

MAIN IDEA

Forming Generalizations

D Why was the Enlightenment such a revolutionary movement?

The Enlightenment also had a profound effect on political thought in the colonies. Colonial leaders such as Thomas Jefferson used reason to conclude that individuals have natural rights, which governments must respect. Enlightenment principles eventually would lead many colonists to question the authority of the British monarchy. **D**

THE GREAT AWAKENING By the early 1700s, the Puritan church had lost its grip on society, and church membership was in decline. The new Massachusetts charter of 1691 forced Puritans to allow freedom of worship and banned the practice of permitting only Puritan church members to vote. Furthermore, many people seemed to be doing so well in this world that they paid little attention to the next. As Puritan merchants prospered, they developed a taste for material possessions and sensual pleasures.

Jonathan Edwards, of Northampton, Massachusetts, was one member of the clergy who sought to revive the intensity and commitment of the original Puritan vision. Edwards preached that church attendance was not enough for salvation; people must acknowledge their sinfulness and feel God's love for them. In his most famous sermon, delivered in 1741, Edwards vividly described God's mercy.

A PERSONAL VOICE

JONATHAN EDWARDS

“The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider, or some loathsome insect over the fire, abhors [hates] you, and is dreadfully provoked: His wrath towards you burns like fire; He looks upon you as worthy of nothing else but to be cast into the fire; . . . and yet it is nothing but His hand that holds you from falling into the fire every moment.”

—“Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God”

Other preachers traveled from village to village, stirring people to rededicate themselves to God. Such traveling preachers attracted thousands, making it necessary for revival meetings to be held outdoors. The resulting religious revival, known as the **Great Awakening**, lasted throughout the 1730s and 1740s.



VIDEO

Did You Know: Ben Franklin

hmhsocialstudies.com

KEY PLAYERS



BENJAMIN FRANKLIN
1706–1790

Benjamin Franklin was one of the leading champions of Enlightenment ideals in America. Like other scientists and philosophers of the Enlightenment, Franklin believed that human beings could use their intellectual powers to improve their lot.

Franklin's observations and experiments led to a number of inventions, including the lightning rod, bifocals, and a new kind of heating system that became known as the Franklin stove. Inventions like these proved that knowledge derived from scientific experiment could be put to practical use.

Franklin's achievements brought him world renown. In 1756 British scholars elected him to the Royal Society, and in 1772 France honored him with membership in the French Academy of Sciences.



JONATHAN EDWARDS
1703–1758

Descended from a long line of Puritan ministers, Jonathan Edwards denied that humans had the power to perfect themselves. He believed that “however you may have reformed your life in many things,” as a sinner you were destined for hell unless you had a “great change of heart.”

Edwards was a brilliant thinker who entered Yale College when he was only 13. His preaching was one of the driving forces of the Great Awakening. Ironically, when the religious revival died down, Edwards's own congregation rejected him for being too strict about doctrine. Edwards moved to Stockbridge, Massachusetts, in 1751, where he lived most of his remaining years as missionary to a Native American settlement.



▲ The British minister George Whitefield was a major force behind the Great Awakening. In his seven journeys to the American colonies between 1738 and 1770, Whitefield preached dramatic sermons that brought many listeners to tears.

The Great Awakening brought many colonists, as well as Native Americans and African Americans, into organized Christian churches for the first time. As the movement gained momentum, it also challenged the authority of established churches. Some colonists abandoned their old Puritan or Anglican congregations. At the same time, independent denominations, such as the Baptists and Methodists, gained new members. The Great Awakening also led to an increased interest in higher education, as several Protestant denominations founded colleges such as Princeton (originally the College of New Jersey), Brown, Columbia (originally King's College), and Dartmouth to train ministers for their rapidly growing churches.

Vocabulary
denomination:
 a large group of religious congregations united by shared beliefs

While the Great Awakening and the Enlightenment emphasized opposing aspects of human experience—emotionalism and reason, respectively—they had similar consequences. Both caused people to question traditional authority. Moreover, both stressed the importance of the individual—the Enlightenment by emphasizing human reason, and the Great Awakening by de-emphasizing the role of church authority.

These movements helped lead the colonists to question Britain's authority over their lives. The separation between Britain

and the colonies was further hastened by another significant event, a North American war between Great Britain and France, in which the colonists fought on Britain's side.

SECTION 3

ASSESSMENT

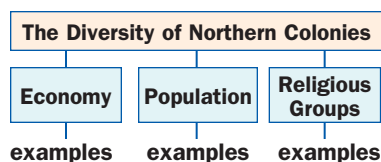
1. TERMS & NAMES For each term or name, write a sentence explaining its significance.

- Enlightenment
- Benjamin Franklin
- Jonathan Edwards
- Great Awakening

MAIN IDEA

2. TAKING NOTES

Re-create the diagram below on your paper and fill it in with historical examples that illustrate the main idea at the top.



Name the advantages and the disadvantages of this kind of society.

CRITICAL THINKING

3. COMPARING

What positive and negative trends that emerged in the Northern colonies during the 1700s do you think still affect the United States today? Support your responses with details from the text. **Think About:**

- the growth of cities
- the influx of immigrants
- the status of women and African Americans
- the effects of the Enlightenment and the Great Awakening

4. MAKING INFERENCES

How do you think a person who believed in the ideas of the Enlightenment might have assessed the Salem witchcraft trials? Support your response with reasons.

5. CONTRASTING

In what ways did the Northern colonies differ from the Southern colonies in the 1700s? Use evidence from the text to support your response.