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## The Significant People of the Enlightenment Period

The age of Enlightenment is described as “an intellectual and scientific movement of 18th century Europe which was characterized by a rational and scientific approach to religious, social, political, and economic issues” (Dictionary.com). The Enlightenment came about when people in the 18th century started becoming more aware of their conditions. In these ages, the people had no freedom in their lives and education was not available to everyone. This age was heavily influenced by philosophers like Immanuel Kant and Voltaire.

The followers of The Enlightenment believed in freedom to the people including the peasants. Along with freedom of speech and religion, they believed that every child, man, and woman should have access to education. Pierre Bayle fought for religious tolerance, writing “Historical and Critical Dictionary, which cited all the errors and delusions that he could find in past and present writers of all religions” (567). Jean-Jacque Rousseau believed in a child’s right for education and that children should be outside playing as well.

John Locke was an Englishman who believed that the people have a right to revolt if there is a legitimate reason. He believed that a person makes a deal with the government, in that they will protect you if you listen to them even when they do something stupid. If they stop holding their end of the bargain than the people have the right to revolt against them. This was called the social contract.

All in all, the enlightenment helped shape the world we live in today. These men and women wrote about their beliefs and got people thinking. Not only did it lead to religious tolerance, education, social contracts, but economics and capitalism were also invented during this time by Adam Smith. Thanks to their willingness to fight for what they believe in, we are closer to a better world.

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