



English Learning for Curious Minds



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Episode #149

The Enlightenment

13th Apr, 2021

[00:00:00] Hello, hello hello, and welcome to English Learning for Curious Minds, by Leonardo English.

[00:00:12] The show where you can listen to fascinating stories, and learn weird and wonderful things about the world at the same time as improving your English.

[00:00:22] I'm Alastair Budge and today we are going to be talking about The Age of Enlightenment, otherwise known as just The Enlightenment.

[00:00:33] It was the [intellectual](#)¹ movement that involved philosophers, mathematicians, scientists, economists, and thinkers of all kinds, and had a [profound](#)² impact on politics, philosophy, business, science and our society as a whole.

¹ related to thinking and understanding of ideas

² very big



The Enlightenment

[00:00:52] You might have thought that a show called English Learning for Curious Minds, which has a mission of helping you expand your knowledge, might have chosen to do an episode on The Enlightenment much earlier than episode number 149.

[00:01:08] You might be right, but I think that now is the perfect time, for two reasons.

[00:01:14] Firstly, there are many [principles](#)³ of The Enlightenment that are being particularly challenged all over the world, and so it's a useful time to think about where these [principles](#) actually came from.

[00:01:29] And secondly, perhaps more importantly, the next episodes will be a mini series on The Age of Revolution, where we'll cover The Industrial, American, and French Revolutions, all three of which were deeply [influenced](#)⁴ by Enlightenment thinking.

[00:01:48] It is a huge subject, and a fascinating one, so let's get right into it.

[00:01:56] Now, the [tricky](#)⁵ thing about The Enlightenment is that there isn't a specific start and end date for it.

[00:02:05] No people's [uprising](#)⁶, no war, no one single event.

³ ideas that serve as a basis of understanding something

⁴ affected

⁵ needing careful attention

⁶ an act of resistance, sometimes violent



The Enlightenment

[00:02:11] Some people **date**⁷ the start of The Enlightenment back to 1637, which was when Descartes' "I think, therefore I am" philosophy was first published, while for others it doesn't start for another 100 years.

[00:02:28] And in terms of when it ends, that's perhaps an even harder question.

[00:02:34] In France, most historians **date** the end of the Enlightenment to 1789, the start of The French Revolution, but others would say it continued into the 19th century.

[00:02:48] For the purposes of today's episode, it doesn't really matter.

[00:02:53] The important thing to **underline**⁸ is that before The Enlightenment, in Europe the way the world worked was explained through religion.

[00:03:04] God had created the world, kings and queens ruled countries **on his behalf**⁹, and society was **structured**¹⁰ in a very **hierarchical**¹¹ way.

[00:03:15] Access to knowledge was difficult.

[00:03:18] And that knowledge was often incomplete, or wrong, it wasn't based on reason.

⁷ give the date when something happened

⁸ give emphasis, pay attention to something important

⁹ for his benefit and interest, as his representative

¹⁰ organised

¹¹ arranged in order of rank



The Enlightenment

[00:03:25] The Enlightenment questioned all of this.

[00:03:29] If there's one word that we should probably associate with The Enlightenment, it's not [gravity¹²](#), or humanity, or equality, it's.....why. Yes, the word "why".

[00:03:43] The Enlightenment was all about questioning the reason why certain things were the way they were.

[00:03:51] Why do things happen?

[00:03:53] What would be a better explanation for it, or a better way of doing things, a better way of structuring the society we live in?

[00:04:03] A great example both of the [conventional¹³](#) way of thinking and about how Enlightenment thought changed this came after a terrible earthquake in Lisbon, Portugal, in 1755.

[00:04:18] It [struck¹⁴](#) on All Saints Day, an important Christian holiday, and is thought to have killed between 30 and 50 thousand people.

¹² the force that pulls objects towards one another

¹³ traditional and ordinary

¹⁴ hit with force



The Enlightenment

[00:04:29] It was a tragedy, and as humans do in these [circumstances¹⁵](#), people looked for explanations.

[00:04:37] For some people, it was a sign that God was unhappy, he had sent this disaster down to show that people were not behaving in the way he wanted them to.

[00:04:49] For others, who had started to be [influenced](#) by Enlightenment ideas, they asked “why”?

