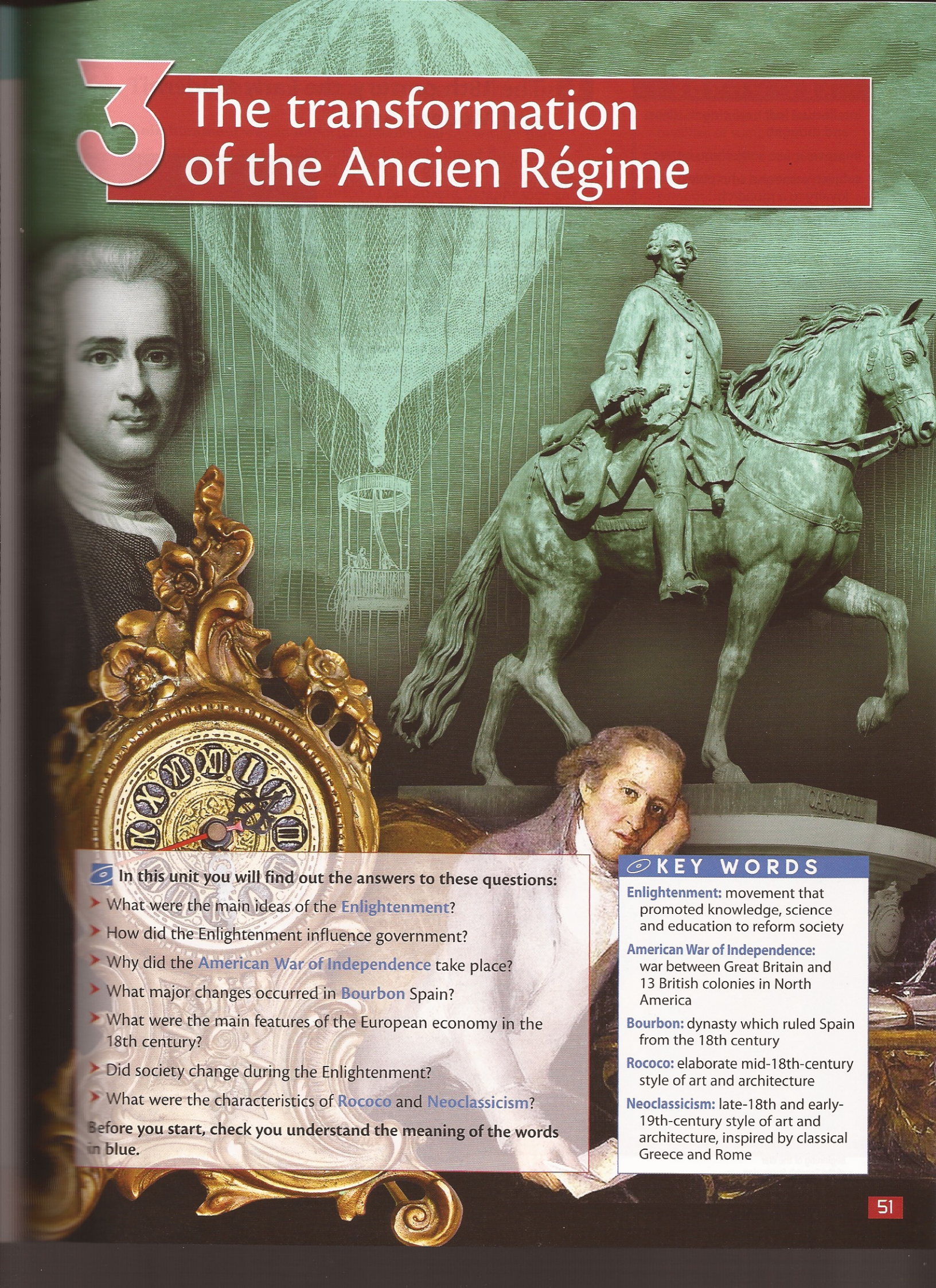


# 3 The transformation of the Ancien Régime



 In this unit you will find out the answers to these questions:

- What were the main ideas of the **Enlightenment**?
- How did the Enlightenment influence government?
- Why did the **American War of Independence** take place?
- What major changes occurred in **Bourbon** Spain?
- What were the main features of the European economy in the 18th century?
- Did society change during the Enlightenment?
- What were the characteristics of **Rococo** and **Neoclassicism**?

