

SECTION 2 Step-by-Step Instruction

Objectives

As you teach this section, keep students focused on the following objectives to help them answer the Section Focus Question and master core content.

- Identify the roles that censorship and salons played in the spread of new ideas.
- Describe how the Enlightenment affected the arts and literature.
- Understand how *philosophes* influenced enlightened despots.
- Explain why Enlightenment ideas were slow to reach most Europeans.


Prepare to Read

Build Background Knowledge L3

Discuss how information and ideas have spread throughout history thus far. Ask students how the spread of ideas challenges preexisting institutions.

Set a Purpose L3


- **WITNESS HISTORY** Read the selection aloud or play the audio.

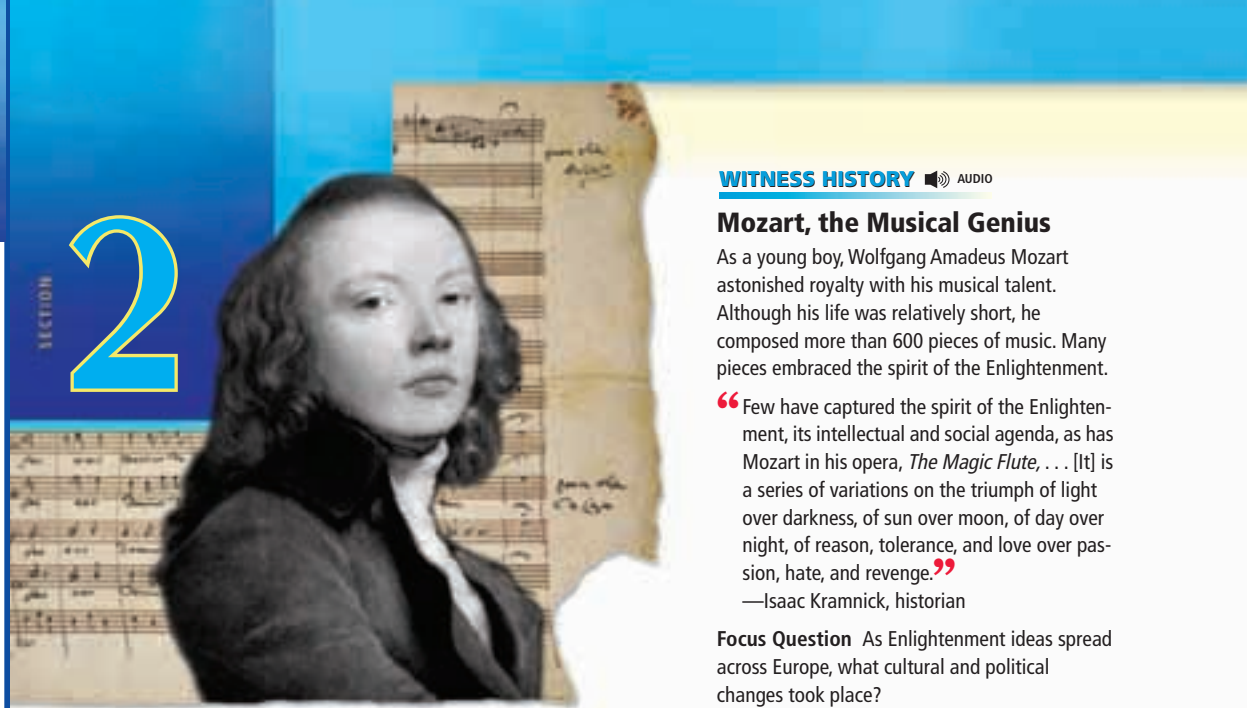
 **Witness History Audio CD,** Mozart, the Musical Genius

Ask **How does historian Isaac Kramnick describe Mozart's opera?** (*triumph of light over darkness, of sun over moon, of day over night*)

How does Mozart's *The Magic Flute* illustrate the ideas of the Enlightenment? (*It illustrates the triumph of reason.*)

- **Focus** Point out the Section Focus Question and write it on the board. Tell students to refer to this question as they read. (*Answer appears with Section 2 Assessment answers.*)
- **Preview** Have students preview the Section Objectives and the list of Terms, People, and Places.
- **Note Taking** Have students read this section using the Guided Questioning strategy (TE, p. T20). As they read, have students fill in the concept web illustrating the spread of Enlightenment ideas across Europe.

