Ideas Have Roots

Trace the earlier ideas behind Enlightenment thinking

SS24.8.18a "Trace the origins of Enlightenment ideas to earlier eras and movements, including Classical Greece and Rome, Christianity, the Renaissance, the Reformation, and the Scientific Revolution."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each earlier era or movement named in the passage, and circle an idea or practice linked to it. Use your marks to trace where Enlightenment ideas came from.

A Debate with a Long History

1 In a London coffeehouse around 1720, readers debated a bold question: Where should a ruler's power end? Enlightenment writers did not invent every idea in that debate. They looked back to ancient Greece, where thinkers used reason to examine public life and some cities let male citizens take part in government. They also studied Rome's republic, whose elected officials shared governing duties and whose written laws offered a model for rules that outlasted individual leaders. These ancient examples helped later writers argue that power could be questioned and limited.

2 Other roots came from religious and cultural change. Christian teaching that people have worth in God's sight helped shape later arguments about human dignity, though Christians disagreed about political rights. During the Renaissance, scholars recovered Greek and Roman works and studied them closely. During the Reformation, disputes over church authority encouraged some people to read religious texts for themselves and defend freedom of conscience. These movements did not create modern equality, but they widened debates about authority and belief that Enlightenment writers would continue.

3 The Scientific Revolution added another tool. Investigators such as Galileo tested claims about nature through observation and mathematics, challenging ideas supported mainly by tradition. Enlightenment thinkers tried to apply careful reasoning to laws and government as well as to nature. For example, John Locke argued that rulers must protect people's rights and that government rests on their consent. His argument drew on older debates about law, human worth, and authority, while the new faith in inquiry encouraged people to test political claims. Enlightenment ideas grew from several roots, not one sudden discovery.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did examples from ancient Greece and Rome give Enlightenment writers ways to question a ruler's power?

2. How did Renaissance scholars help carry ideas from an earlier era into Enlightenment debates?

3. How could Christian teaching and Reformation debates each contribute to later arguments about people's rights or beliefs?

4. What practice from the Scientific Revolution did Enlightenment thinkers apply to government?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a coffeehouse reader challenging a ruler in 1720. Write four sentences: ask your own question about government, then explain how three different earlier eras or movements from the passage could shape that question, one per sentence.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 8 · SS24.8.18a

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each earlier era or movement named in the passage, and circle an idea or practice linked to it. Use your marks to trace where Enlightenment ideas came from. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did examples from ancient Greece and Rome give Enlightenment writers ways to question a ruler's power?	**Greek thinkers used reason to examine public life, and some Greek cities allowed citizen participation. Rome's republic provided examples of shared duties and written laws that lasted beyond one leader.**
2	How did Renaissance scholars help carry ideas from an earlier era into Enlightenment debates?	**They recovered and closely studied Greek and Roman works, making ancient ideas available for later debates.**
3	How could Christian teaching and Reformation debates each contribute to later arguments about people's rights or beliefs?	**Christian teaching about people's worth helped shape arguments about human dignity. Reformation debates led some people to defend freedom of conscience.**
4	What practice from the Scientific Revolution did Enlightenment thinkers apply to government?	**They used careful reasoning to test claims about laws and government, much as investigators tested claims about nature through observation and mathematics.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Should a ruler be able to punish people for criticizing a law? Rome's republic offered examples of officials sharing power and laws that lasted beyond one leader. Reformation debates about church authority led some people to defend freedom of conscience, which could support questioning leaders. The Scientific Revolution's practice of testing claims suggests asking for evidence before accepting a ruler's defense of a law.

Accept other accurate connections between the named roots and Enlightenment thinking. For Part 3, look for an original government question and three distinct, plausible connections to earlier eras or movements.