

Having gotten in trouble for some of his writings, Voltaire also spoke out against censorship—removal of information considered harmful. He argued, “I [may] disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it.” His statement emphasized the Enlightenment goal of freedom of thought.

Enlightenment thinkers made an effort to share their thoughts with the public. Philosopher Denis Diderot (dee-DROH) edited a book called the *Encyclopedia*. This book included articles by more than 100 experts on science, technology, and history. The French king and the pope both banned the *Encyclopedia*.

In spite of censorship, Enlightenment ideas spread. One important place for the exchange of ideas was the **salon**, a social gathering held to discuss ideas. Women often hosted the salons. Most Enlightenment thinkers did not view women as equal to men. However, in hosting salons women could influence opinions.

**British Writers** Women and men also began to publish their ideas in books, pamphlets, and newspaper articles. British writer **Mary Wollstonecraft**, for example, argued that women should have the same rights as men.

Enlightenment thinkers even applied their ideas of freedom and progress to economics. British writer Adam Smith believed economics was governed by natural laws. He argued that governments should not try to control the economy and that economic growth came when individuals were free to make their own choices. Like many Enlightenment thinkers, his ideas would have a lasting effect.

**Summary and Preview** Scholars during the Enlightenment drew on ideas from previous eras. They proposed ideas about the importance of reason and progress. In the next lesson, you will learn how the Enlightenment changed ideas about government.

Reading Check  
Summarize  
How did  
Enlightenment  
thinkers spread their  
ideas?