 **Reading and Note Taking Study Guide,** p. 160



Mozart and a sheet of his music

WITNESS HISTORY AUDIO

Mozart, the Musical Genius

As a young boy, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart astonished royalty with his musical talent. Although his life was relatively short, he composed more than 600 pieces of music. Many pieces embraced the spirit of the Enlightenment.

“Few have captured the spirit of the Enlightenment, its intellectual and social agenda, as has Mozart in his opera, *The Magic Flute*, . . . [It] is a series of variations on the triumph of light over darkness, of sun over moon, of day over night, of reason, tolerance, and love over passion, hate, and revenge.”

—Isaac Kramnick, historian

Focus Question As Enlightenment ideas spread across Europe, what cultural and political changes took place?

Enlightenment Ideas Spread

Objectives

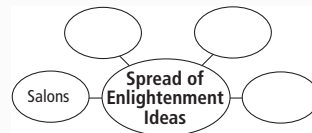
- Identify the roles that censorship and salons played in the spread of new ideas.
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Terms, People, and Places

censorship	enlightened despot
salons	Frederick the Great
baroque	Catherine the Great
rococo	Joseph II

Note Taking

Reading Skill: Categorize On a sheet of paper, draw a concept web to help you record information from this section.



Paris, France, the heart of the Enlightenment, drew many intellectuals and others eager to debate new ideas. Reforms proposed one evening became the talk of the town the next day. Enlightenment ideas flowed from France, across Europe, and beyond. Everywhere, thinkers examined traditional beliefs and customs in the light of reason and found them flawed. Even some absolute monarchs experimented with Enlightenment ideas, although they drew back when changes threatened the established way of doing things.


New Ideas Challenge Society

Enlightenment ideas spread quickly through many levels of society. Educated people all over Europe eagerly read not only Diderot's *Encyclopedia* but also the small, inexpensive pamphlets that printers churned out on a broad range of issues. More and more, people saw that reform was necessary in order to achieve a just society.

During the Middle Ages, most Europeans had accepted without question a society based on divine-right rule, a strict class system, and a belief in heavenly reward for earthly suffering. In the Age of Reason, such ideas seemed unscientific and irrational. A just society, Enlightenment thinkers taught, should ensure social justice and happiness in this world. Not everyone agreed with this idea of replacing the values that existed, however.

Vocabulary Builder

Use the information below and the following resources to teach the high-use word from this section.

 **Teaching Resources, Unit 4, p. 5; Teaching Resources, Skills Handbook, p. 3**

High-Use Word

evolve, p. 551

Definition and Sample Sentence

v. to develop gradually over time

Since it began twenty years ago, the town's July 4th celebration had **evolved** from a small parade into a large procession with floats and fireworks.

Writers Face Censorship Most, but not all, government and church authorities felt they had a sacred duty to defend the old order. They believed that God had set up the old order. To protect against the attacks of the Enlightenment, they waged a war of **censorship**, or restricting access to ideas and information. They banned and burned books and imprisoned writers.

To avoid censorship, *philosophes* and writers like Montesquieu and Voltaire sometimes disguised their ideas in works of fiction. In the *Persian Letters*, Montesquieu used two fictional Persian travelers, named Usbek and Rica, to mock French society. The hero of Voltaire's satirical novel *Candide*, published in 1759, travels across Europe and even to the Americas and the Middle East in search of "the best of all possible worlds." Voltaire slyly uses the tale to expose the corruption and hypocrisy of European society.