Before you start, check you understand the meaning of the words in blue.

## KEY WORDS

**Enlightenment:** movement that promoted knowledge, science and education to reform society

**American War of Independence:** war between Great Britain and 13 British colonies in North America

**Bourbon:** dynasty which ruled Spain from the 18th century

**Rococo:** elaborate mid-18th-century style of art and architecture

**Neoclassicism:** late-18th and early-19th-century style of art and architecture, inspired by classical Greece and Rome



## KEY WORDS

**intellectual** (*adj.*): relating to ideas and thought

**improve**: make something better

**subject**: someone who owes loyalty to a monarch

**allow**: permit someone to do something

**wealthy**: prosperous, rich

**gain**: acquire

**taste**: liking or preference for something

**sponsor**: support someone by giving them money

# 1 The 18th century: the Early Modern and Modern Ages

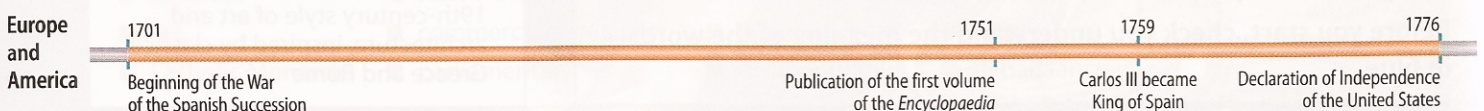
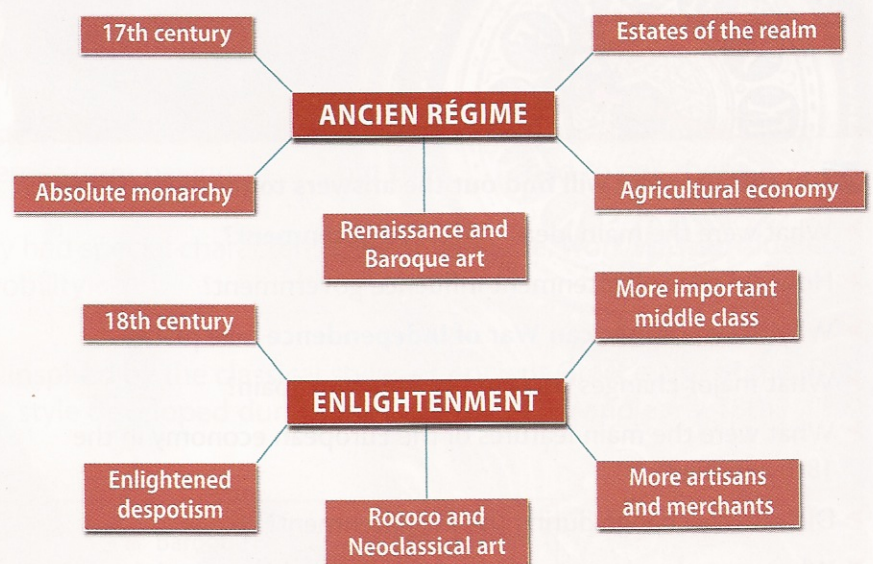
The 18th century was a period of **transition** between the Early Modern Age and the Modern Age in Europe. During this period, important changes took place which contributed to the collapse of the Ancien Régime, and marked the end of the Early Modern Age.

One of the main developments in the 18th century was an **intellectual** movement called the **Enlightenment**. The supporters of this movement wanted to use reason, science and education to combat ignorance and reform society. These new ideas eventually transformed most of the basic structures of the Ancien Régime.



18th-century French scientist Antoine Lavoisier and his wife (Jacques-Louis David, 1788)

- In some countries, absolute monarchs introduced **social reforms** to **improve** their **subjects'** quality of life. However, they did not **allow** the people to participate in choosing the government.
- New forms of **industry** and **commerce** contributed to significant economic expansion.
- The three traditional **estates of the realm** continued to exist, but the **wealthy** middle class, or **bourgeoisie**, became more important and tried to **gain** more political power.
- **Artistic styles** reflected the reforms implemented by monarchs and the **tastes** of the upper classes. Monarchs, the nobility and wealthy subjects **sponsored** artists.





