

Why do we need one?

What are the pros & cons of a government?

What is it for?

Could we do without?

Why Government?

How did we setup a government?

What happens if we don't have one?

State of Nature

Natural Rights

Why Sovereign Government?

HOBBS, LOCKE, ROUSSEAU

Social Contract

Tabula Rasa



Terms &
people
you will
learn about
today

State of Nature

Social Contract

Sovereign

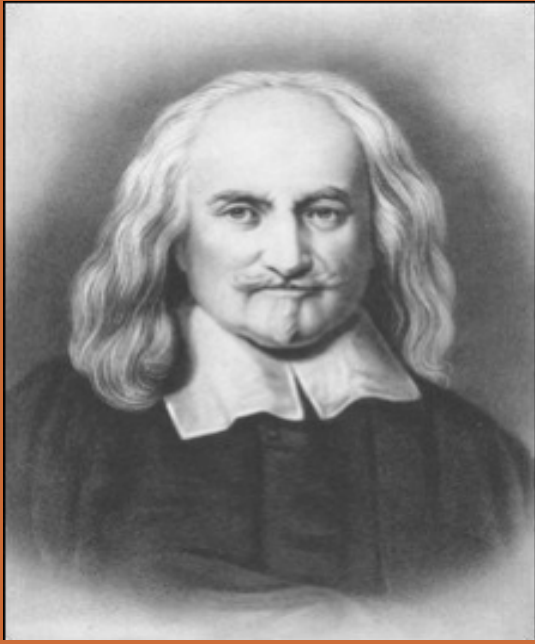
Tabula Rasa

Natural Rights

Hobbes/Leviathan

Locke/Treatises of Government

Rousseau/The Social Contract



Thomas Hobbes

Philosopher

Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury, in some older texts Thomas Hobbs of Malmsbury, was an English philosopher, best known today for his work on political philosophy. [Wikipedia](#)

Born: April 5, 1588, Westport, Wiltshire

Died: December 4, 1679, Derbyshire, United Kingdom

Nationality: British

Parents: Thomas Hobbes Sr.

Education: Hertford College, Oxford (1603–1608), Malmesbury School

Thomas Hobbes was an English scholar and philosopher.

He was born in 1588 and later became a tutor to a very wealthy family.

As a tutor Hobbes had access to many books, traveled often, and met many important thinkers.

Hobbes lived in Paris through the English Civil Wars and was interested in the nature of government.

He wrote about many topics, including politics, geometry, physics, religion, and history.

Hobbes was one of many scholars who tried to answer the question, "Why do we have government?"

Notes: Sum up who Thomas Hobbes was

“In such condition ...the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short.”

T. Hobbes

Hobbes saw humans as naturally selfish and quick to fight.

He believed that before there were governments, people lived in a **state of nature.**

In a state of nature, **there are no laws and everyone has a right to everything.**

In order to get what they wanted, people would always be at war with everyone else.

Nobody would produce anything like inventions, art, or even crops or tools because they would be afraid other people would take them away.

Hobbes didn't paint a very pretty picture of life without government.

How did Hobbes think people would behave if left to their own devices? What other word describes this state?

Social Contract



Hobbes lived at a time when many philosophers were thinking about the nature of government.

He was one of the first of his era to discuss the idea of a **social contract** between people and their government.

A contract is an agreement in which both sides agree to something in order to reach a shared goal.



"From this fundamental law of nature, by which men are commanded to endeavour peace, is derived this second law: that a man be willing, when others are so too, as far forth as for peace and defence of himself he shall think it necessary, to lay down this right to all things; and be contented with so much liberty against other men as he would allow other men against himself. For as long as every man holdeth this right, of doing anything he liketh; so long are all men in the condition of war. But if other men will not lay down their right, as well as he, then there is no reason for anyone to divest himself of his: for that were to expose himself to prey, which no man is bound to, rather than to dispose himself to peace. This is that law of the gospel: Whatsoever you require that others should do to you, that do ye to them." [Leviathan, Ch. VI]

*According to Hobbes, if
you don't want to live in a
state of nature, what does
a person have to do?*

Social Contract

In Hobbes' view, people agreed to give up some rights and power in exchange for protection.

Social Contract: *an implicit agreement among the members of a society to cooperate for social benefits by sacrificing some individual freedom for state protection.*

In this post 9-11 era, what freedoms do we give up for protection?



But for Hobbes, the social contract was no two-way street. He believed that once the people agreed to hand over power in exchange for protection, they lost the right to overthrow, replace, or even question the government.

Leviathan

Hobbes wrote a book called Leviathan to explain how he thought governments should work.

Hobbes wrote Leviathan during the English Civil War.

He wrote about the social contract, and he spent much of the book trying to show that a strong central authority was the only way to avoid the evils of war.

Hobbes believed a single **sovereign**, or ruler, should have total authority over the people.

He believed in a monarchy led by a king. That's because he thought that government would work best if all the power rested in one place.

What did Hobbes see as the purpose of the government?