Ideas Spread in Salons New literature, the arts, science, and philosophy were regular topics of discussion in **salons**, or informal social gatherings at which writers, artists, *philosophes*, and others exchanged ideas. The salon originated in the 1600s, when a group of noblewomen in Paris began inviting a few friends to their homes for poetry readings. By the 1700s, some middle-class women began holding salons. Here middle-class citizens could meet with the nobility on an equal footing to discuss and spread Enlightenment ideas.

Madame Geoffrin (zhoh FRAN) ran one of the most respected salons. In her home on the Rue St. Honoré (roo sant ahn ur AY), she brought together the brightest and most talented people of her day. The young musical genius Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart played for her guests, and Diderot was a regular at her weekly dinners for philosophers and poets.

✔ **Checkpoint** What did those opposed to Enlightenment ideas do to stop the spread of information?

Arts and Literature Reflect New Ideas

In the 1600s and 1700s, the arts evolved to meet changing tastes. As in earlier periods, artists and composers had to please their patrons, the men and women who commissioned works from them or gave them jobs.

From Grandeur to Charm In the age of Louis XIV, courtly art and architecture were either in the Greek and Roman tradition or in a grand, ornate style known as **baroque**. Baroque paintings were huge, colorful, and full of excitement. They glorified historic battles or the lives of saints. Such works matched the grandeur of European courts at that time.

Louis XV and his court led a much less formal lifestyle than Louis XIV. Architects and designers reflected this change by developing the **rococo** style. Rococo art moved away from religion and, unlike the heavy splendor of the baroque, was lighter, elegant, and charming. Rococo art in salons was believed to encourage the imagination. Furniture and tapestries featured delicate shells and flowers, and more pastel colors were used. Portrait painters showed noble subjects in charming rural settings, surrounded by happy servants and pets. Although this style was criticized by the *philosophes* for its superficiality, it had a vast audience in the upper class and with the growing middle class as well.



Satire by Swift

Jonathan Swift published the satirical *Gulliver's Travels* in 1726. Here, an illustration from the book depicts a bound Gulliver and the Lilliputians, who are six-inch-tall, bloodthirsty characters. Although *Gulliver's Travels* satirizes political life in eighteenth-century England, it is still a classic today. *Why did writers hide their feelings about society?*

Vocabulary Builder

evolved—(ee VAHLVD) *v.* developed gradually over time

Teach

New Ideas Challenge Society

13

Instruct

- **Introduce: Key Terms** Have students find the key term **censorship** (in blue) in the text. Ask them to predict why the government and church authorities would want to censor the new ideas of the Enlightenment. Then have them read to see if their predictions are true.
- **Teach** Using the Numbered Heads strategy (TE, p. T23), ask students to list the ways Enlightenment ideas spread. Ask **How did the government restrict access to information?** (*banned books, imprisoned writers*) **How did *philosophes* and writers try to avoid this censorship?** (*disguised ideas in works of fiction, exchanged ideas at salons*)
- **Quick Activity** Organize the class as though it were a salon in Paris during the 1700s and have them debate the idea of a "just society." Half of the class should play defenders of the old order, and the other half should portray supporters of enlightened ideals.

Independent Practice

Have small groups of students write journal entries from the point of view of a guest at one of Madame Geoffrin's salons. Entries should include details of the salon.

Monitor Progress

As students fill in their concept webs, circulate to make sure they understand how the ideas of the Enlightenment spread across Europe. For a completed version of the concept web, see

📖 **Note Taking Transparencies, 134A**

Connect to Our World

Connections to Today Censorship continues to be controversial today. From 1990 to 2000, the American Library Association's Office for Intellectual Freedom received 6,364 challenges to materials. A challenge is a request that material be restricted or removed from a library, usually because of objectionable content. The reasons cited include violence, offensive language, and "unsuited to age group."

Seventy-one percent of these challenges were to materials in schools or school libraries, and sixty percent were filed by parents.

The debate is fierce. Some point to the First Amendment, which protects freedom of speech and the press, and argue that we are each free to choose what to read. Others argue that we must protect children from ideas and materials that they are not yet ready for.

Answers

✔ They engaged in censorship, burning books and imprisoning writers, to restrict access to information.

Caption They wanted to avoid censorship, so they disguised their ideas in fiction.

Arts and Literature Reflect New Ideas

L3


Instruct

■ Introduce: Vocabulary Builder

Have students read the Vocabulary Builder term and definition. Tell students that as the ideas of the Enlightenment spread, people's taste in art *evolved*, or changed, as well.

- **Teach** Ask **How did music and art change?** (*Both moved from the baroque, a grand, complex style, to the rococo, which was more elegant, delicate, and charming.*) **Why did the middle class emerge as a new audience?** (*They could afford to commission works of music and art, and they had different tastes from the court.*) **How did middle class tastes influence the rise of the novel?** (*Middle class readers liked stories about their own times told in a straightforward language, therefore creating a market for long prose fiction.*)

- **Analyzing the Visuals** Direct students' attention to the Infographic on this page. As they look at these artifacts, have them point out the key characteristics of the rococo style. (*pastel colors, rural settings, depictions of everyday life, delicate details such as lace*) Then play the selection from the Witness History audio, discussing characteristics of the music of the time and how it differs from other forms of music with which students are familiar.

 AUDIO Witness History Audio CD, Rococo Reaction

Independent Practice

Link to Literature To help students better understand the new form of literature that developed, have them read the excerpt from Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and complete the worksheet.

 Teaching Resources, Unit 4, p. 9

Monitor Progress


Reread the title of this section, Arts and Literature Reflect New Ideas. Ask students to summarize developments in art, music, and literature during the Enlightenment.

The Enlightenment Inspires Composers The new Enlightenment ideals led composers and musicians to develop new forms of music. There was a transition in music, as well as art, from the baroque style to rococo. An elegant style of music known as “classical” followed. Ballets and opera—plays set to music—were performed at royal courts, and opera houses sprang up from Italy to England. Before this era, only the social elite could afford to commission musicians to play for them. In the early to mid-1700s, however, the growing middle class could afford to pay for concerts to be performed publicly.

Among the towering musical figures of the era was Johann Sebastian Bach. A devout German Lutheran, Bach wrote beautiful religious works for organ and choirs. He also wrote sonatas for violin and harpsichord. Another German-born composer, George Frideric Handel, spent much of his life in England. There, he wrote *Water Music* and other pieces for King George I, as well as more than 30 operas. His most celebrated work, the *Messiah*, combines instruments and voices and is often performed at Christmas and Easter.

Composer Franz Joseph Haydn was one of the most important figures in the development of classical music. He helped develop forms for the string quartet and the symphony. Haydn had a close friendship with another famous composer, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Mozart was a child prodigy who gained instant celebrity status as a composer and performer. His brilliant operas, graceful symphonies, and moving religious music helped define the new style of composition. Although he died in poverty at age 35, he produced an enormous amount of music during his lifetime. Mozart's musical legacy thrives today.



Composers adopted the graceful rococo style in their works of music. They wrote pieces for an instrument called the harpsichord (above) that reflected this new style.  AUDIO

● INFOGRAPHIC

ROCOCO REACTION

In the eighteenth century, France experienced an aesthetic shift in art, clothing, music, and architecture. Curving lines, pastel colors, elegant music, and paintings depicting delightful love scenes replaced the formal lines and dark colors of the baroque style.

The rise of this new style, referred to as rococo, reflected changes in French society that were brought about by

the Enlightenment. As the French elite became more involved in the salons of the day (numbering about 800 in Paris), they competed with each other for the most fashionable home in which to host their intellectual discussions.



History Background

Satire and Society Enlightenment writers tried to bring about reform by satirizing corruption in society. Their satires often presented a premise that, when carried to its logical extreme, was absurd. The Anglo-Irish author Jonathan Swift used this method in his essay “A Modest Proposal.” The essay, which may be found in many anthologies of English literature, protested English domination of Ireland.

