

I. Enlightenment and Enlightened Absolutism

- A.** The philosophes believed in natural rights for all people. These rights are the ones referred to in the American Declaration of Independence: to religious worship, speech, press, assembly, property, and the pursuit of happiness.
- B.** The philosophes believed that enlightened rulers were to establish and preserve these rights. These rulers were to nurture the arts, sciences, and education, and to enforce the laws fairly over all subjects.
- C. Enlightened absolutism** is a term once used to describe the monarchies that emerged at this time. According to this view, monarchs of this time tried to govern by Enlightenment principles while retaining royal power.
- D.** Is the concept of enlightened absolutism correct? We can examine three states where philosophies tried to influence rulers to make enlightened reforms: **Prussia, Austria, and Russia.**
- E.** Frederick William I and Frederick II made Prussia a European power in the eighteenth century. Frederick William I tried to maintain a highly efficient bureaucracy, whose values were obedience, honor, and service to the king. He doubled the army's size.
- F.** Nobles who owned large estates were officers in the Prussian army. They believed in duty, obedience, and sacrifice, and were loyal to the king.
- G.** Frederick II, or **Frederick the Great**, was one of Europe's most cultured kings. He knew and adopted some Enlightenment ideas. He abolished torture except in treason and murder cases, and granted limited freedom of speech, limited freedom of the press, and complete religious toleration.
- H.** As a boy, mischievous Frederick II once escaped with a friend from his father. The king had them captured and made his son watch his friend's beheading. A year later the boy who would become Frederick the Great asked his father's forgiveness and followed his father's model thereafter.
- I.** Austria was a major power by the eighteenth century. Empress **Maria Theresa**, who came to the throne in 1740, centralized the Austrian Empire and strengthened the state's power. Her successor, Joseph II, was more influenced by the philosophes.
- J.** Joseph II abolished serfdom and the death penalty; he recognized equality before the law and religious reforms, including toleration. His program largely failed. Nobles were alienated because of the serfs' being freed. Serfs were confused about the sudden changes.
- K.** After several weak rulers following Peter the Great's death, **Catherine the Great**, the German wife of the murdered Peter III, came to the Russian throne. She ruled from 1762 to 1796. She knew the ideas of the Enlightenment, and even invited Diderot to speak in Russia, which he did. She invited him to speak to her "man to man." In the end she did not adopt Enlightenment reforms because she needed the support of the Russian nobility.
- L.** Conditions for the peasants worsened, and Catherine the Great responded strongly to a peasant revolt. Serfdom was expanded to newer parts of the empire. She effectively expanded Russia's territory. For example, in the west, Russia gained about 50 percent of Poland's territory.
- M.** The theory of enlightened absolutism seems questionable. Most of these three governments did not institute Enlightenment reforms. The decisions the rulers made were ultimately about the well-being of their states, which the monarch equated with the state's power—to collect taxes and wage war.

II. War of the Austrian Succession

- A.** Maria Theresa succeeded her father to the Austrian throne after his death in 1740. The Prussian king took advantage of having a woman on the throne and invaded Austrian **Silesia**. France allied with Prussia, and Britain allied with Austria.
- B.** The War of the Austrian Succession (1740 to 1748) was fought in Europe, the Far East, and North America. In 1748 all parties made peace with the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, and all occupied territories but Silesia were returned to their original owners.

IV. The Seven Years' War

A. Two new rivalries took center stage: France and Britain over colonial empires and Austria and Prussia over Silesia. Maria Theresa refused to accept the loss of Silesia.

B. Though Austria and France had long been rivals, France abandoned Prussia and allied with Austria. Russia joined that alliance because it saw Prussia as a threat. Britain then allied with Prussia. In 1756 another worldwide war broke out—in Europe, India, and North America.

C. The superb Prussian army was able to defeat the French, Austrians, and Russians for some time. Prussian forces were being worn down, however, and Frederick the Great faced disaster until the czar Peter III withdrew his troops from the war. Peter III greatly admired the Prussian leader.

D. A stalemate led to peace. In 1763, under the Treaty of Paris, all occupied territories were returned and Austria officially recognized Prussia's permanent control of Silesia.

E. The struggle between Britain and France during this time outside of Europe was known as the Great War for Empire. Sheer persistence made the British win out in India. In 1763 the French withdrew from India for good.

F. The greatest conflicts of the Seven Years' War took place in North America. The French colonies in North America (Canada and Louisiana) were thinly populated trading outposts. French settlers would not move to North America. The 13 British colonies were thickly populated with about 1.5 million people by 1750. The British colonies also were quite prosperous.

G. The British and French fought in the waterways of the Gulf of St. Lawrence in Canada and in the Ohio River valley. The French tried to establish forts in this valley to keep the British settlers from expanding into new territory. Native Americans allied with the French because the French were viewed as traders, not settlers.

H. At first the French were winning, but then William Pitt the Elder, Britain's prime minister, revived Britain's cause. He focused the British navy against the French colonial forces. It defeated the smaller, weaker French navy.

I. The British soon scored a series of land victories in the Great Lakes area and the Ohio River valley. The French made peace, and the 1763 Treaty of Paris transferred Canada and all lands east of the Mississippi to Britain. Spain, an ally of France, transferred Florida to British control, and France gave Spain its Louisiana territory.

J. By 1763 Britain was the world's greatest colonial power.