Monarchy? Not Democracy?

Many political thinkers—including America's Founding Fathers—built on Hobbes' ideas, especially the idea of a social contract.

Hobbes was more concerned with **protection** and **order** than rights.

But people like John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau changed the focus from monarchy to democracy—power with the people instead of a sovereign.

They began to see that people have rights that must be protected even from government.



John Locke

Philosopher

John Locke FRS, was an English philosopher and physician regarded as one of the most influential of Enlightenment thinkers and known as the "Father of Classical Liberalism". [Wikipedia](#)

Born: August 29, 1632, Wrington, United Kingdom

Died: October 28, 1704, High Laver, United Kingdom

Nationality: English

Education: Westminster School, Christ Church, Oxford

Parents: Agnes Keene, John

One of Locke's books, called An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, took over 18 years to write.

In it, he says that people are born with a mind like a **tabula rasa**, which means a blank slate or page.

During life, that blank slate gets filled up with what a person experiences with the five senses.

He said people learn and develop differently because they are exposed to different situations.

The one aspect people have in common is that they are human and share a human nature that is the same for all people everywhere.

Locke also wrote Two Treatises of Government which is a work of political philosophy published anonymously in 1689. In it he condemns patriarchalism and outlines his ideas for a more civilized society based on natural rights and contract theory.

Notes: Summarize who Locke was



Jean-Jacques Rousseau

Philosopher

Jean-Jacques Rousseau was a Genevan philosopher, writer, and composer of the 18th century. His political philosophy influenced the French Revolution as well as the overall development of modern political, sociological, and educational thought. [Wikipedia](#)

Born: June 28, 1712, Geneva, Switzerland

Died: July 2, 1778, Ermenonville, France

Nationality: Swiss

Buried: Panthéon, Paris, France

Plays: [Pygmalion](#)

Rousseau's political philosophy influenced the French Revolution as well as the overall development of modern political, sociological, and educational thought.

Rousseau criticized Hobbes for asserting that since man in the "state of nature . . . has no idea of goodness he must be naturally wicked; that he is vicious because he does not know virtue". On the contrary, Rousseau holds that "uncorrupted morals" prevail in the "state of nature"

The Social Contract, arguably Rousseau's most important work, outlines the basis for a legitimate political order within a framework of a democracy. Rousseau theorized about the best way to establish a political community in the face of the problems of commercial society. The Social Contract argued against the idea that monarchs were divinely empowered to legislate; as Rousseau asserts, only the people, who are sovereign, have that all-powerful right. Published in 1762, it became one of the most influential works of political philosophy in the Western tradition.

According to Rousseau, by joining together into civil society through the social contract and abandoning their claims of natural right, individuals can both preserve themselves and remain free.

Notes: Summarize who Rousseau was

John Locke: *Two Treatises on Government*

Turn to page 11 in your textbook and read the excerpt of Locke. Look at the questions and be prepared to discuss them with the class.

To understand political power aright . . . we must consider what estate all men are naturally in, and that is, a state of perfect freedom to order their actions, and dispose of their possessions and persons as they think fit, within the bounds of the law of nature, without asking leave or depending upon the will of any other man. . . .

Men being . . . by nature, all free, equal and independent, no one can be put out of this estate and subjected to the political power of another without his own consent, which is done by agreeing with other men, to join and unite into a community for their comfortable, safe and peaceable living, one amongst another, in a secure enjoyment of their properties, and a greater security against any that are not of it. . . .

When any number of men have, by the consent of every individual, made a community, they have thereby made that community one body, with a power to act as one body, which is only by the will and determination of the majority. . . . And thus every man, by consenting with others to make one body politic under one government, puts himself under an obligation to every one in that society to submit to the determination [decision] of the majority, and to be concluded by it. . . .

If man in the state of nature . . . be absolute lord of his own person and possessions, equal to the greatest and subject to nobody, why will he part with his freedom, this empire, and subject himself to



John Locke
1632–1704

the dominion [authority] and control of any other power? . . . It is obvious to answer that though in the state of nature he hath such a right, yet the enjoyment of it is very uncertain and constantly exposed to the invasion of others; for all being kings as much as he, every man his equal, . . . the enjoyment of the property he has in this state is very unsafe, very insecure.

This makes him willing to quit this condition which, however free, is full of fears and continual dangers; and it is not without reason that he seeks out and is willing to join in society with others . . . for the mutual preservation of their lives, liberties and estates, which I call by the general name—property.

The great and chief end, therefore, of men uniting into commonwealths, and putting themselves under government, is the preservation of their property. . . .

Analyzing Primary Sources

1. According to Locke, what freedoms did people have before the founding of governments?
2. What are the potential dangers of a person living in what Locke called "perfect freedom"?
3. According to Locke, how are governments formed?
4. What trade-off does Locke say occurs when people live under governments?

Jean-Jacques Rousseau: *The Social Contract*

Main Idea

In consenting to form a government, Rousseau says, individuals choose to give up their self-interest in favor of the common good.

