**Enlightenment Thinkers and the Social Contract Theory**

**The idea of the social contract is an important one for us to study in greater depth, because our system is based on that theory. For this activity, you will be examining information about the history and ideas of four political philosophers who shaped the ideas of our founding fathers on the nature of government and how to build a system that would be better than what they were rebelling against.**

**You will use this worksheet as your guide to taking notes on what you are reading and learning. As you read, you should develop a definition of social contract theory and the differences between the ‘state of nature’ and ‘civil society’. Each of these men had some similarities and many differences. Our founders chose to take the ideas they liked best from each of them.**

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| **Social Contract Theory** |
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| **State of Nature** | **Civil Society** |
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[Thomas Hobbes excerpts](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1QF2x_V5FoUYvj4JNSRkk-_uhN6oop9zlQNeCVyZzeQU/edit?usp=sharing)

[John Locke excerpts](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Fv5-gsdTjWwET3nXxuzHyNlawCh1FBQBux6j2--oFYc/edit?usp=sharing)

[Baron de Montesquieu excerpts](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1a0MA6IbGTHj-cUJnkLIzUyM07MZYivBW9YuZ2Y3liGI/edit?usp=sharing)

[Jean-Jacques Rousseau excerpts](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1K-dYK7Q5VJcYsWAiSwBbAU8e9idV0R53UqasJDQsJeg/edit?usp=sharing)

Comparing Philosophers: In this chart, you should compare each philosopher’s ideas on these key concepts. Use what you have read to this point to fill in the squares in the chart.

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| **Philosopher and Background** | **State of Nature** | **Nature of Man** | **Rights of Man**  **Role of Man in Society** | **Definition of Liberty** | **Role and Responsibilities of Government** | **Ideal Government** |
| **Hobbes** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Locke** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Rousseau** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Montesquieu** |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Making Connections:

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| **Identify one way that each philosopher had an impact on the creation of American government. Provide one piece of evidence from each philosopher’s writing.** | |
| **Hobbes** |  |
| **Locke** |  |
| **Montesquieu** |  |
| **Rousseau** |  |

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| **Which philosopher do you agree with the most: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** | |
| **Reason 1:** | **Support from Reading:** |
| **Reason 2:** | **Support from Reading:** |
| **Reason 3:** | **Support from Reading:** |

Questions:

1. Each of these writers were known as social contract theorists. In which of their conceptions about society and government do people have more natural rights? More legal rights?
2. On what points do they have the most in common? On what points do they differ the most?
3. Which of these theorist’s ideas do you think had the greatest influence on the founding of the United States? Explain.
4. How do these readings help you better understand natural rights and legal rights?