Swift's satire suggests that the starving masses of Ireland could be satisfied if unwanted children were raised and slaughtered for food and accessories. Swift's shocking plan is meant to get the reader to recognize the cannibalism of Ireland by England, a domination he found no less scandalous than the barbarism of his proposal.

The Novel Takes Shape By the 1700s, literature developed new forms and a wider audience. Middle-class readers, for example, liked stories about their own times told in straightforward prose. One result was an outpouring of novels, or long works of prose fiction. English novelists wrote many popular stories. Daniel Defoe wrote *Robinson Crusoe*, an exciting tale about a sailor shipwrecked on a tropical island. This novel is still well known today. In a novel called *Pamela*, Samuel Richardson used a series of letters to tell a story about a servant girl. This technique was adopted by other authors of the period.

✓ **Checkpoint** How did the arts and literature change as Enlightenment ideas spread?

Enlightened Despots Embrace New Ideas

The courts of Europe became enlivened as *philosophes* tried to persuade rulers to adopt their ideas. The *philosophes* hoped to convince the ruling classes that reform was necessary. Some monarchs did accept Enlightenment ideas. Others still practiced absolutism, a political doctrine in which a monarch had seemingly unlimited power. Those that did accept these new ideas became **enlightened despots**, or absolute rulers who used their power to bring about political and social change.

Frederick II Attempts Reform Frederick II, known as **Frederick the Great**, exerted extremely tight control over his subjects during his reign as king of Prussia from 1740 to 1786. Still, he saw himself as the “first servant of the state,” with a duty to work for the common good.

Enlightened Despots Embrace Ideas

E

Instruct

- **Introduce: Key Terms** Have students find the key term **enlightened despots** (in blue) in the text. Tell them that some rulers who believed in absolute power also saw value in political and social reform. Have students speculate on the rulers’ motivations. Ask them to predict whether the rulers’ reforms would last.
- **Teach** Have students describe the enlightened despots and their reforms. Ask **What reform did all three enlightened despots enact?** (*extending religious tolerance*) **What was one of the main goals of Frederick II’s reforms?** (*to create a more efficient government*)
- **Quick Activity** Have students access **Web Code nap-1721** to take the **Geography Interactive Audio Guided Tour** and then answer the map skills questions in the text.

Independent Practice

- **Primary Source** To help students better understand the reforms of the enlightened despots, have them read the selection from Frederick II’s *Essay on the Forms of Government* and complete the worksheet.

All in One Teaching Resources, Unit 4, p. 8

- **Note Taking** Have students fill in the concept web describing the reforms of the three major enlightened despots.

Reading and Note Taking Study Guide, p. 160

Monitor Progress

Circulate to make sure students are filling in their concept webs accurately. For a completed version of the concept web see

Note Taking Transparencies, 134B



Ornate Artifacts

In the examples of the rococo style shown here, notice the elegance of the delicate lace and floral patterns, as well as the charming paintings depicting the pleasures of everyday life.

Thinking Critically

1. **Make Generalizations**
Based on what you see in the collection of images here, describe what you think it would have been like to live during this time period.
2. **Draw Inferences** Why might the *philosophes* have disliked the rococo style?

Differentiated

Instruction Solutions for All Learners

L1 Special Needs L2 Less Proficient Readers

Organize students into groups of three and assign each group an enlightened despot (*Maria Theresa, Joseph II, Catherine the Great, Frederick the Great*). Each group should write or illustrate five of their ruler’s accomplishments on poster board. Ask students to explain how Enlightenment ideas affected each ruler’s actions.

L2 English Language Learners

Use the following study guide resources to help students acquiring basic skills:

Adapted Reading and Note Taking Study Guide

- Adapted Note Taking Study Guide, p. 160
- Adapted Section Summary, p. 161

Answers

- ✓ Art became more elegant and charming; music also became more elegant, with performances more affordable for the middle class; there was an outpouring of novels.

Thinking Critically

1. Sample: Life was refined and elegant.
2. The *philosophes* thought the rococo style was superficial, because it was more decorative than functional.

