



### 3.11 Critical Challenge: Was Classical Liberalism an Improvement?

[Here is a link to the instruction video also found on the assignment download page](#)

#### Big Ideas



- *Examine the impacts of liberal thought on 18th century society.*
- *Explore the growth of liberalism.*
- *Explore the relationship between the values of liberalism and the origins of liberal thought.*
- *Identify historic and contemporary expressions of individualism and collectivism.*

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## Instructions

1. Complete the textbook readings provided for this assignment. Read the background for this assignment.
2. Plan your response.
3. Write your response. Download the entire assignment and submit.
4. Check your feedback for this assignment following submission.

## Background

In this assignment, write a position paragraph describing whether or not classical liberalism improved 18th century (the 1700s) European society.

To be **historically accurate**, use the information from Unit 3 and the readings from Chapter 4 of the textbook, *Understandings of Ideologies*.

Research for the position paragraph will include the chart below.

- Describe the most significant changes political and economic aspects of 18th century (1700s) European society **before and after** classical liberalism developed. These periods are listed in the readings.

Feudalism		Enlightenment		Modern Liberalism	
		Classic Liberalism			
Europe		1500s	1600s	1700s	1800s 1900s
<b>Political System before the Enlightenment:</b>  <b>Absolute monarchy</b>  <b>Feudalism</b>  <b>Class system</b>		<b>Political System After:</b>  <b>Classic Liberalism</b> <b>Rights and freedoms</b> <b>Rule of law</b>		<b>Economic System before the Enlightenment:</b>  <b>Mercantilism</b> <b>Class system</b>	
				<b>Economic System After:</b>  <b>Capitalism</b> <b>Economic freedom</b>	

## Write an Essay

**Classical liberalism improved the lives of citizens. Do you agree or disagree with this statement and why?**

Use the information you researched in the above chart as examples to help support your position (position paragraph).

**Your written response should** defend your position about whether or not classical liberalism did or did not improve 18th century European society.

**Total /15** \*Based on the Position Paragraph rubric found at the end of the assignment

***Make sure you include information about all citizens (the rich, the poor) and how did it improve their lives.***

***DO NOT include information about the about Modern Liberalism.***

## Suggested Format

Introduction (3–5 sentences)

- Compare absolute monarchy and classical liberalism generally.
- Thesis statement should include the position on the question.

Paragraph 1 (5–7 sentences)

- Politically list and detail the changes that occurred during this time.
- What were the political experiences of average citizens?
- State whether this was positive or negative for citizens. Why?

Paragraph 2 (5–7 sentences)

- Economically list and detail the changes that occurred during this time.
- What were the economic experiences of average citizens?
- State whether this was positive or negative for citizens. Why?

Conclusion (3–5 sentences)

- Summarize the average person’s political and economic experiences.
- Summarize overall the standard of living for the majority.
- Take a position regarding the question and state why.

Include terminology.



<Write your response here.>

## Rubric for Position Paragraph(s)

<b>Scoring Criteria:</b>  <b>Position Paragraph</b>	<b>Explanations and Support</b> <b>10 marks</b>  When marking <b>Explanations and Support</b> , markers should consider <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• quality of explanations</li> <li>• selection and quality of support</li> </ul>	<b>Communication</b> <b>5 marks</b>  When marking <b>Communication</b> , markers should consider <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• organization and coherence</li> <li>• vocabulary (specificity and accuracy)</li> <li>• sentence construction (clarity and completeness)</li> <li>• grammar and mechanics (consistency of tense, punctuation, spelling, capitalization)</li> </ul>
<b>Excellent</b> <b>E</b>	Explanations are thorough and comprehensive, revealing a perceptive understanding. Support is specific and accurate. Errors, if present, do not detract from the response. <b>10</b>	The writing is fluent and effectively organized. Vocabulary is precise and effective. The writing demonstrates confident control of sentence construction, grammar, and mechanics. The occurrence of errors is rare. <b>5</b>
<b>Proficient</b> <b>Pf</b>	Explanations are appropriate and purposeful, revealing a clear understanding. Support is relevant and appropriate but may contain some minor errors. <b>8</b>	The writing is clearly organized. Vocabulary is accurate and appropriate. The writing demonstrates frequently effective control of sentence construction, grammar, and mechanics. The occurrence of errors is infrequent. <b>4</b>
<b>Satisfactory</b> <b>S</b>	Explanations are general and straightforward, revealing an acceptable understanding. Support is relevant but general, may be incompletely developed, and/or contains errors. <b>6</b>	The writing is generally clear and functionally organized. Vocabulary is generally accurate but not specific. The writing demonstrates basic control of sentence construction, grammar, and mechanics. Errors do not interfere seriously with communication. <b>3</b>
<b>Limited</b> <b>L</b>	Explanations are overgeneralized and/or redundant, revealing a confused, though discernable, understanding. Support is superficial, may not always be relevant, and contains significant errors. <b>4</b>	The writing is uneven and incomplete but is discernibly organized. Vocabulary is imprecise and/or inappropriate. The writing demonstrates faltering control of sentence construction, grammar, and mechanics. Errors hinder communication. <b>2</b>
<b>Poor</b> <b>P</b>	Explanations are tangential or minimal, revealing a negligible understanding. Support, if present, is incomplete, may be marginally relevant, and contains significant and/or frequent errors. <b>2</b>	The writing is unclear and disorganized. Vocabulary is ineffective and frequently incorrect. The writing demonstrates lack of control of sentence construction, grammar, and mechanics. Errors impede communication. <b>1</b>

<b>Total: /15</b>	
<b>Areas of Strength</b>	
<b>Areas to Improve</b>	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>Total: /15 marks</b> Once your assignment is graded, always review the comments and the feedback file. You will be expected to use those comments and feedback in your next assignment.

