**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* Outdated social institutions (*religious, social, economic, and political institutions, which have not modernized*) cause unsociable behavior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