Lives of the Majority Change Slowly

L3

Instruct

- **Introduce** Have students recall the way most people lived in Europe. (*as serfs and peasants*) Point out that serfdom still existed in central and Eastern Europe, while traces of it remained in Western Europe.
- **Teach** Ask **Where did the majority of people live during the Age of Reason?** (*in small, rural villages*) **Why would their culture be slow to change?** (*It would take a while for ideas to reach the rural villages, and their lives were based on old traditions.*)
- **Quick Activity** Discuss with students how peasants and serfs might have reacted to ideas about equality and social justice. Why would some embrace these ideas? Why would others resist?

Independent Practice

Have students fill in the Outline Map *Enlightenment Europe*.

All in One Teaching Resources, Unit 4, p. 12

Monitor Progress

Circulate to make sure students are correctly labeling where the Enlightenment began and the regions it spread to on their Outline Maps.

Enlightened Rulers in the Eighteenth Century



Map Skills Although the center of the Enlightenment was in France, the ideas of reform spread to the rulers of Austria, Prussia, and Russia.

1. **Locate** (a) Paris (b) Prussia (c) Austria
2. **Location** Which enlightened despot ruled farthest from Paris?
3. **Draw Conclusions** According to the map, what regions of Europe were affected by enlightened despots?

Geography Interactive
For: Audio guided tour
Web Code: nap-1721

Frederick openly praised Voltaire's work and invited several of the French intellectuals of the age to Prussia. Some of his first acts as king were to reduce the use of torture and allow a free press. Most of Frederick's reforms were directed at making the Prussian government more efficient. To do this, he reorganized the government's civil service and simplified laws. Frederick also tolerated religious differences, welcoming victims of religious persecution. "In my kingdom," he said, "everyone can go to heaven in his own fashion." His religious tolerance and also his disdain for torture showed Frederick's genuine belief in enlightened reform. In the end, however, Frederick desired a stronger monarchy and more power for himself.

Catherine the Great Studies *Philosophes'* Works Catherine II, or **Catherine the Great**, empress of Russia, read the works of the *philosophes* and exchanged letters with Voltaire and Diderot. She praised Voltaire as someone who had "fought the united enemies of humankind: superstition, fanaticism, ignorance, trickery." Catherine believed in the Enlightenment ideas of equality and liberty.

Catherine, who became empress in 1762, toyed with implementing Enlightenment ideas. Early in her reign, she made some limited reforms in law and government. Catherine abolished torture and established religious tolerance in her lands. She granted nobles a charter of rights and criticized the institution of serfdom. Still, like Frederick in Prussia, Catherine did not intend to give up power. In the end, her main political contribution to Russia proved to be an expanded empire.

Differentiated Instruction Solutions for All Learners

L4 Advanced Readers L4 Gifted and Talented

Remind students that several of the *philosophes* shared their ideas on reform with the enlightened despots. It was Diderot, after all, who nicknamed Frederick II Frederick the Great. Have students take the role of a *philosophe* and write a letter to one of the enlightened despots. Letters should address both

the arts and politics of the day and should suggest a reform. Then have students exchange letters and compose a letter in response from the viewpoint of that ruler, explaining whether or not they will enact the suggested reform. Students should explain their reasoning.

Answers

Map Skills

1. Review locations with students.
2. Catherine the Great
3. parts of central and eastern Europe

Joseph II Continues Reform In Austria, Hapsburg empress Maria Theresa ruled as an absolute monarch. Although she did not push for reforms, she is considered to be an enlightened despot by some historians because she worked to improve peasants' way of life. The most radical of the enlightened despots was her son and successor, **Joseph II**. Joseph was an eager student of the Enlightenment, and he traveled in disguise among his subjects to learn of their problems.

Joseph continued the work of Maria Theresa, who had begun to modernize Austria's government. Despite opposition, Joseph supported religious equality for Protestants and Jews in his Catholic empire. He ended censorship by allowing a free press and attempted to bring the Catholic Church under royal control. He sold the property of many monasteries that were not involved in education or care of the sick and used the proceeds to support those that were. Joseph even abolished serfdom. Like many of his other reforms, however, this measure was canceled after his death.

Checkpoint Why were the *philosophes* interested in sharing their beliefs with European rulers?

Lives of the Majority Change Slowly

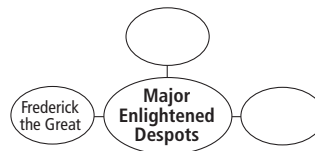
Most Europeans were untouched by either courtly or middle-class culture. They remained what they had always been—peasants living in small rural villages. Echoes of serfdom still remained throughout Europe despite advances in Western Europe. Their culture, based on centuries-old traditions, changed slowly.

By the late 1700s, however, radical ideas about equality and social justice finally seeped into peasant villages. While some peasants eagerly sought to topple the old order, others resisted efforts to bring about change. In the 1800s, war and political upheaval, as well as changing economic conditions, would transform peasant life in Europe.

Checkpoint During this time, why did change occur slowly for most Europeans?

Note Taking

Reading Skill: Summarize Fill in a concept web like the one below with information about the enlightened despots and their contributions.



Assess and Reteach

Assess Progress

L3

- Have students complete the Section Assessment.
- Administer the Section Quiz.

All in One Teaching Resources, Unit 4, p. 3

- To further assess student understanding use **Progress Monitoring Transparencies**, 73

Reteach

If students need more instruction, have them read the section summary.

Reading and Note Taking Study Guide, p. 161

L3

Adapted Reading and Note Taking Study Guide, p. 161

L1 L2

Spanish Reading and Note Taking Study Guide, p. 161

L2

Extend

L4

Ask students to review the headings and visuals in this section. Have them generate five critical thinking questions, such as How do these images reflect social attitudes at this time? Share their questions with the class.

Answers

- ✓ Because they wanted reform, they tried to persuade European rulers to accept their ideas. These rulers had the power to effect change.
- ✓ Most Europeans were peasants living in small rural villages during this time and were not part of courtly or middle-class culture, where the changes were occurring.

Section 2 Assessment

Progress Monitoring Online

For: Self-quiz with vocabulary practice
Web Code: naa-1721

Terms, People, and Places

1. For each term, person, or place listed at the beginning of the section, write a sentence explaining its significance.

Note Taking

2. **Reading Skill: Categorize** Use your completed concept webs to answer the Focus Question: As Enlightenment ideas spread across Europe, what cultural and political changes took place?

Comprehension and Critical Thinking

3. **Draw Conclusions** How did ideas of a "just society" change during the Age of Reason?
4. **Summarize** Explain the differences between baroque and rococo, and how these styles were reflected in art.
5. **Analyze Information** What did Frederick the Great mean when he said, "In my kingdom, everyone can go to heaven in his own fashion"?
6. **Predict Consequences** What actions might peasants take as they learn more about ideas such as equality?

Writing About History

Quick Write: Narrowing Your Response In the essay prompt below, identify and list the key words. Then write a brief outline of the main ideas to help you form the best response. In your own words, explain what is being asked of you in the instructions.

- Think of the various effects of the Enlightenment. Identify which effect you think most contributed to society, both short-term and long-term. Explain your response.

Section 2 Assessment

1. Sentences should reflect an understanding of each term, person, or place listed at the beginning of the section.
2. Rococo art replaced the Baroque, and new forms of music and literature appeared. Several enlightened despots ruled Europe.
3. Enlightenment thinkers said a just society should ensure justice and happiness

4. Students should mention that baroque is grand and complex, while rococo is delicate and charming.
5. He was referring to freedom of religion.
6. Sample: Peasants will eventually revolt to fight for equality.

Writing About History

Students should recognize that they are being asked to evaluate the effects of the Enlightenment and that their responses should be an explanation, not merely a list.

For additional assessment, have students access **Progress Monitoring Online** at **Web Code naa-1721**.

Opera

Objectives


- Understand how opera developed.
- List the key features of an opera.