## 2 The Enlightenment: a change in thinking

The **Enlightenment** was an important intellectual movement that emerged in Europe during the 18th century. Enlightenment thinkers **criticised** the traditional structures of the Ancien Régime and suggested new ideas to change society. They wanted to put an end to ignorance and **promote** social progress, using reason, science and education.

The main principles of Enlightenment thought were:

- **reason** is the only real **source** of knowledge; beliefs and **dogma** are not considered rational.
- **learning** and **teaching** are essential. People must learn as much as possible and share their knowledge in order to educate and 'enlighten' society.
- **equality** and **liberty** are key elements of an enlightened society; all people should **enjoy** the same legal rights and freedoms.

Enlightenment ideas were spread through newspapers, periodicals and books, and through schools and special academies. In addition, Enlightenment thinkers organised meetings in the **salons** of their homes to discuss new ideas.

Some intellectuals, such as D'Alembert and Diderot, created an extensive collection of writings called the *Encyclopaedia*. It **summarised** knowledge from many areas of study, including science, philosophy, art and grammar.

### KEY WORDS

**criticise:** talk about the bad qualities of something

**promote:** support or encourage

**source:** origin or beginning of something

**dogma:** set of beliefs that are accepted without question or debate

**enjoy:** have the use or benefit of something

**summarise:** give a short description or summary



the salon of Madame Geoffrin (Gabriel Lemonnier, 1812)



## KEY WORDS

**popular sovereignty:** political system in which citizens have ultimate power

**social inequality:** difference between people's rights and status within a society

**decline (vb.):** lose power or strength

**publish:** print and sell written materials, such as newspapers or books

**sociedades económicas de amigos del país:** Spanish associations that promoted the development of agriculture, trade and industry

## 2.1. Enlightenment criticisms and proposals

Enlightenment thinkers wanted to make substantial changes in various areas of society.

In relation to **politics**, they proposed measures to limit the powers of absolute monarchs.

- **Montesquieu** argued for the **separation of powers**. This meant that the three branches of government (the legislative, executive and judicial branches) should be separate from one another.
- **Voltaire** favoured a strong monarchy, but he also supported the existence of parliaments.
- **Rousseau** introduced the idea of **popular sovereignty**.

In relation to the **economy**, a group of intellectuals called the **Physiocrats** argued that agriculture was the true source of wealth. They rejected **Mercantilism**, and believed that the state should not interfere with trade and other economic activities.

In relation to **society**, Enlightenment thinkers criticised the **social inequalities** of the estates system. They argued that no group should have special privileges under the law.

## 2.2. The Enlightenment in Spain

In Spain, Enlightenment ideas were spread by a group of important thinkers and politicians that included **Jovellanos** and the **Conde de Floridablanca**. These people wanted to use Enlightenment ideas to improve economic, social and cultural conditions in Spain. This was necessary because Spain had **declined** during the reigns of the **Lesser Hapsburgs** – the last three kings of the Hapsburg dynasty.

To communicate their ideas, Spanish Enlightenment thinkers **published** scientific and literary papers. They also established schools, academies and special associations known as **sociedades económicas de amigos del país**. New public spaces were also created, such as the Royal Botanical Gardens in Madrid. However, Enlightenment ideas also encountered **resistance** from the nobility, the Church and from many people who defended their traditional way of life. This made it difficult to implement reform.



The party at the Botanical Garden (Luis Paret, c.1789–1799)



## Activities

1 Are these sentences true or false? Correct the false sentences in your exercise book.

- a) The 18th century was a period of transition from the Middle Ages to the Modern Age.
- b) The Enlightenment was an artistic movement that began in Europe.
- c) Enlightenment thinkers wanted to change the structures of the Ancien Régime.
- d) Absolute monarchs did not permit their subjects to participate in choosing their governments.
- e) The middle class became less important during the 18th century.

