

ments were created by consent of human beings, then human beings had a right to change them. Locke argued that people have natural rights. These are the rights to life, liberty, and property. He insisted that people have the right to change a government that does not protect their natural rights. Locke's ideas would become very influential among American colonists who were dissatisfied with the political relationship with Britain.

Enlightenment writers such as John Locke encouraged a belief in progress—the idea that human beings can improve society and the world. The Enlightenment idea of progress would become one of the fundamental beliefs of American culture. In the following centuries, this optimistic hope for a better future would help Americans through many periods of uncertainty and change.

Enlightenment ideas of progress, natural rights, and government by agreement had a strong impact on colonial leaders. Such ideas encouraged colonists to reexamine their political ties to Britain. They also sparked political debate throughout the colonies. The colonists were beginning to see the British government as a threat to their rights and freedoms.



Ben Franklin experiments with electricity.

**SUMMARIZE** Explain how the ideas and values of the Enlightenment influenced the colonists.

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Section Assessment

**ONLINE QUIZ**  
For test practice, go to  
Interactive Review @ [ClassZone.com](http://ClassZone.com)

**TERMS & NAMES**

1. Explain the importance of
  - Great Awakening
  - Enlightenment
  - Jonathan Edwards
  - George Whitefield
  - Benjamin Franklin
  - John Locke

**USING YOUR READING NOTES**

2. **Main Ideas and Details** Complete the diagram you started at the beginning of this section.



**KEY IDEAS**

3. How did the abundance of land in America shape colonial society?
4. How did the Great Awakening and the Enlightenment affect the colonies?

**CRITICAL THINKING**

5. **Compare and Contrast** How did the colonial class system differ from the class system in Europe?
6. **Make Inferences** Why was the literacy level so high in New England?
7. **Connect to Today** What modern American values can be traced back to the Great Awakening and the Enlightenment?
8. **Writing Report** Research and write a short report on Benjamin Franklin's contribution to the understanding of electricity.