Find a form of association that defends and protects the person and goods of each associate with all the common force, and by means of which each one, uniting with all, nevertheless obeys only himself and remains as free as before. This is the fundamental problem which is solved by the social contract. . . .

[F]irst of all, since each one gives his entire self, the condition is equal for everyone, and since the condition is equal for everyone, no one has an interest in making it burdensome for the others. . . .

If, then, everything that is not the essence of the social compact is set aside, one will find that it can be reduced to the following terms: Each of us puts his person and all his power in common under the supreme direction of the general will; and in a body we receive each member as an indivisible part of the whole.

Instantly, in place of the private person of each contracting party, this act of association produces a moral and collective body, composed of as many members as there are voices in the assembly, which receives from this same act its unity, its common self, its life, and its will. This public person, formed thus by the union of all the others, formerly took the name City, and now takes that of Republic or body politic, which its members call State when it is passive, Sovereign when active, Power when comparing it to similar bodies. As for the associates, they collectively take the name People; and individually are called Citizens as participants in the sovereign authority, and Subjects as subjects to the laws of the State. . . .

Natural Rights

Locke imagined a set of **natural rights** that human beings share.

These are the right to life, liberty, and property.

Life refers to the fact that people want to live and will fight to survive.

Liberty means that people want to be as free as possible to make their own decisions.

Property represents the fact that people want to own things that help them survive, such as land, food, and tools.

Locke believed these rights aren't given to people—people are born with them.

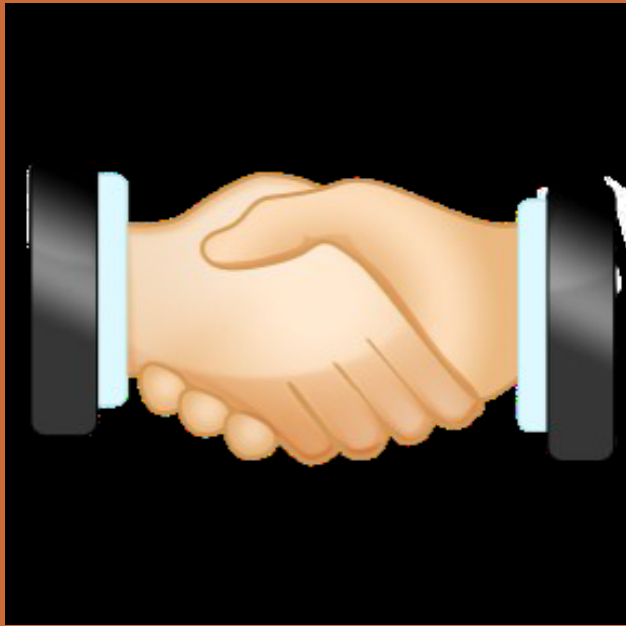
Why do we need a government?

Locke also wondered what life would be like if people didn't have a government.

In this **state of nature** there would be no rules, no one in charge, and no way for people to protect their natural rights.

He believed the purpose of government is to end the state of nature and give people certain protections.

Most importantly, Locke believed governments should protect people's natural rights.



Social Contract

Locke & Rousseau believed a government can only be legitimate, or valid, if it is based on a social contract with citizens.

A **social contract** happens between a government and its people.

The people agree to give up some freedoms if the government agrees to protect everyone's rights.

If the government fails to deliver, the people revolt—like the colonists did during the American Revolution.

Terms &
People you
should know

State of Nature

Social Contract

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Rousseau/The Social Contract

Copy down the following questions at the end of your notes and write the answer as we discuss it.

1. Which of the following statements best summarizes the excerpt from Locke?

- a. People should give up their fundamental rights in order to establish absolute monarchies.
- b. People establish governments in order to set & enforce laws. If a government does not do this, the people may abolish it.
- c. Most legislative powers are corrupt.
- d. Judges may need to act outside the law.

Copy down the following questions at the end of your notes and write the answer as we discuss it.

2. According to Locke, which of the following groups has the final authority of government?

- a. the legislature
- b. the prince
- c. the people
- d. the judges



Copy down the following questions at the end of your notes and write the answer as we discuss it.

3. According to Rousseau, “social contract” provides a solution to the fundamental problem of finding a form of government in which:

- a. people’s differences can be solved peacefully.
- b. people remain as free as they were without government.
- c. people are not subject to unjust or immoral laws.
- d. minorities are protected.

Copy down the following questions at the end of your notes and write the answer as we discuss it.

4. The Republic or body politic is defined by Rousseau as the:

- a. assembly
- b. collective body formed when the social contract is dissolved.
- c. collective body formed when private persons enter into the social contract.
- d. collective body appointed by the king.

Copy down the following questions at the end of your notes and write the answer as we discuss it.

5. According to Locke, what do people give up when they enter into a society? Why do you think people give this up?

Copy down the following questions at the end of your notes and write the answer as we discuss it.

6. Why does Rousseau believe that people are safe putting themselves under the directions of the “general will”?