2 Copy and complete the table in your exercise book.

	Ancien Régime	Enlightenment
Time period	17th century	
Government		
Society		
Economy		
Artistic styles		

3 Read and listen to the text. Then copy and complete it in your exercise book, using these words: *dogma, enlighten, law, liberty, reason, rights, science, source*.

Enlightenment thinkers argued that \_\_\_\_\_ was the true \_\_\_\_\_ of knowledge, not beliefs or \_\_\_\_\_. They wanted to reform and \_\_\_\_\_ society through \_\_\_\_\_ and education. Equality and \_\_\_\_\_ were key principles of the Enlightenment: all people should have the same \_\_\_\_\_ and freedoms under the \_\_\_\_\_.

4 In your exercise book, match the people to the ideas associated with them.

Diderot

Jovellanos

Montesquieu

Rousseau

Voltaire

social reforms in Spain

popular sovereignty

a parliamentary system

the separation of powers

the *Encyclopaedia*

5 Answer these questions in your exercise book.

- a) Why were books and other printed media important during the Enlightenment?
- b) What areas of knowledge were included in the 18th-century *Encyclopaedia*?
- c) Which group of people thought that agriculture was the true source of a country's wealth?
- d) Why did some people in Spain resist Enlightenment reforms?

6 Copy and complete the fact file, using these words: *Bastille, Candide, England, French, government, Paris, satirical, writer, 1694*. Then listen and check your answers.

### Voltaire

Real name: François-Marie Arouet

Nationality: \_\_\_\_\_

Born: Paris, \_\_\_\_\_

Died: \_\_\_\_\_, 1778

Profession: \_\_\_\_\_

Important publications:

*Lettres Philosophiques*, \_\_\_\_\_,

*Zadig*



Voltaire (Nicolas de Largillière, 1718)

Interesting facts: Voltaire was famous for his philosophical and \_\_\_\_\_ writings. He was sent to the \_\_\_\_\_ prison on two occasions: after criticising the \_\_\_\_\_ and after a dispute with a nobleman. Voltaire also spent time in \_\_\_\_\_ after being exiled from France.

7 Use reference books and the Internet to make a new fact file for one of these Enlightenment thinkers: *Diderot, Floridablanca, Jovellanos, Montesquieu, Rousseau*.

8 In pairs, look at the painting and discuss the questions below.



- a) What people do you see in the painting?
- b) Where are they and what are they doing?
- c) What clothes are they wearing?
- d) What social class do they probably belong to?
- e) What do you think their daily life was like?



## KEY WORDS

**despotism:** exercise of absolute power by one person, called a despot

**centralised government:** national government with power to make decisions for the whole country

**policy:** set of measures, course of action taken by a government or ruler

**appoint:** choose someone for a job

**avoid:** prevent or stop something from happening

**succeed:** have the desired result

**guarantee (vb.):** ensure something, make it secure

## 3 Enlightenment politics in Europe, America and Spain

### 3.1. Enlightened despotism: rise and fall

**Enlightened despotism** was a new form of government that developed in some European countries in the 18th century. Its objective was to modernise the country and improve subjects' quality of life by combining **absolute monarchy** with **Enlightenment ideas**. Enlightened despots had the following characteristics:

- they created **centralised governments** to consolidate their power and implement their **policies**.
- to promote reform, they **appointed** enlightened thinkers to important positions, for example as ministers.
- to **avoid** challenges to their power, they tried to make changes peacefully, through education and new laws.

Examples of enlightened despots include Catherine the Great of Russia, Joseph II of Austria, Frederick II of Prussia and **Carlos III** of Spain (1759–1788). These monarchs implemented various enlightened reforms, such as the unification of the legal system; the modernisation of the army; and the promotion of agriculture, industry, education and culture.

In the end, enlightened despotism did not **succeed** as a form of government because it maintained the privileges of the estates system. In addition, the legal reforms were not sufficient to **guarantee** equality and freedom for all members of society.



SOURCE: VARIOUS AUTHORS, *Historia contemporánea. Orientaciones, textos, mapas y documentos*, Everest (Translated and adapted)



### 3.2. The United States: an Enlightenment victory

During the **American War of Independence**, 13 British colonies on the Atlantic coast of North America fought for their independence from Great Britain. The main causes of the conflict were:

- **Ideological** – the Enlightenment ideas of equality and liberty formed the basis for the independence movement.
- **Political** – Great Britain **refused** to give the colonies representation in Parliament. This was where laws were passed, including laws related to colonial **taxes**.
- **Socio-economic** – prosperous middle-class colonists wanted control over their own commercial activities.



The 13 colonies were established by Great Britain in the 17th and early 18th centuries.

The conflict started when the British government **increased** taxes. The American colonists refused to pay them and then began to arm themselves. Great Britain responded by ordering their armed forces into action, and the war **broke out** in 1775.

The colonists **proclaimed** the **Declaration of Independence of the United States of America** on 4 July 1776. Great Britain finally recognised the independence of the new nation in 1783. This was a significant triumph for the Enlightenment.

The United States Constitution was written in 1787. It established a **federal** republic based on **popular sovereignty** and the **separation of powers**. It also recognised the legal equality of all citizens, although in most states **suffrage** was limited. This meant that only male citizens with a certain level of wealth and property could vote in elections.

#### KEY WORDS

**refuse:** say no to something

**tax:** money that a government collects from the inhabitants of the country

**increase (vb.):** make something bigger or higher

**break out:** sudden start of a war, revolution or disease

**proclaim:** make an official announcement

**federal:** system in which several regions or states come together to form a country but retain power over some aspects of their government

**suffrage:** right to vote



## KEY WORDS

**heir:** person with the legal right to someone's property or position after they die

**intendant:** royal official who collected taxes, and managed economic resources in times of war

**corregidor:** royal official who represented the king on town councils

## 3.3. Changes in Spain

### A change of dynasty: the rise of the Bourbons

Carlos II was the last Spanish king of the Hapsburg line. He had no children, so he designated the **Bourbon** Philip of Anjou as his **heir**. However, when Carlos II died in 1700, there was a dispute that resulted in the **War of the Spanish Succession** (1701–1714). The rivals for the throne were:

- **Philip of Anjou**, the official heir, who was supported by France and the Crown of Castilla
- **Archduke Charles of Austria**, who was supported by Austria, Great Britain and the Crown of Aragón.

The war finally ended with the **Treaties of Utrecht** and **Rastatt**. Philip became King of Spain as Felipe V, the first monarch of the Bourbon dynasty. At the same time, the treaties gave some of Spain's territories to Austria, while Great Britain received Gibraltar and Menorca.



SOURCE: F. GARCÍA DE CORTÁZAR, *Atlas de historia de España*, Planeta (Translated and adapted)

### Centralisation under the Bourbons

The Spanish Bourbons, inspired by French centralised government, took measures to establish administrative uniformity in their territories.

- **Central government:** ministries were created and the various *cortes* on the Iberian Peninsula were consolidated into one for the whole kingdom. Castilla's laws were imposed on Aragón as punishment for not supporting Felipe V during the War of Succession.
- **Regional government:** Spain was divided into provinces and the figure of the **intendant** was maintained.
- **Local government:** the figure of the **corregidor** was imposed on the municipalities of Aragón.



## Activities

9 Copy and complete the sentences in your exercise book, choosing the correct words.

- a) Enlightened despotism combined *absolute monarchy* / *democracy* \_\_\_\_\_ with the ideas of Enlightenment thinkers.
- b) Enlightened despots wanted to *worsen* / *improve* \_\_\_\_\_ their subjects' quality of life.
- c) Enlightened despots used *centralised* / *decentralised* \_\_\_\_\_ governments to implement their decisions.
- d) Some monarchs asked *peasants* / *intellectuals* \_\_\_\_\_ to be government ministers.

10 Copy and complete the sentences about the reforms implemented by enlightened despots like Catherine the Great.

- a) They unified \_\_\_\_\_.
- b) They modernised \_\_\_\_\_.
- c) They promoted \_\_\_\_\_.



