

The use of reason advanced science and technology, which in turn influenced the Enlightenment.

Here, the Italian scientist Alessandro Volta explains a new invention, the battery.



Reading Check
Find Main Ideas
What ideas influenced the Enlightenment?

The Scientific Revolution The Scientific Revolution also influenced Enlightenment thinkers. Through experiments, scientists like Newton and Galileo had discovered that the world did not work exactly the way the church explained it. Using scientific methods of study, scientists discovered laws that governed the natural world. Enlightenment thinkers took the idea of natural laws one step further. They believed that natural laws must also govern human society and government.

New Ideas

Enlightenment thinkers borrowed ideas from history to develop a new worldview. They believed the use of reason could improve society. To achieve this progress, they had to share their ideas with others.

French Philosophers French philosophers popularized many Enlightenment ideas. One philosopher, **Voltaire** (vohl-TAYR), mocked government and religion in his writings. Instead of trusting God to improve human happiness, Voltaire believed humans could improve their own existence.

BIOGRAPHY

Voltaire 1694–1778

Voltaire is the pen name of the French philosopher and author François-Marie Arouet. He used his wit, intelligence, and sense of justice to poke fun at religious intolerance. Voltaire's skill and bold ideas made him a popular writer. In his writings he argued that the purpose of life is the pursuit of human happiness through progress in science and the arts.

Make Inferences

Why did Voltaire poke fun at religious intolerance?

