John Locke

John Locke was an **English philosopher** born in 1632. Many people consider John Locke as being one of the most influential thinkers during the enlightenment. His many ideas and writings are still influential to many countries around the world, including the United States.

John Locke believed that naturally, all people are equal and independent. Locke also believed that every person has natural rights. **Natural Rights** are basic rights that every person is born with and has a right to protect. Specifically, Locke believed that the natural rights were "Life, Liberty, and Property". Locke believed that the government's **main** purpose is to protect peoples' natural rights. If the government does not protect peoples' natural rights, then Locke says they are justified in overthrowing the government.

Locke's ideas about natural rights and government are a direct influence on many of the thinkers and writers in American history. Many of his ideas are found in the U.S. Constitution and the Declaration of Independence.