[00:04:56] Why would a God punish an entire city, and surely if this was his idea, he would have [spared¹⁶](#), he would have saved all of the good Christians.

[00:05:08] As it happened, many churches were destroyed, [worshippers¹⁷](#) killed, while some [brothels¹⁸](#), places where [prostitutes¹⁹](#) work, were saved.

[00:05:20] This didn't seem to make a huge amount of sense, it didn't stand up to reason.

¹⁵ conditions

¹⁶ saved, kept safe

¹⁷ people who attend a church service to adore God

¹⁸ places where sex is sold

¹⁹ people who have sex for money



The Enlightenment

[00:05:27] And if why is the word that one must first associate with The Enlightenment, it has an equally important [twin²⁰](#), reason.

[00:05:38] One of the main [principles](#) of the Enlightenment was a belief that reason is [sovereign²¹](#), it is the most important thing.

[00:05:47] We shouldn't believe something just because someone else has told us that it is true, or it is [conventional wisdom²²](#), we need to see it for ourselves, and to understand it.

[00:06:00] These ideas were developed by two early writers.

[00:06:05] First, René Descartes, the French-born philosopher, known for the phrase “Cogito, ergo sum” or “I think, therefore I am”.

[00:06:16] And secondly, the English [civil servant²³](#) and philosopher, Francis Bacon who is widely [credited²⁴](#) with introducing a scientific method of [enquiry²⁵](#); in other words

²⁰ something very similar and connected to something else

²¹ something of the highest power and importance

²² knowledge and understanding of things

²³ a person who works for a government service

²⁴ recognised as

²⁵ a scientific method based on examination and investigation of things



The Enlightenment

you discover what works best through a [meticulous](#)²⁶ and [thorough](#)²⁷ process of experimentation – recording evidence and making [judgements](#)²⁸ on the basis of that evidence.

[00:06:42] The [fancy](#)²⁹ and technical term for this movement is Empiricism.

[00:06:48] The other [founding father](#)³⁰ of the Enlightenment for many people is another Englishman, John Locke.

[00:06:57] His main area of interest was in government and the rules by which societies were ruled.

[00:07:04] Locke set out the [principle](#)³¹ that everyone has the right to “life, liberty and property“.

[00:07:12] All of these three were writing in the late 17th century, either before the Enlightenment began, or right at the start of the Enlightenment, depending on when exactly you believe it started.

²⁶ very careful and detailed

²⁷ detailed, careful and complete

²⁸ the ability to make the right decisions

²⁹ impressive

³⁰ a person who starts a movement

³¹ an idea that serves as a basis of understanding something



The Enlightenment

[00:07:26] So, the writings and **influence**³² of such men as Descartes, Bacon and Locke were **instrumental**³³ in causing others to think **expansively**³⁴ about almost everything in society.

[00:07:41] An obvious **target**³⁵ for this was the power of **monarchs**³⁶, of kings and queens, and of the Church.

[00:07:49] If every person had the right to life, liberty, and property, having **all-powerful**³⁷ kings, queens and **nobility**³⁸, while the poor suffered terribly didn't seem very fair. It didn't seem very **just**³⁹.

[00:08:06] Why should this be the case?

[00:08:09] These sorts of ideas were discussed by scientists, writers, philosophers, and engineers all over Europe, and there was a huge growth in something called learned

³² the power to affect things

³³ something that had a very important role

³⁴ in a way that covers a wide area

³⁵ a thing that is criticised

³⁶ the heads of a state, kings or queens

³⁷ having complete power

³⁸ group of people belonging to the highest social class

³⁹ fair



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societies, where these people would come together to share ideas and question the [status quo](#)⁴⁰.

[00:08:30] An interesting way of exploring these ideas is by telling the stories of some of the major [contributors](#)⁴¹ to the main part of the Enlightenment and focusing on the four countries I mentioned at the start: Scotland, England, France and Italy.

[00:08:48] Although Scotland was only formally joined with England, Wales and Ireland to make the United Kingdom in 1707, the strength of its own Enlightenment thinkers, based in Edinburgh and Glasgow, means that the Scottish Enlightenment deserves to have its own story told.

[00:09:08] One of the two most influential people here is a philosopher called David Hume, who wrote from the 1730s to the 1760s.

[00:09:19] [He invites me](#)⁴² to introduce the central Enlightenment quality - [scepticism](#)⁴³

.

[00:09:27] [Scepticism](#) is best defined as an attitude through which you doubt whether something is true or useful.

⁴⁰ the present situation

⁴¹ people who play a significant part in making something happen

⁴² he provides me with the opportunity to

⁴³ an attitude through which you doubt accepted opinions



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[00:09:36] Now when we say someone is a **sceptic**⁴⁴, it often has a slightly negative **connotation**⁴⁵, but in the case of Hume it was a **vitally**⁴⁶ important characteristic; it meant that you actually thought critically about what you read or heard, you didn't just take it as true.

[00:09:58] Alongside Hume stood the best known of the British Enlightenment thinkers, a Scotsman you will probably have heard of and someone who is often described as the Father of Capitalism: Adam Smith.

[00:10:13] Smith's lengthy and **profoundly**⁴⁷ **influential**⁴⁸ book, "The Wealth of Nations", challenged the **conventional** thought of the day, which said that the amount of wealth in the world was **finite**⁴⁹, there was a **defined**⁵⁰ amount of it, and therefore **encouraged**⁵¹ nations to protect their trade and economies from other countries.

⁴⁴ someone who questions and doubts accepted opinions

⁴⁵ an idea or feeling that comes to mind when hearing a particular word

⁴⁶ in a way that is absolutely necessary

⁴⁷ deeply or extremely

⁴⁸ having a big effect

⁴⁹ having a limit or end

⁵⁰ certain, particular

⁵¹ tried to persuade



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[00:10:38] Smith's big idea was that there was an “invisible hand” which operated and that through what he called enlightened [self-interest](#)⁵² and trade within societies and between nations, everyone’s lives could improve.

[00:10:55] Smith writes in a very effective and [vivid](#)⁵³ way. Here is perhaps his best known quotation:

[00:11:03] “It is not from the [benevolence](#)⁵⁴ of the [butcher](#)⁵⁵, the [brewer](#)⁵⁶, or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their [regard](#)⁵⁷ to their own [self-interest](#).”

[00:11:15] So, just to explain that, Smith is saying that the people who provide our food do not do so because they are kind, but rather because it is in their advantage. And of course, he isn’t talking just about food, but about the economy as a whole.

[00:11:34] And his theory was that if society was structured in this way, then everyone’s lives would improve. This is really the heart of modern day capitalism, it’s the society that most of us live in today.

⁵² a concern for one's advantage and well-being

⁵³ lively and detailed

⁵⁴ the quality of being kind and helpful

⁵⁵ a person who sells meat in a shop

⁵⁶ a person who makes beer

⁵⁷ concern



The Enlightenment

[00:11:50] Now let us leave Scotland and travel south to England, where the giant of Enlightenment thinking was the great scientist, Isaac Newton.

[00:12:01] [Legend has it](#)⁵⁸ that Newton was sitting under a tree and an apple fell on his head, and it was from there that he came up with the idea for [gravity](#).

[00:12:11] This is, of course, a great [oversimplification](#)⁵⁹.

[00:12:15] Newton was not only a [pioneering](#)⁶⁰ scientist who set out the [basis](#)⁶¹ for much of today's science but he also showed how you could use scientific techniques to solve problems.

[00:12:28] He demonstrated how, although Nature may be a [puzzle](#)⁶², it can be hard to understand, we could, through scientific methods, gradually work it out and learn how better to control it for our own benefit.

[00:12:44] So, that was Isaac Newton.

⁵⁸ according to legend, to what people say

⁵⁹ to explain something in such a simple way that it leads to misunderstanding

⁶⁰ someone that brings new ideas

⁶¹ the most important ideas from which something is developed

⁶² something difficult to explain or understand



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[00:12:46] The third country we will visit on our journey is France where the giants of this movement were Voltaire and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, or as he is called in English, Rousseau.

[00:13:00] Voltaire was [arguably](#)⁶³ the most influential philosopher of the 18th century and certainly the most famous.

[00:13:08] Perhaps his most important achievements were to [champion](#)⁶⁴ freedom of speech, to challenge the [prevailing](#)⁶⁵ power of religion and in particular to support the separation of church and state.

[00:13:23] His most famous work that sets out a lot of this philosophy is his short book Candide, or Optimism.

[00:13:32] His ideas were pretty [radical](#)⁶⁶ at the time, and throughout his life he was [in conflict](#)⁶⁷ with the authorities of France, being imprisoned twice and also [exiled](#)⁶⁸ or [banished](#)⁶⁹ for two years, when he went to England.

⁶³ very possibly true

⁶⁴ support or defend

⁶⁵ winning

⁶⁶ very different from the usual

⁶⁷ in serious disagreement

⁶⁸ sent away of one's country, usually due to political reasons

⁶⁹ sent away of one's country as a punishment



The Enlightenment

[00:13:49] When he was in England he saw what he considered to be the success of a [constitutional](#)⁷⁰ government, and this was very [influential](#) in his [subsequent](#)⁷¹ criticisms of the absolute power of the French King Louis XV.

[00:14:06] We can see, through a look at the life of Voltaire, how closely linked a lot of these Enlightenment thinkers were, and how much they [collaborated](#)⁷² with each other with the shared goal of increasing human knowledge and understanding.

[00:14:22] Voltaire's great hero was Isaac Newton, and indeed when Voltaire was sent to England he was there at Isaac Newton's [funeral](#)⁷³.

[00:14:32] Back in France, at his [estate](#)⁷⁴ on the Swiss border, he entertained other Enlightenment thinkers such as Benjamin Franklin, one of the [founding fathers](#)⁷⁵ of the United States, and Adam Smith, the Scottish philosopher and economist we heard about a few minutes ago.

[00:14:49] And the other French master of the Enlightenment to mention was Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

⁷⁰ ruling according to a constitution (laws according to which a country is being governed)

⁷¹ one coming after the other

⁷² worked with each other for a common purpose

⁷³ a ceremony for burying the body of a dead person

⁷⁴ a large property of land with a large house on it

⁷⁵ a group of people who start a movement



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[00:14:54] Rousseau [likewise](#)⁷⁶ challenged the [status-quo](#), and put forward the [radical](#) and dangerous idea – even [heretical](#)⁷⁷ idea – that human beings are born essentially good, but they are [corrupted](#)⁷⁸ by human society and [institutions](#)⁷⁹.

[00:15:13] You may well remember the quote “man is born free, but everywhere he is in chains”, which is how he starts his most famous work, Du Contrat Social, or The Social Contract.

[00:15:26] These ideas were, of course, [radical](#).

[00:15:29] If you believe that the [institutions](#) of society [corrupt](#)⁸⁰ innocent people, well then the [institutions](#) of society aren’t going to react particularly well to that idea.

[00:15:41] And indeed Rousseau was [denounced](#)⁸¹ publicly as the [antichrist](#)⁸², and he had to [flee](#)⁸³ to Great Britain, where he stayed with his friend David Hume, the father of [scepticism](#), who we heard about a few minutes ago.

⁷⁶ in the same way

⁷⁷ opposing the official or popular opinion, especially one of the Church

⁷⁸ turned from good to bad in morals and actions

⁷⁹ official organisations having an important role in society

⁸⁰ turn good people to bad in morals and actions

⁸¹ publicly declared to be evil

⁸² a person seen as opposing the Christian Church

⁸³ escape by running away



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[00:15:55] Now to our fourth country, Italy – or the area of the world now known as Italy – and to the **splendidly**⁸⁴ named Marquis Cesare Di Beccaria.

[00:16:07] His famous work “On Crimes and Punishment” is a short but powerful and **spine-tingling**⁸⁵ work to read even now.

[00:16:17] It has the added benefit of having a commentary written by his admirer, the **aforementioned**⁸⁶ Voltaire.

[00:16:25] As I am sure you know, the penal system or system of punishment in 1764 when Beccaria wrote his **ground-breaking**⁸⁷ work, was **utterly**⁸⁸ **brutal**⁸⁹.

[00:16:38] For even what we would now consider to be the smallest of crimes you could be **tortured**⁹⁰, cut up into pieces, publicly **executed**⁹¹, and suffer the most horrible of punishments.

⁸⁴ extremely well

⁸⁵ thrilling

⁸⁶ mentioned before

⁸⁷ bringing something new which changed things a lot

⁸⁸ completely, extremely

⁸⁹ cruel and violent

⁹⁰ punished very painfully

⁹¹ put to death



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[00:16:52] Beccaria challenged all of that; in his introduction he questions why it should be that in all human societies one part is given “the height of power and happiness“ and reduces the other part – the poor and weak – to “the extreme of weakness and [misery](#)⁹²“.

[00:17:12] His work explains how good laws should work against this [tendency](#)⁹³ and so “[diffuse](#)⁹⁴ their [influence](#) universally and equally.”

[00:17:22] This might seem to us to be simple good sense, but in Europe of the 18th century this was revolutionary and [radical](#), enlightened thinking.

[00:17:34] And because of this, Beccaria can be [justly](#)⁹⁵ described as the father of criminal law.

[00:17:42] So, these are some of the most famous individual thinkers of The Enlightenment, but before we move onto the [influence](#) of the Enlightenment, it’s worth mentioning a [remarkable](#)⁹⁶ [innovation](#)⁹⁷ that came out of this period.

⁹² great unhappiness

⁹³ approach, direction

⁹⁴ spread

⁹⁵ in a fair way

⁹⁶ worthy of attention

⁹⁷ a new idea or method



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[00:17:57] And that is the [Encyclopedia](#)⁹⁸.

[00:18:00] Its founding [editor](#)⁹⁹, the Frenchman Denis Diderot stated that its mission was for people “to be able to inform themselves and to know things.”

[00:18:11] 17 [volumes](#)¹⁰⁰ were printed over a period of 21 years amounting to 20 million words.

[00:18:20] It was a [collaboration](#)¹⁰¹, drawing on the best minds of the day and aiming to include information across a whole range of subjects and “to change the way people think“.

[00:18:33] Now, [encyclopedias](#)¹⁰² have obviously gone slightly [out of fashion](#)¹⁰³ with the creation of The Internet, but it’s hard to [overestimate](#)¹⁰⁴ quite how important this invention was.

⁹⁸ a set of books that give information on many subjects in alphabetical order

⁹⁹ the person in charge of a text-based work

¹⁰⁰ books as parts of a series

¹⁰¹ the action of working together towards a common goal

¹⁰² sets of books that give information on many subjects in alphabetical order

¹⁰³ unpopular at a certain period of time

¹⁰⁴ think that something is better than it is



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[00:18:45] It wasn't free, of course, but people could suddenly find information for themselves, they could inform themselves and make up their own minds through rational thought.

[00:18:58] Now, as we move on to consider the [influence](#) of Enlightenment ideas on the world that came after them, and of course our modern world, perhaps the [stated](#)¹⁰⁵ mission of Diderot and his [encyclopedia](#) might remind you of an [ever present](#)¹⁰⁶ element of our own knowledge universe.

[00:19:17] Google, of course, whose mission is “to organise the world’s information making it universally accessible and useful.”

[00:19:26] A [cynic](#)¹⁰⁷, or [sceptic](#) even, might say that Diderot’s mission was purely intellectual and for the public good, whereas Google is also pretty good at making money, but that is [beside the point](#)¹⁰⁸.

[00:19:40] Let’s pause for a moment and [take stock](#)¹⁰⁹ – or gather our thoughts.

¹⁰⁵ something already expressed and specified

¹⁰⁶ always present

¹⁰⁷ a person who thinks that people are interested only in their own benefit

¹⁰⁸ not relevant

¹⁰⁹ carefully think about what has been said



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[00:19:46] We have had a quick survey of some of the key **contributors** to the Enlightenment and started to look at the ways in which they, **collectively**¹¹⁰, **amassed**¹¹¹ knowledge, **collaborated** and **stimulated**¹¹² each other to think.

[00:20:00] Before moving on to discuss the impact and **influence** they had on different countries in the succeeding 50 years, let me **illustrate**¹¹³ a bit more fully how their ideas spread and in doing so say a little bit about the climate of ideas that operated in Europe at this time.

[00:20:20] During the first half of the 18th century there was a particularly rapid growth in all the different ways that humans could **congregate**¹¹⁴ – that they could meet together – and communicate.

[00:20:34] Coffee houses became the centre of talk and political debate.

[00:20:39] Especially in England, newspapers and political **pamphlets**¹¹⁵ - or short essays – were **plentiful**¹¹⁶, they were all over the place.

¹¹⁰ as a group

¹¹¹ collected, gathered

¹¹² provided exciting inspiration, encouraged

¹¹³ give a clear image of

¹¹⁴ come together

¹¹⁵ a small book with few pages giving information about something

¹¹⁶ a lot



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[00:20:49] Not only were there the learned societies mentioned before, but also debating societies [sprung up](#)¹¹⁷.

[00:20:57] New [heights](#)¹¹⁸ of [sophistication](#)¹¹⁹ in entertainment became popular, with London, the largest and richest city in Europe, a particularly strong centre for music, attracting [[albeit](#)¹²⁰ only for 15 months] the young Mozart, and – more permanently – Georg Händel.

[00:21:17] Now, moving on to the biggest effects of the Enlightenment– and here I am pointing towards the mini series on revolutions - we are talking about three very different kinds of revolution: the Industrial, the American and the French.

[00:21:34] Taking each one in turn, I will say a brief word on each revolution, but leave the majority for the full episodes.

[00:21:42] So, the Industrial Revolution was the period from approximately 1760 to 1820 when Western Europe initially and then the USA went through a period of [explosive](#)¹²¹

¹¹⁷ appeared suddenly

¹¹⁸ levels of success

¹¹⁹ the result of being cultured and having knowledge

¹²⁰ though

¹²¹ sudden and very big



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and **transformative**¹²² growth based on the use of new industrial techniques, such as spinning machines for making **cotton**¹²³ and **steam**¹²⁴ engines.

[00:22:07] Although it is difficult to show direct cause and effect, the scientific method and Empiricism, **pioneered**¹²⁵ by Enlightenment thinkers, **laid the basis**¹²⁶ for this revolution.

[00:22:21] Both industrialists and Enlightenment thinkers gathered in coffee shops and in learned societies, and so there was a great sharing of ideas that helped **stimulate**¹²⁷ the Industrial Revolution.

[00:22:36] And the concept of empiricism, of trial and error, and of experimentation, created completely new professions, such as the engineer, and it was these people who were some of the key drivers of The Industrial Revolution.

[00:22:54] Moving on to The American Revolution, there is no doubting the impact that the Enlightenment had on it.

¹²² causing change

¹²³ a soft white material used for making clothes

¹²⁴ the invisible form the water takes after being boiled

¹²⁵ brought new ideas

¹²⁶ made the required preparations

¹²⁷ create interest and enthusiasm for



The Enlightenment

[00:23:03] Of the most important **founding fathers** of the United States, Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson were particularly **influenced** by what they saw and heard when visiting Europe and also what they read.

[00:23:17] Jefferson, the **architect**¹²⁸ of the American Constitution, **declared**¹²⁹ Locke, Newton and Bacon as “three of the greatest men that had ever lived.”

[00:23:29] In designing the American Constitution, the **influence** of the thought of Isaac Newton is there in the way in which the different **interlocking**¹³⁰ and **counterbalancing**¹³¹ parts of the Constitution work together.

[00:23:44] As we saw in the final days of President Donald Trump, this **robustly**¹³² and **ingeniously**¹³³ organised mechanism can **withstand**¹³⁴ great pressure - it's quite the **legacy**¹³⁵.

¹²⁸ the person who is responsible for making an idea real

¹²⁹ announced officially as

¹³⁰ connected and fit together

¹³¹ balanced by applying equal force to each other

¹³² strong and reliable

¹³³ in a clever and original way

¹³⁴ resist

¹³⁵ something valuable received from the past



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[00:23:57] Whilst the Industrial Revolution brought about a [seismic¹³⁶](#) and massive change in society and the American Revolution was a war of independence against the [colonial¹³⁷](#) power, the French Revolution was the [overthrowing¹³⁸](#) of an existing [regime¹³⁹](#) - at that time one of the most famous [monarchies¹⁴⁰](#) in the world.

[00:24:20] As you may well have detected from what you've learned about the French [contributors](#) to the Enlightenment, they often found themselves needing to escape from France because they were seen as representing a threat to the [status quo](#).

[00:24:34] Which, history shows us, they were.

[00:24:38] As you will learn about in the episode on The French Revolution, Enlightenment ideas about the social contract between the rulers and the ruled and in particular about each human being's rights to liberty and equality were at the heart of its revolutionary ideals.

[00:24:58] And it shows you quite how important some of the Enlightenment thinkers in France were that shortly after the French Revolution the bodies of both Voltaire and Rousseau were brought to be buried with full honours in the Pantheon in Paris.

¹³⁶ having a very strong effect

¹³⁷ related to the practice of a country expanding to other countries

¹³⁸ removing someone from power with force

¹³⁹ a strict government

¹⁴⁰ form of governments ruled by a single person



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[00:25:15] The number of people who lined the streets in Paris to pay their respects to Voltaire was said to be around one million, which is more people than the entire population of Paris at the time.

[00:25:31] So, to the final section and some concluding thoughts on the impact and [influence](#) of the Enlightenment movement on today's world.

[00:25:41] As I have indicated earlier, you can see its [workings](#)¹⁴¹ in the American constitution in particular, and you can see it in the current French state, with its [emphasis](#)¹⁴² on individual freedoms, and the separation of church and state.

[00:25:56] These ideas about what [constitutes](#)¹⁴³ good government and commonly accepted ideas about civil liberties have been [enshrined](#)¹⁴⁴ in such concepts as universal human rights.

[00:26:09] Indeed, a lot of these ideas, whether that's challenging the [status quo](#), or the importance of reason, of equality between people, or of the right to access information, they don't seem particularly revolutionary at all to us now.

[00:26:27] If anything, for most people living in a Western democracy, they seem normal.

¹⁴¹ effect

¹⁴² special attention and consideration

¹⁴³ forms, makes up

¹⁴⁴ protected and kept safe as something very important



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[00:26:34] And that is no doubt the most lasting legacy of The Enlightenment.

[00:26:40] OK then, that is it for today's slightly longer than usual episode on The Age of Enlightenment.

[00:26:48] I hope it's been an interesting one, that you've learnt something new, and that it will be helpful when it comes to this mini series on the Age of Revolution.

[00:26:58] As always, I would love to know what you thought of this episode.

[00:27:02] Which Enlightenment thinkers, or ideas, do you think had the greatest impact? Was it even someone, or an idea, that I didn't mention in this episode?

[00:27:13] I would love to know.

[00:27:14] You can head right in to our community forum, which is at community.leonardoenglish.com and get chatting away to other curious minds.

[00:27:24] You've been listening to English Learning for Curious Minds, by Leonardo English.

[00:27:30] I'm Alastair Budge, you stay safe, and I'll catch you in the next episode.

[END OF EPISODE]



Key vocabulary

Word	Definition
Intellectual	related to thinking and understanding of ideas
Profound	very big
Principles	ideas that serve as a basis of understanding something
Influenced	affected
Tricky	needing careful attention
Uprising	an act of resistance, sometimes violent
Date	give the date when something happened
Underline	give emphasis, pay attention to something important
On his behalf	for his benefit and interest, as his representative
Structured	organised
Hierarchical	arranged in order of rank
Gravity	the force that pulls objects towards one another
Conventional	traditional and ordinary



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Struck	hit with force
Circumstances	conditions
Spared	saved, kept safe
Worshippers	people who attend a church service to adore God
Brothels	places where sex is sold
Prostitutes	people who have sex for money
Twin	something very similar and connected to something else
Sovereign	something of the highest power and importance
Wisdom	knowledge and understanding of things
Civil servant	a person who works for a government service
Credited	recognised as
Enquiry	a scientific method based on examination and investigation of things
Meticulous	very careful and detailed
Thorough	detailed, careful and complete
Judgements	the ability to make the right decisions



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Fancy	impressive
Founding father	a person who starts a movement
Principle	an idea that serves as a basis of understanding something
Influence	the power to affect things
Instrumental	something that had a very important role
Expansively	in a way that covers a wide area
Target	a thing that is criticised
Monarchs	the heads of a state, kings or queens
All-powerful	having complete power
Nobility	group of people belonging to the highest social class
Just	fair
Status quo	the present situation
Contributors	people who play a significant part in making something happen
He invites me	he provides me with the opportunity to
Scepticism	an attitude through which you doubt accepted opinions



