

Q. How did 'The Great Enlightenment' play a role in the American Revolution?

### EXORDIUM

The enlightenment and the great awakening started from Europe and prevailed in America in 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century. It influenced the American Revolution vastly. It highlights the basic rights of people and make them aware of the reality of crown. It emphasized on separation from the 'so-called' divine authority of king. Many philosophers presented significant works to enlighten the mind of the Americans. The two main works of 'American Revolution' is 'The Common Sense' by Thomas Paine and 'Declaration of Independence' by Thomas Jefferson. Here is the detailed analysis of how 'The Great Enlightenment' played a role in the American revolution.

### Scientific Enlightenment

The scientific enlightenment was started before a century. It changed the way of thinking about the science and public



affairs. It reversed ideologies in the realm of science with the help of different scientists. The perception of people changed by this. The evidents names of scientific enlightenment includes, Issac Newton, Galileo etc.

### Enlightenment in Philosophy

The advanced ideas moved from English, Scottish, German, French and Swiss coffee houses, literary salons to the America. The philosophers challenged the prevailing ideas of kingship and motivated people for revolution. The enlightenment in philosophy played its role in American revolution.

### John Locke (1632-1704)

He is an English philosopher. He had a notable work, "The Two Great Treaties". He challenged the monarchy and <sup>of government</sup> stated that they holds power and authority when the public favours it. Locke also emphasised that a man has basic right of life, liberty and property. If government fails in giving these natural

rights than public has the authority to overthrow the government.

Voltaire (1696-1778)

Voltaire was a French philosopher and in his philosophy he voted for the freedom of right of speech, religion and civil liberty.

Rousseau (1717-1778)

Rousseau was also a French philosopher and took enlightenment from Europe to America. His two notable works played important role in American revolution, including, 'The Discourse of Inequality' and . Rousseau favoured the public natural rights and for the discouragement of inequality b/w the king and the public.

David Hume (1711-1776)

He was a Scottish philosopher. He presented two main ideas to highlight unjust authority of crown. Firstly, the crown is so far away from America, whole Atlantic ocean lies



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between than who he (king) could rule America. Secondly, he questioned the unjust treatment to the colonies. Treating them for the sole benefit of mother-land.

Immanuel (1624-1704)

He was a Scottish philosopher and in his work "What is Enlightenment" he enlightened the minds of Americans. He also played a vital role in American Revolution.

Rousseau wrote, Man is born free but he is yet in chains. So, those who ruled the others are in fact the real slaves. All above mentioned philosophers enlightened the minds of Americans so they demanded for their rights, such as,

1. It includes the basic natural rights.
2. It includes the logic and reasoning.
3. It involves empirical observation and clear challenge to divine authority of the king.



## Impacts

There are significant impacts of the enlightenment on the lives of American, which later contributed in American revolution.

### Impact on Political philosophy

The impact on political philosophy can be seen in the work of Thomas Jefferson's, 'Declaration of independence'. Jefferson used knowledge and by writing a document he declared America independent on 4<sup>th</sup> of July, 1776.

### Impact on Theories of government

Montesquieu gave the concept of separation of power. There is bicameral legislation in American parliament influenced by his ideas.

### Impact on Foreign Policy

Benjamin Franklin diplomatic staff visited Europe also based on the ideological and communication relations established during enlightenment. He was also a diplomat to France after American independence.

### Impact on the treaty of Paris

The most significant impact can be seen in the treaty of Paris signed in 1783. The Article (1) of the treaty guarantee the natural and fundamental rights



of human.

Roger Willian writes, the state and the church shall be separated from each other. These philosophers presented these ideas in 17<sup>th</sup> century when it was herculean's task to challenge the divine authority. But, this enlightenment has an impact on American revolution and no doubt at American independence.

### Denouement

The 'Great Enlightenment' started in Europe but it effected American in a way that America is now a true example of Lockean philosophy. Immanuel states 'Dare to know! Have the courage to use the reason'. The American's used their own reason triggered by enlightenment. They embraced tightly and welcomed the great awakening. It is one of the conspicuous reason of American revolution.

**Rephrase your  
headings**

**Focus on your presentation**

**Understand the length**

**Argument formation could be improved**