

The Colonists Consider New Ideas

RETEACHING ACTIVITY

Chapter 4, Section 1

Directions: Study the summary carefully. Then fill in the chart below. This activity will help you to better understand how ideas of the Enlightenment affected the colonies.

The Enlightenment was a term used to describe a period where people were open to new ideas and looked beyond religious authority to explain how the universe worked. This period saw great developments in science, the humanities, religious thinking, and education.

Benjamin Franklin wrote *Poor Richard's Almanack*, which offered advice for right living and getting ahead in the world. John Locke, a philosopher, declared that human beings had natural, God-given rights to life, liberty, and property.

For the first time, scientific inquiry became a separate field of knowledge. Sir Isaac Newton discovered evidence that the world operates according to mathematical laws instead of by chance or miracles. Franklin discovered that lightning is actually electricity.

During the period of the Enlightenment, a revival of religious feeling took place in America. A Massachusetts preacher, Jonathan Edwards, was one of several ministers who emphasized the emotional rather than intellectual experience of religion. Edwards's sermons often described the dangers of leading a sinful life.

In education, the founding of Harvard college—the first American college—in 1636 reflected a stronger emphasis on formal schooling. As education increased, newspapers became the most important link among the colonists. In 1735 an American jury made a powerful decision in the case of John Peter Zenger, manager of a printing press in New York. The court found it legal to print complaints against the government if the complaints were based on truth. Freedom of the press had taken root.

