**THE AGE OF REASON**

* Begins in the late 1700s
  + Moving away from Puritanical beliefs and Religious focus
* **Reason over Faith**
* People are basically good
  + Tabula rasa / blank slate
* Perfection is achievable on Earth (as opposed to Christian views)
* Outdated social institutions (*religious, social, economic, and political institutions, which have not modernized*) cause unsociable behavior
* 5 Core Ideas – Reason can help us:
  + discover the **Natural Laws** of the universe
  + and the **Natural Rights** of mankind
  + thereby making **Progress** in knowledge, technology and moral values achievable.
  + New religion (sort of) = **Deism**
    - Generally believe that
      * God created the universe, then left us to our own devices
      * One cannot access God through any organized religion, set of belief, ritual, sacrament or other practice.
      * There are no “chosen people”
      * A practical morality can be derived from reason without the need to appeal to religious revelation and church dogma.
      * God’s revelation, believed Deists, was simple, logical and clear-cut, a natural religion which always existed
    - *"My mind is my church." - Thomas Paine*
  + Promote **Humanitarianism**
    - benevolence to those less fortunate
* Belief:
  + Man is obligated to follow his own intellect, not ‘revealed’ truth.
  + Earth and emphasis on nature are all important
  + Miracles, prophecy, and religious rites are mere superstitions

**Literature**

* Mostly Non-Fiction
  + Political documents, Speeches, Pamphlets
* Goal is to: instruct, enlighten, make people think
* Focuses on life as it is
  + Unlike imaginative / fictional texts (life as we might wish or fear it to be)
* De-emphasis on emotion and passions
* “Reason” is all important
* “Founding Fathers”
  + **Thomas Paine**
    - **“The Crisis”**
      * Persuasive techniques
      * “Plain style”
      * Rallied scattered citizenry
      * Bolstered spirits of troops
      * Rhetorical Strategies = all important