

Small Group Assignment 8: Enlightenment Thinkers Presentation

During the medieval period the Catholic Church strictly controlled people's thinking; it was dangerous to think thoughts, or advocate ideas, that appeared to contradict official Church teachings. Nonetheless, the Catholic Church did do some progressive things like establish universities where scientific inquiry was encouraged. Bishop Albert Magnus (1200-1280 CE) for example was allowed the freedom to investigate the nature of light and to speculate on all sorts of scientific topics. He was the first person to see the wisdom of conducting experiments to prove or disprove beliefs. For this reason he was accused of practicing witchcraft by critics. Albert was a rare type of thinker during the medieval period. Most were satisfied with the answers the Catholic Church gave them.

The Enlightenment (1650-1800 CE), also known as the Age of Reason, was a period of intellectual transformation and change; it was the product of successful challenges to Church authority by the Renaissance¹ (1350-1650 CE), Reformation² (1520-1620 CE) and Scientific Revolution³ (1650 to present). The Age of Reason absolutely transformed the way people in the West looked at the world:

1. **Reason.** Enlightened thinkers believed truth could be discovered through reason or logical thinking.
2. **Nature.** The Philosophes (a French group of philosophers) believed that what was natural was also good and reasonable.
3. **Happiness.** The Philosophes rejected the medieval notion that people should find joy in the only the hereafter and urged people to seek well-being while they are alive.
4. **Progress.** The Philosophes stressed that society and humankind could improve. Education was the key to progress and moral improvement.
5. **Liberty.** Enlightenment thinkers called for the expansion of liberty and freedom (eventually giving birth to the notion of *human rights*).

¹ The Renaissance was a period of cultural renewal and transformation. The Church's teaching the world was sinful was replaced by a new more optimistic worldview where the beauty of humankind was celebrated.

² The Reformation was the result of the Catholic Church's unwillingness to reform itself. Christians broke away from the Church and formed new denominations. The unity of the Western Church was destroyed and so with it the capacity of the Church to effectively control thought.

³ The Scientific Revolution began when scientific inquiry was freed from the strict control of a medieval-minded Catholic Church. Scientists began developing new models for explaining the physical world. The scientific method was developed at this time. Experimental science was also develop during this period.

Assignment Objective: research and present an oral presentation of an Enlightenment era thinker.

Procedure

1). With a partner select one of the Enlightenment thinkers below to present.

John Locke	Mary Wollstonecraft	Denis Diderot	Jean Jacques Rousseau
Isaac Newton	David Hume	Voltaire	Thomas Jefferson
Thomas Paine	Mary Wollstonecraft	Émilie du Châtelet	Adam Smith
Rene Descartes	Lady Anne Conway	Immanuel Kant	Thomas Hobbes
Galileo Galilei	Baruch Spinoza	Mary Astell	Giambattista Vico

2). Begin conducting research. Do not use *Wikipedia*. Use only quality websites (ones with URLs ending in .edu are usually trustworthy). Do not use *Quora* or *Yahoo Answers* either. These are inherently unreliable. If you plan to use a website published by an individual, look into the individual's background to ensure they are in fact an appropriate expert. When in doubt ask the teacher for assistance in finding good sources of information.

Note: keep track of all the sites and sources of information you use. You must incorporate this information on a bibliography page at the end of your presentation.

Create a *Google* Sheet and call it [Your_Name_Your_Partner's_Name_Thinker's_Name], e.g. **Jill_Dupont_Doug_Flanders_Thomas_Jefferson**. Organize your information on to the appropriate slides (see page four).

3). Present the oral presentation.

