# Who Holds Power?

Compare three Enlightenment views of government and citizens

**SS24.6.12b** "Compare and contrast how Enlightenment thinkers interpreted the purpose of government and the relationship between government and citizens."

NAME _____ DATE _____

## 1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

**YOUR JOB** Underline each thinker's view of government's job, and circle what citizens should do in that thinker's view. Use your marks to compare where the thinkers agree and disagree.

### The Bridge Dispute

1. Imagine a town where arguments over a bridge turn into fights. English thinker Thomas Hobbes, writing during a time of civil war, feared what could happen without strong government. He argued that people should agree to give a ruler broad power to keep order and protect them from violence. In return, citizens should obey the ruler's laws, even when they dislike a decision about the bridge. For Hobbes, peace and safety mattered more than letting each person decide what government should do.

2. Another English thinker, John Locke, also believed people needed government, but he gave it a different job. He argued that people already had rights to life, liberty, and property. Government should protect those rights and rule with the consent of the people. If leaders failed to protect rights, citizens could replace them. In the bridge dispute, Locke would ask whether officials protected people's rights and had their consent. Unlike Hobbes, he thought citizens could challenge a government that broke its duty to them.

3. French thinker Jean-Jacques Rousseau focused on the people's shared power. He argued that citizens should join together to make laws for the common good, rather than hand all power to a ruler. Citizens must also follow the laws they make together, even if a law does not give each person what they want. For the bridge, they might discuss a rule that serves the whole town. All three thinkers wanted government to solve problems, but they disagreed about who should hold power and what citizens should do.

## 2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Hobbes and Locke differ about government's most important job?

2. How did Hobbes and Rousseau differ about citizens' roles in making and following laws?

3. How did Locke and Rousseau each give citizens power, and what was different about that power?

4. If a leader's bridge decision violated people's rights, how might Locke's advice to citizens differ from Hobbes's?

## 3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A town plans to close its public park after school because of litter. In 3 to 4 sentences, recommend a decision from one thinker's viewpoint, then explain how a second thinker might respond differently. Include each thinker's view of what citizens should do.

ANSWER KEY

# Who Holds Power?

GRADE 6 · SS24.6.12b

## PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each thinker's view of government's job, and circle what citizens should do in that thinker's view. Use your marks to compare where the thinkers agree and disagree. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

## PART 2 · ANSWERS

| # | QUESTION | ANSWER |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | How did Hobbes and Locke differ about government's most important job? | **Hobbes emphasized keeping order and protecting people from violence. Locke emphasized protecting people's rights to life, liberty, and property.** |
| 2 | How did Hobbes and Rousseau differ about citizens' roles in making and following laws? | **Hobbes said citizens should give a ruler broad power and obey the ruler's laws. Rousseau said citizens should help make laws for the common good and then follow those laws.** |
| 3 | How did Locke and Rousseau each give citizens power, and what was different about that power? | **Both gave citizens a role in government. Locke said government needed their consent and they could replace leaders who failed to protect rights; Rousseau said citizens should join together to make laws.** |
| 4 | If a leader's bridge decision violated people's rights, how might Locke's advice to citizens differ from Hobbes's? | **Locke would allow citizens to challenge or replace leaders who failed to protect rights. Hobbes would urge citizens to obey the ruler's laws to preserve order.** |

## PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Rousseau might ask residents to discuss a park rule that helps the whole town, such as requiring visitors to pick up litter. Citizens would help make the rule and then follow it, even if some dislike cleaning up. Hobbes might prefer a strong ruler to set a rule that prevents fights over litter. Citizens would obey that rule even if they wanted a different one.

Accept different park decisions if the response accurately contrasts two thinkers and explains each view of citizens' roles. For question 4, accept that Hobbes favored obedience even when citizens disliked a decision.