Frederick the Great of Prussia

Prussia is roughly modern day Germany and Poland.

Excerpt from his book written in 1752

**Rise of the Great Powers**

Politics is the science of always using the most convenient means in accord with one’s own interests. In order to act in **conformit*y*** with one’s interests, one must know what these interests are, and in order to gain this knowledge, one must study their history and application. ... One must attempt ... to know the ... people which one wants to govern in order to know if one must treat them **lenientl*y (not strictly)*** or severely. ...

[The Prussian nobility] has sacrificed its life and goods for the service of the state; its loyalty and merit have earned it the protection of all its rulers, and it is one of the duties [of the ruler] to aid those noble families which have become **impoverished** in order to keep them in possession of their lands. ...

A well-conducted government must have an underlying concept ... that it could be likened to a system of philosophy. All actions taken must be well-reasoned, and all financial, political, and military matters must flow towards one goal, which is the strengthening of the state and the furthering of its power. ... A **sovereign (ruler, king or queen)** is not elevated to his high position; supreme power has not been confined to him in order that he may live in lazy luxury, enriching himself by the labor of the people, being happy while everyone else suffers. The sovereign is the first servant of the state. He is well-paid ... but one demands that he work efficiently for the good of the state, and that he ... pay personal attention to the most important problems. ...

You can see, without doubt, how important it is that the King of Prussia govern personally. ... All parts of the government are ... linked with each other. Finance, politics, and military affairs are inseparable; ... a Prince who governs personally, who has formed his [own] political system, will not be handicapped when occasions arise where he has to act swiftly. ...

Catholics, Lutherans, ... Jews, and other Christian sects live in this state, and live together in peace. If the sovereign ... declares himself for one religion or another ... heated **disputes ensue** and, in the end, the religion **persecuted** will leave the fatherland, and millions of subjects will enrich our neighbors.

It is of no concern in politics whether the ruler has a religion or whether he has none. All religions ... are founded on **superstitious** systems. ... It is impossible for a man of good sense

... not to see their error; but these prejudices ... were made for men, and one must know enough to respect the public and not to outrage its faith, whatever religion be involved.

Catherine the Great, Ruler of Russia

Excerpt from her proposal of new law codes

**Proposals for a New Law Code**

11. Every other Form of Government whatsoever [other than monarchy] would not only have been **prejudicial (causing harm)** to Russia, but would even have proved its entire Ruin.

12. Another Reason is: That it is better to be subject to the Laws under one Master, than to be **subservient(lesser or dependent on)** to many.

13. What is the true End of Monarchy? Not to deprive People of their natural Liberty; but to correct their Actions, in order to attain the supreme Good.

14. The Form of Government, therefore, which best attains this End, and at the same Time sets less Bounds than others to natural **Liberty**, is that which coincides with the Views and Purposes of rational Creatures, and answers the End, upon which we ought to fix a steadfast Eye in the Regulations of **civil Polity (government)**.

15. The Intention and the End of Monarchy, is the Glory of the Citizens, of the State, and of the Sovereign.

16. But, from this Glory, a Sense of Liberty arises in a People governed by a Monarch; which may produce in these States as much Energy in transacting the most important Affairs, and may contribute as much to the Happiness of the Subjects, as even Liberty itself. ...

33. The Laws ought to be so framed, as to secure the Safety of every Citizen as much as possible.

34. The Equality of the Citizens consists in this, that they should all be subject to the same Laws.

35. This Equality requires Institutions so well adapted, as to prevent the Rich from oppressing those who are not so wealthy as themselves, and converting all the Charges and Employments entrusted to them as **Magistrates (judges)** only, to their own private **Emolument (payment for work done)**. ...

37. In a State or **Assemblage** of People that live together in a Community, where there are Laws, Liberty can only consist in doing that which every One ought to do, and not to be **constrained** to do that which One ought not to do.

38. A Man ought to form in his own Mind an exact and clear Idea of what Liberty is. Liberty is the Right of doing whatsoever the Laws allow: And if any one Citizen could do what the Laws forbid, there would be no more Liberty; because others would have an equal Power of doing the same.

Joseph II of Austria

Excerpt from a letter written by Joseph II

I determined from the very **commencement** of my reign to **adorn (add decoration to)** my **diadem** (crown) with the love of my people, to act in the administration of affairs according to just, **impartial (not biased)**, and liberal principles; consequently, I granted toleration [in 1781], and removed the **yoke (burden, something that harms people)** which had oppressed the Protestants for centuries.

**Fanaticism (holding extreme belief)** shall in future be known in my states only by the **contempt** I have for it; nobody shall any longer be exposed to hardships on account of his **creed (religious beliefs)**; no man shall be **compelled** in future to profess the religion of the state if it be *contrary* to his persuasion. ...

Tolerance is an effect of the increase of knowledge which now enlightens Europe and which is owing to philosophy and the efforts of great men; it is a convincing proof of the improvement of the human mind, which has boldly reopened a road ... which, fortunately for mankind, has now become the highway of monarchs.

Thomas Jefferson to William C. Jarvis

"If the Legislature fails to pass laws for a census, for paying the Judges and other officers of government, for establishing a militia, for naturalization as prescribed by the Constitution, or if they fail to meet in Congress, the Judges cannot issue their mandamus to them; if the President fails to supply the place of a judge, to appoint other civil or military officers, to issue requisite commissions, the Judges cannot force him. They can issue their mandamus or distringas [i.e., property seizures] to no executive or legislative officer to enforce the fulfilment of their official duties any more that the President or Legislature may issue orders to the Judges or their officers. Betrayed by the English example, and unaware, as it should seem, of the control of our Constitution in this particular, they have at times overstepped their limit by undertaking to command executive officers in the discharge of their executive duties; but the Constitution, in keeping the three departments distinct and independent, restrains the authority of the Judges to judiciary organs as it does the Executive and Legislative to executive and legislative organs."

Enlightenment in Action

For each of the primary sources you and your group will find examples of ideas from the philosophes and place it on the chart below. There are multiple examples from each thinker so see you should have more than one for each!

**Voltaire:**

**Rousseau:**

**Montesquieu:**

**Wollstonecraft**:

**Smith:**