Presentation Standards

The following minimum standards must be met:

- Ensure all the required slides are completed (see page four)
- Ensure no slide has more than 30 total words
 - Slides must be free of grammatical, factual, formatting and spelling errors
 - Use light fonts on dark backgrounds or dark fonts on light backgrounds
 - Use two fonts maximum for the entire presentation
 - Ensure your font is the same size and same color on all slides
 - It is highly recommended you choose a conservative template style
- Do not use pixilated images, e.g. blurry, foggy or poor quality pictures
- Strive to create slides that are polished and professional looking, e.g. use consistent formatting for all of your slides
- While presenting focus eye contact on the audience (not the slides)
 - You are the expert and should know everything by heart
 - Be prepared to answer questions posed to you by the teacher during the presentation
 - Partners should present for approximately an equal amount of time
 - Presentations should be a minimum of three minutes in length (but no longer than six)

Evaluation

- The presentation is evaluated on the basis of a rubric (see page five)

THE PRESENTATION'S ORGANIZATION

Slide 1: Title Slide

Include the thinker's name and a relevant image of some sort.

Slide 2: Early Life

This slide covers the thinker's early life like where they were born, what their parents did for a living, if they had any hobbies as a child.

Slide 3: Career

Explain where the thinker was educated, who their influences were, and if they published any important books or achieved anything noteworthy.

Slide 4: Thought 1 or Contribution 1

Identify and explain the thought or contribution. Be willing to fully explain what the idea's or contribution's significance is.

Slide 5: Thought 2 or Contribution 2

Identify and explain the thought or contribution.

Slide 6: Thought 3 or Contribution 3

Identify and explain the thought or contribution.

Slide 7: Historical Significance

Provide a brief discussion of the thinker's overall significance to the history of ideas or history generally.

Slide 8: Bibliography

List all of the sources you consulted to create your presentation. Format the list according to Chicago style.

Oral Presentation Rubric

TRAIT	4	3	2	1
NONVERBAL SKILLS				
EYE CONTACT	Holds attention of entire audience with the use of direct eye contact, seldom looking at notes. Movements seem fluid and help the audience visualize.	Consistent use of direct eye contact with audience, but still returns to notes. Made movements or gestures that enhances articulation.	Displayed minimal eye contact with audience, while reading mostly from the notes. Very little movement or descriptive gestures.	No eye contact with audience, as entire report is read from notes. No movement or descriptive gestures.
BODY LANGUAGE	Student displays relaxed, self-confident nature about self, with no mistakes.	Makes minor mistakes, but quickly recovers from them; displays little or no tension.	Displays mild tension; has trouble recovering from mistakes.	Tension and nervousness is obvious; has trouble recovering from mistakes.
POISE				

COMMENTS:

VERBAL SKILLS				
ENTHUSIASM	Demonstrates a strong, positive feeling about topic during entire presentation.	Occasionally shows positive feelings about topic.	Shows some negativity toward topic presented.	Shows absolutely no interest in topic presented.
ELOCUTION	Student uses a clear voice and correct, precise pronunciation of terms so that all audience members can hear presentation.	Student's voice is clear. Student pronounces most words correctly. Most audience members can hear presentation.	Student's voice is low. Student incorrectly pronounces terms. Audience members have difficulty hearing presentation.	Student mumbles, incorrectly pronounces terms, and speaks too quietly for a majority of students to hear.

COMMENTS:

CONTENT				
SUBJECT KNOWLEDGE	Student demonstrates full knowledge by answering all class questions with explanations and elaboration.	Student is at ease with expected answers to all questions, without elaboration.	Student is uncomfortable with information and is able to answer only rudimentary questions.	Student does not have grasp of information; student cannot answer questions about subject.
ORGANIZATION	Student presents information in logical, interesting sequence which audience can follow.	Student presents information in logical sequence which audience can follow.	Audience has difficulty following presentation because student jumps around.	Audience cannot understand presentation because there is no sequence of information.
MECHANICS	Presentation has no misspellings or grammatical errors.	Presentation has no more than two misspellings and/or grammatical errors.	Presentation has three misspellings and/or grammatical errors.	Student's presentation has four or more spelling and/or grammatical errors.

COMMENTS: