England early in that century (in the English Civil War) but as a result, they developed opposite ideas about human nature and how a government should be run.



**Thomas Hobbes** expressed his views in a book called *Leviathan*. The horrors of the English Civil war convinced him that all humans were selfish and wicked. Hobbes believed that there needs to be one person in charge of the government who has absolute authority over the people. The people must turn over their rights and individuality to this leader in order for there to be a working government. This is known as the Social Contract.

### Hobbes-*The Social Contract*

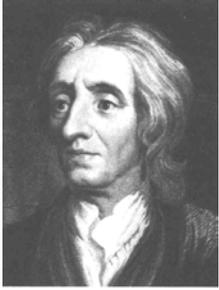
People give up power to one man. → This one man becomes the absolute leader.

***Do you agree with Hobbes’ idea that one man should have absolute power?***

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**John Locke** wrote his views in a book called *The Two Treatises on Government*. Locke took on a more positive view of human nature. He believed that people are born with three natural rights- life, liberty, and property. Locke believed that the power should really be with the people. He believed that a government was created to protect the people's rights. However, if the government didn't do this properly, the people could destroy the government and create a new one.

**Locke-Natural Rights**

All men have Natural rights → The government should protect these rights

*According to Locke, who should be stronger: the people or the government? How do you know? Do you agree with him?*

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**What would Locke and Hobbes think of us today?**

Look at the different issues below and with your group, decide how Locke and Hobbes would answer the question.

Issue	What would Hobbes say?	What would Locke say?
1. Should the government <u>cancel</u> (cut out) music lyrics on the MP3's we listen to? 		
2. Should the police use <u>any means necessary</u> to prevent crime? 		
3. Should the government <u>listen to</u> our phone calls and email in order to prevent terrorism? 		

***Do you agree more with Locke or Hobbes? Explain your answer.***

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