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Sceptic	someone who questions and doubts accepted opinions
Connotation	an idea or feeling that comes to mind when hearing a particular word
Vitally	in a way that is absolutely necessary
Profoundly	deeply or extremely
Influential	having a big effect
Finite	having a limit or end
Defined	certain, particular
Encouraged	tried to persuade
Self-interest	a concern for one's advantage and well-being
Vivid	lively and detailed
Benevolence	the quality of being kind and helpful
Butcher	a person who sells meat in a shop
Brewer	a person who makes beer
Regard	concern
Legend has it	according to legend, to what people say



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Oversimplification	to explain something in such a simple way that it leads to misunderstanding
Pioneering	someone that brings new ideas
Basis	the most important ideas from which something is developed
Puzzle	something difficult to explain or understand
Arguably	very possibly true
Champion	support or defend
Prevailing	winning
Radical	very different from the usual
In conflict	in serious disagreement
Exiled	sent away of one's country, usually due to political reasons
Banished	sent away of one's country as a punishment
Constitutional	ruling according to a constitution (laws according to which a country is being governed)
Subsequent	one coming after the other
Collaborated	worked with each other for a common purpose



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Funeral	a ceremony for burying the body of a dead person
Estate	a large property of land with a large house on it
Founding fathers	a group of people who start a movement
Likewise	in the same way
Heretical	opposing the official or popular opinion, especially one of the Church
Corrupted	turned from good to bad in morals and actions
Institutions	official organisations having an important role in society
Corrupt	turn good people to bad in morals and actions
Denounced	publicly declared to be evil
Antichrist	a person seen as opposing the Christian Church
Flee	escape by running away
Splendidly	extremely well
Spine-tingling	thrilling
Aforementioned	mentioned before
Ground-breaking	bringing something new which changed things a lot



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Utterly	completely, extremely
Brutal	cruel and violent
Tortured	punished very painfully
Executed	put to death
Misery	great unhappiness
Tendency	approach, direction
Diffuse	spread
Justly	in a fair way
Remarkable	worthy of attention
Innovation	a new idea or method
Encyclopedia	a set of books that give information on many subjects in alphabetical order
Editor	the person in charge of a text-based work
Volumes	books as parts of a series
Collaboration	the action of working together towards a common goal
Encyclopedias	sets of books that give information on many subjects in alphabetical



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order

Out of fashion

unpopular at a certain period of time

Overestimate

think that something is better than it is

Stated

something already expressed and specified

Ever present

always present

Cynic

a person who thinks that people are interested only in their own benefit

Beside the point

not relevant

Take stock

carefully think about what has been said

Collectively

as a group

Amassed

collected, gathered

Stimulated

provided exciting inspiration, encouraged

Illustrate

give a clear image of

Congregate

come together

Pamphlets

a small book with few pages giving information about something

Plentiful

a lot



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Sprung up	appeared suddenly
Heights	levels of success
Sophistication	the result of being cultured and having knowledge
Albeit	though
Explosive	sudden and very big
Transformative	causing change
Cotton	a soft white material used for making clothes
Steam	the invisible form the water takes after being boiled
Pioneered	brought new ideas
Laid the basis	made the required preparations
Stimulate	create interest and enthusiasm for
Architect	the person who is responsible for making an idea real
Declared	announced officially as
Interlocking	connected and fit together
Counterbalancing	balanced by applying equal force to each other



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Robustly	strong and reliable
Ingeniously	in a clever and original way
Withstand	resist
Legacy	something valuable received from the past
Seismic	having a very strong effect
Colonial	related to the practice of a country expanding to other countries
Overthrowing	removing someone from power with force
Regime	a strict government
Monarchies	form of governments ruled by a single person
Workings	effect
Emphasis	special attention and consideration
Constitutes	forms, makes up
Enshrined	protected and kept safe as something very important

We'd love to get your feedback on this podcast.

What did you like? What could we do better?



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What did you struggle to understand?

Let us know in the forum community.leonardoenglish.com