## Student Exemplars



### 50-60%

Well in the past, individuals mostly lived in societies based on limited individual's rights and freedoms. That meaning that liberal minded people demanded individual rights and freedoms. Classical Liberalism can be defined as the political ideology and a branch of liberalism which advocates civil liberties and political freedom with representative democracy under the rule of law.

Economic System involved the Industrial Revolution, which changed a lot of things in Europe. The British class system did limit the equality within the economy. People like Adam Smith that did challenge key ideas behind the mercantilist system showed us that people were free to compete, and be in their self-interests to improve. As those who were netter, stronger, faster, and smarter. Adam Smith was against government intervention because with self-interests and competition people were supposed to act freely. From an Economic perspective, it has changed for the people because individual know have say in things and are not under one person and people have the same rights as others.

Political System involved the American Revolution and it was against British monarchy and the French Revolution. It involved the 3 estates and how people were treated and how the equality of individuals was obviously not fair. People did not have a say when they were the lowest, however, the people at the top of the chain did and they also had better privileges. It has changed a lot now because we know we don't listen to one person telling us what to do and how we are supposed to live. We still have our freedom and rights. Furthermore, I think that classical liberalism has improved the lives of everyone. It changes everything we thought about back then and how far we have come from having an absolute monarch. (It did provide people more 'freedom" politically, but did the average person really benefit? Explain how it might have affected or changed their day to day life; you are doing too much "telling what happened" instead of focussing on the opinion part of the question.

**80-90%**

### **Classical Liberalism**

The changes from systems of monarchy to classical liberalism in many ways have paved the way for the modern systems of liberalism many countries such as Canada have today. It is true that in 18th century Europe, through classical liberalism, people achieved some of their goals, such as limiting excessive government intrusion, distributing wealth across a wider range of society, and were able to exercise many individual rights that they could not while living under an absolute monarchy. However, seeing the effects classical liberalism had on the majority of citizens during the late 18th century and early 19th century, although some changes were beneficial, I do not believe classical liberalism improved the lives of citizens to a large degree.

One significant political change was the transition from an absolute monarchy to a liberal democracy. Before classical liberalism, countries in Europe such as France and Spain were absolute monarchies. The king and his court had complete control over the government and people. They were able to restrict people's freedoms, such as the freedom to own private property, the freedom to travel, and the freedom of speech. Through revolutions and demands for change, a system of liberal democracy was implemented and people gained certain rights and freedoms that did not exist before, like the freedom from excessive government control and the freedom to make decisions regarding one's own life. A liberal democracy meant equality among citizens, elections, political parties, and political decisions that were made through democratically elected legislature. The other perhaps more significant change was economic change. Before classical liberalism, mercantilism was the economic system. Mercantilism required many workers, but most of the profit was kept by the government, which were usually kings and queens. After the development of classical liberalism, capitalism became the new economic system, meaning producers and consumers were given the freedom to make economic choices for themselves. The government was no longer able to interfere in the trade of labour and goods. I believe the increase of freedoms and rights with the extreme intrusion of government being limited were actual benefits people experienced during this time of classical liberalism. However, because self-interest became the primary focus in many cases, some very significant negative results did follow.

A small percentage of people benefited a great deal because of the absence of government control in the economy. Entrepreneurs like Cornelius Vanderbilt who made a fortune in the shipping and railroad industries were success stories of this new liberal system. Yet the majority of citizens' living conditions did not improve, and in some cases, arguably became worse. The Industrial Revolution brought many people to work in factories. Studies showed that the economic situation of the larger part of workers did not improve greatly during the Industrial Revolution. The cost of living rose, but the average wages of workers did not necessarily go up. Some businesses took advantage of the absence of government interference and subjected their workers to harsh conditions, such as senseless long-working hours, abuse, child labour, and unfair firing practices. Living areas were overcrowded, and many diseases and illnesses resulted from pollution and unsafe working conditions. Child labour was acceptable and many worked in mines, farms, factories, and as

servants in order to support their families. Many business owners favoured children over adults because of their size, obedience, and unlikelihood to join unions.

As a result of classical liberalism, I believe there was an increase in rights and freedoms for people in comparison with the time of absolute monarchy. Yet even though the government was limited and self-interest was supposed to improve the living conditions of all citizens, it failed to do so in many ways. This is why I believe classical liberalism did not considerably improve the lives of citizens.

Marker Response: Thank you for the introduction and conclusion. The details of the citizen's lives push this paper further. You divided the paper into two sections, which was beneficial when examining the time period.