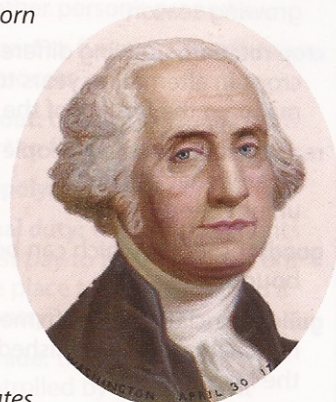
Catherine the Great of Russia (Dmitri Grigorievich Levitski, 1780)

11 Read and listen to the text. Then copy and complete it in your exercise book, using these words: *colonists*, *commerce*, *constitution*, *Great Britain*, *Independence*, *middle*, *representation*, 13.

In the late 18th century, the \_\_\_\_\_ colonies of North America won their independence from \_\_\_\_\_. The \_\_\_\_\_ refused to pay higher taxes and they also wanted to have \_\_\_\_\_ in Parliament. Wealthy members of the colonial \_\_\_\_\_ class also wanted more control over their land and \_\_\_\_\_. The War of \_\_\_\_\_ began in 1775 and Britain finally recognised the United States in 1783. A new \_\_\_\_\_ was written four years later.

12 Read and listen to the text. Then answer the questions below.

George Washington was born in Westmoreland County, Virginia, in 1732. During the American War of Independence, he was the Commander-in-Chief of the rebel forces that fought the British. After the war had ended, Washington presided over the 1787 Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, where the Constitution of the United States was written.



(unknown artist, 1880)

In 1789, Washington was elected as the first President of the United States. During his time in office, he supported the Bill of Rights, which guaranteed the basic rights of all citizens. He was president until 1797, and died two years later in Mount Vernon, his home in Virginia.

- a) Which army did Washington lead during the war?
- b) Where was the American constitution written?
- c) When did Washington become president?
- d) In what year did Washington die?

13 In your exercise book, match the people to the descriptions.

Carlos II
Felipe V
Archduke Charles of Austria
Carlos III

was the last Spanish king from the Hapsburg dynasty

had the support of Austria and the Crown of Aragón during the War of Succession

became the first Spanish king of the Bourbon dynasty

established a system of enlightened despotism after he became King of Spain

14 Why were the Treaties of Utrecht and Rastatt so important? How did they affect Spain's territories?

15 Find the mistakes in these sentences and correct them in your exercise book.

- a) The kings of the Bourbon dynasty were inspired by the Russian form of government.
- b) The Bourbon kings established many provincial *cortes* around Spain.
- c) Aragón's laws were imposed on Castilla as a punishment after the War of Succession.
- d) The figure of the intendant was imposed on towns and cities in Aragón.



## KEY WORDS

**due to:** as a result of, because of

**harvest:** collection of agricultural products at the end of the growing season

**crop rotation:** growing different crops in alternating years to maintain the fertility of the land

**repopulation:** moving people into an area that has been uninhabited

**goods:** products which can be bought and sold

**guild:** association of craftsmen or merchants, first established in the Middle Ages

**overall:** in general

## 4 Economic changes

At the beginning of the 18th century, the economies of Europe and Spain functioned in the same way as they had in the earlier phases of the Ancien Régime. However, important changes took place in the following decades **due to** social reforms introduced by Enlightened monarchs.

### 4.1. Agriculture

During the 18th century, **harvests** improved for a number of reasons:

- agricultural techniques like **crop rotation** were more widely used.
- improved agricultural machinery increased farmers' productivity.
- the **repopulation** of uninhabited areas increased production.
- new crops were introduced, such as potatoes and corn.



A man named Parmentier approached King Louis XVI and offered him a potato blossom (unknown artist, c.1780).

### 4.2. Skilled craftsmanship

During the 18th century, **population growth** caused an increase in **demand** for many consumer **goods**. In rural areas, the **domestic system** of production became more important, especially in the case of textiles. In contrast, other artisans did not increase their production because of the restrictions imposed by the **guilds**.

