

CONTEXTUALIZATION

In the early 18th century, Baroque art styles continued to focus on religious themes and the promotion of royal grandeur. The emerging middle class of bankers and merchants became more influential as cities grew and global trade increased. The Scientific Revolution's emphasis on empiricism and rationalism spread beyond the scientific community as Enlightenment-era writers sought to apply these values to society at large.

OVERVIEW

As the middle class expanded and gained influence in Western Europe, the arts shifted in focus from the promotion of religion and absolute monarchies to reflect middle-class values. Enlightenment values were prevalent in art and literature. The innovation of the political pamphlet facilitated the spread of new ideas to wide audiences in spite of continued censorship by government and religious authorities.

KEY TERMS

Pamphlet

In the eighteenth century, political writers often circulated their ideas through publishing pamphlets, which were short publications (usually 40 pages or less) that were folded and stapled rather than bound as a book.

Consumer Revolution

Due to the increased availability of luxury goods from overseas, Europe's expanding middle class developed a consumer culture that was based on imitated the consumption habits of the aristocracy.

Neoclassicism

The Enlightenment led to a renewed interest in the art, architecture, and literature of ancient Greece and Rome. Neoclassical artists consciously imitated Roman and Renaissance styles while promoting the values of the Enlightenment.

COMPARE AND CONTRAST

16th-century Renaissance art and 18th-century Neoclassical art were **similar** because...

Renaissance art and Neoclassical art were both inspired by classical Greek and Roman art. Both styles stressed realism, symmetry, and restraint. Artists in both periods used art to connect the classical era with their own times.

16th-century Renaissance art and 18th-century Neoclassical art were **different** because...

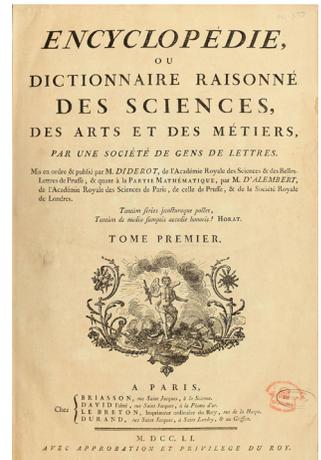
Religious themes were prevalent in Renaissance art, while Neoclassical art appealed to a more secularized European society during the Age of Enlightenment.

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THE LITERARY ENLIGHTENMENT

Enlightenment ideas spread like wildfire through European society thanks to the popularization of **pamphlets**, which were short booklets that enabled political writers to get their ideas into many hands at a low cost. **Denis Diderot**, went to much greater lengths to circulate knowledge, publishing a multi-volume **Encyclopédie** that offered the literate public a source of knowledge that was not controlled by the Catholic Church.

The 18th century also marked a period of increased European interest in cultures outside of Europe. Europeans read firsthand observations of Asiatic cultures in published travel journals. Inspired by such a travel journal, **Montesquieu** published *Persian Letters*, a novel written as a collection of letters written by fictional Persian travelers on a journey to France.



Title page of an early volume of Diderot's Encyclopédie

THE CONSUMER REVOLUTION

During the 18th century, the rising middle class began to willfully imitate aristocratic tastes, purchasing luxury goods to show their status. They began purchasing clothing for fashion rather than for practical use. Consumption of sugar—formerly a luxury—more than doubled during the 18th century.

NEOCLASSICAL ART

In the early 18th century, European monarchs continued to employ the grandeur of Baroque art to project their power. By the 1760s, increasing middle-class interest in purchasing art called for a new art style—or rather, a return to the classical style. **Neoclassicism** made use of classical history to promote Enlightenment values and good citizenship. **Jacques-Louis David**, a Neoclassical painter, used Roman history to express his support for Rousseau's philosophy and the French Revolution. Neoclassical architects designed classically-inspired churches, museums, and government buildings. One such building was the **Pantheon of Paris**, a domed structure that was commissioned as a church, but re-designated for the secular purpose of entombing French intellectuals.



Jacques-Louis David's painting, *The Oath of the Horatii*, features a scene from Livy's *History of Rome*, in which three Romans swear an oath to defend the Roman state in battle. David used this scene from classical antiquity to promote Rousseau's idea of citizenship and gender norms.