Build Background Knowledge L3

Ask students if they have ever seen a musical or opera. If they have, ask them to share their recollections with the class. Tell them that in opera, the music showcases the vocal range of the singers.

Instruct

- Play the selection from the Witness History audio that accompanies this page, or play an opera selection of your own choosing. Have students discuss the piece by comparing and contrasting it to other music that is familiar to them.

 AUDIO **Witness History Audio CD,**
Opera

- Ask students to study the visuals on this page. Point out the image of the modern opera singers, The Three Tenors, and the picture of one of Europe's oldest opera houses, La Scala. Ask **What can you conclude about opera from looking at these pictures?** (*Opera is a formal and elegant art form that is still popular today; attending an opera is an exciting visual and musical experience.*)

Monitor Progress

Ask **Why do you think operas are still written and performed today?** (*Sample: Audiences still enjoy the music and theatricality of opera and appreciate the tremendous skill of the performers.*)

Thinking Critically

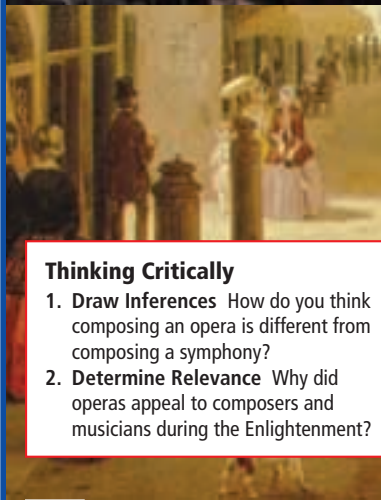
1. Sample: Composers of opera must work not just with the orchestra, but with a plot line and words, as well as showcasing the singers' voices. Most symphonies feature only the orchestra.
2. It was appealing because it was a new form that composers and musicians could use to combine theater and music.

Opera

Operas originated in Florence, Italy, in the seventeenth century. First called *drama per musica*, or drama through music, these musical performances typically involve large casts and elaborate sets and costumes. When Italian operas were performed in France, they emphasized glory and love, and included ballet and lavish stage settings to please the French court. Handel, Mozart, Verdi, Wagner, and Puccini composed some of the world's most famous operas.



View of La Scala in Milan, mid-1800s ▼



◀ Empress Maria Theresa of Austria, whose country ruled Italy by the early 1700s, founded Milan's La Scala (background image), one of Europe's oldest and most celebrated opera houses. Built in 1776, this opera house still showcases the great operas of the nineteenth century, including composer Giuseppe Verdi's masterpieces, *Aida* and *La Traviata*. Verdi's first opera, *Oberto*, was performed at La Scala, and he was the beloved house composer for many years. After years of care and renovation, the interior of La Scala retains its elegance as operatic performances continue to entertain audiences today.

◀ The "Three Tenors" (from left), Plácido Domingo, José Carreras, and Luciano Pavarotti, are some of the best-known opera singers of the modern era. In the hierarchy of the opera stage, the tenor is the highest male voice and usually plays the part of the hero. The female lead is typically sung by a soprano, which is the highest female voice. Singers in the lower ranges (mezzo-soprano and alto for women, baritone and bass for men) generally play villainous or comic roles.

Thinking Critically

1. **Draw Inferences** How do you think composing an opera is different from composing a symphony?
2. **Determine Relevance** Why did operas appeal to composers and musicians during the Enlightenment?

History Background

Opera Opera is generally considered a European art form—traditionally, operas are performed in Italian, French, or German. It would take many years for well-known operas to come out of the United States. The best-known American opera, *Porgy and Bess*, was written in 1935 by George Gershwin and DuBose Howard. The opera, based on Howard's book *Porgy*, is

the story of a black fishing town in South Carolina and the unlikely relationship between Bess, a woman with a sordid past, and Porgy, an old crippled man. At first, critics did not accept the work as an opera, and Gershwin himself chose to have it open on Broadway. Eventually, though, it was accepted as an opera and performed at major opera houses worldwide.