The Age of Reason is also known as the Enlightenment. It lasted between the mid 1600’s through the late 1700’s. The thinking of that age pushed for more freedom for common people based on self-governance, natural rights, and natural law. Natural rights is the concept that all people have basic rights no matter what religion they are, what country they live in or how much money they have. An emphasis on liberty, individual rights, reason, and common sense was all a big part of Enlightenment thinking. These principles were a revolutionary change from theocracy (rule by religious leaders), oligarchy (rule by a few) and the divine right of kings. The Enlightenment is very different from the Middle Ages. Power went from being in the hands of Kings and the church to being in the hands of the people. Enlightenment thinking shaped our democracy here in America and is the foundation of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

Answer the following questions in complete sentences.

1. The Age of Reason is also known as what?
2. What are natural rights?
3. How did the Enlightenment thinking effect the United States?
Two Treatises of Government, by English philosopher John Locke, was published in 1690. Locke argued that the human lives were improved by accepting a social contract under which the state protects its citizens, and the citizens allow those in power to rule. One of the leading Enlightenment thinkers, Locke inspired political leaders to rethink people's relationship to the state.

The Social Contract, (1762) by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, theorized the best way in which to set up a political system. Like John Locke, who believed that a government can only be legitimate (real) if it has been approved by the people. Rousseau claimed that a perfect society would be controlled by the "general will" of its people.

"The legislative power belongs to the people, and can belong to it alone."

The Social Contract helped to inspire political reforms or revolutions in Europe, especially in France. The Social Contract finally killed the myth that the King was appointed by God to rule.

**Answer the following questions in complete sentences.**

1) What idea were Locke and Rousseau known for?
2) How did their writing change the politics of Europe?
3) Explain the Social Contract in your own words.
#3 The Invisible Hand

*The Wealth of Nations* was written by British philosopher Adam Smith in 1776. Today he is seen as the father of modern economics. In his book he describes economics and capitalism. He explains that capitalism, while it seems sometimes unfair and uncontrolled, is actually guided to make the right amount and variety of goods by a so-called "invisible hand". People actually guide the “invisible hand.” If a business tries to sell a product that nobody wants or needs they will go out of business. If a business takes advantage of its customers, charging them too much or not living up to their promises they too will not stay in business.

Smith believed that when a person pursues his self-interest (goes after what he wants and needs) he makes society better. Competition in capitalism, he argued, would help society as a whole by keeping prices low, while still allowing for a wide variety of goods and services.

“"It is not from the benevolence (goodness) of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own self-interest. We address ourselves, not to their humanity but to their self-love, and never talk to them of our own necessities but of their advantages.”"
#4 Thomas Paine

Thomas Paine played a huge role in the American Revolution due to his pamphlet, *Common Sense*. His writing spread quickly among the colonists, in three months, 100,000 copies sold throughout the American colonies.

*Common Sense* didn’t really say anything new, what made it special was the way it was written. Paine took complicated political ideas and wrote about them in a simple way so that the average person could understand them. In it he pushed for American independence from Great Britain. Many readers were shocked by Paine’s hatred of the British monarchy; the pamphlet called King George III “the Royal Brute of Great Britain.

In the early months of the American Revolutionary War Paine published *The Crisis* pamphlet series, it encouraged the colonists to fight the British army. To inspire his troops, General George Washington had *The Crisis* read aloud to them.

“These are the times that try men’s souls: The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman.”

Thomas Paine, *The Crisis*

**Answer the following questions in complete sentences.**

1) How did Thomas Paine affect American politics?
2) What was so different about the pamphlet *Common Sense*?
3) What does the above quote mean in your own words?
Thomas Jefferson was the third President of the United States (1801–1809), perhaps more importantly he was the main author of the Declaration of Independence.

Jefferson believed that each individual has "certain unalienable rights." That is, these rights exist with or without a government; man cannot create, take, or give them away. The right to "liberty" is an issue that Jefferson is also known for writing about. He called liberty the right to do anything that doesn't trample on the rights of others. Jefferson believed that the government could not create a right to liberty, but could violate it. The government, according to Jefferson, should stop people in society from stomping on the liberty of other people, and also stop itself from limiting the liberty of individuals.

'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.' — Declaration of Independence

Answer the following questions in complete sentences.

1) Thomas Jefferson is known for writing what document?
2) What are unalienable rights according to Jefferson?
3) How does the quote from the Declaration of Independence illustrate enlightenment thinking?