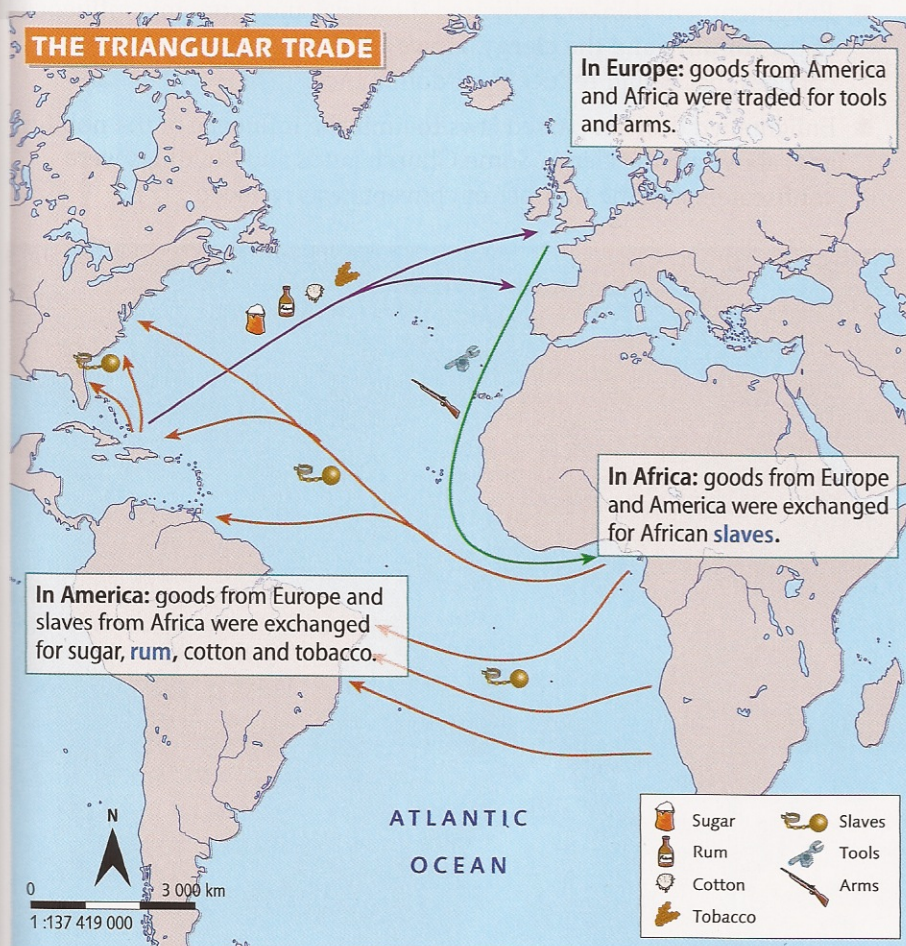
**Royal manufacturers**, also known as royal factories, produced various luxury goods, such as crystal lamps, cloth, silk, tapestries, porcelain and clocks. These products adorned royal palaces and were also bought by the nobility and the bourgeoisie. However, the influence of royal factories on the **overall** economy was limited.



### 4.3. Commerce

In the early 18th century, **domestic trade** in Europe was limited by inadequate transportation systems. Therefore, some countries began to improve roads and build new ones. In addition, canals were built to connect river systems and port installations were modernised.

**International trade** also intensified, with an increased exchange of products between Europe and the American colonies. During the 18th century, the Atlantic Ocean became the world's most important trading zone. The triangular trade routes between Europe, Africa and America were controlled by the British.



### KEY WORDS

**rum:** strong alcoholic drink made from the juice of sugar cane

**slave:** person who is treated as another person's property

**role:** part or function in a situation or process

**carry out:** do a task, usually from start to finish

**monopoly:** exclusive control

**internal duty:** tax that merchants must pay to move goods from one place to another within a country

**free trade:** trade that is not controlled by government regulations

### 4.4. Economic reforms in Spain

The Spanish economy experienced enormous **growth** in the 18th century as a result of reforms introduced by Felipe V and Carlos III. The *sociedades económicas de amigos del país* also played an important **role**, **carrying out** scientific, economic and technical studies, and then publishing the results. Some of the most important reforms were in:

- **Agriculture** – canals were built to facilitate irrigation (the Canal de Castilla) and uninhabited areas were colonised (the Sierra Morena).
- **Industry** – royal manufacturers were established for silk, porcelain and other luxury goods. Textile production in Cataluña was also protected from foreign competition.
- **Trade** – Cádiz lost its **monopoly** on transatlantic trade. **Internal duties** were also eliminated, allowing **free trade**.