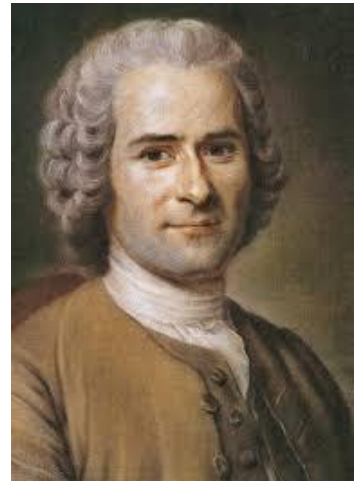


Rousseau & Voltaire

Jean-Jacques Rousseau was a **Swiss philosopher and writer** born in 1712. His ideas about government helped influence the French Revolution and helped to progress the enlightenment throughout Europe. Rousseau focused on individual (human) rights. He promoted the idea of a “direct democracy”. A **direct democracy** is a form of government where all people are equal and the country is run by the people.



Everything (new laws, taxes, trades) is put up to a vote, and the majority vote wins. Direct democracy is different from the United States today because we have a “representative democracy” where we vote for people to make decisions in our best interest. However, many of Rousseau’s ideas about human rights are still influential to governments around the world.



Voltaire was a French enlightenment philosopher and writer born in 1694. In Voltaire’s writings, he advocates for **freedom of speech, freedom of religion**, and separation of Church and State.

Separation of Church and State means that the government should remain neutral towards religion and should not favor one over the other. Voltaire’s writings pushed for tolerance and acceptance of all

religions and cultures. Many of his ideas are in the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights.