

Module 4: Stretching Limits in the Age of Reason

Topic 1 Content: Evolution to the Age of Reason


Introduction

Evolution to the Age of Reason

- The Salem Witch Trials
- Scientific Discoveries and Inventions
- Sir Isaac Newton
- Thomas Hobbes
- John Locke

Introduction

Click on each of the tabs to explore various factors that ushered in the Age of Reason.



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The Salem Witch Trials

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The Salem Witch Trials

The Salem Witch Trials exposed the potential dangers of following religious texts too literally. The execution of nineteen innocent people left many disillusioned with the Puritan theocracy and philosophies. As more Puritans began to find the strict, unforgiving lifestyle oppressive, society began to shift its focus from religion and spiritual salvation to practical problems that could be solved through reason.



Scientific Discoveries and Inventions

Sir Isaac Newton

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Scientific Discoveries and Inventions

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Scientific Discoveries and Inventions

The Royal Society of London for Improving Natural Knowledge first began meeting in 1645 and was followed twenty years later by The Academy of Sciences in France. The invention of tools such as the microscope, telescope, barometer, thermometer, air pump, and pendulum clock led to new discoveries in mathematics, astronomy, and other natural sciences.



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Sir Isaac Newton

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Sir Isaac Newton

Sir Isaac Newton described a "clockwork universe" governed by physical laws. In this analogy, God set everything in motion and the world has been ticking mechanically along by itself since then, just like a mechanical clock. Newton believed that man could discover the mechanical laws that govern the world by using deductive reasoning, and he was able to describe the Law of Gravitation through just this kind of observation and logic.



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Thomas Hobbes

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Thomas Hobbes

Thomas Hobbes described the "social contract" in which people accept a governing power and give up freedoms in exchange for protection against both their own greedy natures and the aggression of others.



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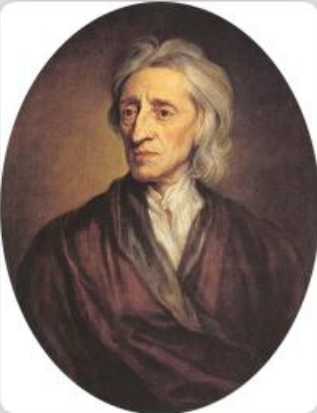
John Locke

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John Locke

John Locke said that experience, not logic, was the source of knowledge. He believed that people are born equal and as a *tabula rasa*, or blank slate. Thus, experience is what defines the unique character of each man.



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