Recreating an Enlightenment Salon

You are cordially invited to attend a meeting of the most interesting minds in all of Europe...

During the Enlightenment, salons were popular intellectual and social gatherings hosted by wealthy and educated women in France, like Madame Geoffrin. These events were well-organized meeting places where women, philosophes, intellectuals, and political elites could discuss the issues of times, such as slavery, government, education, and women’s rights.

Assignment: We will be recreating an 18th century French Salon (le Salon de Deux Cent Trente-Six). You will be assigned a philosophe, an intellectual, or a monarch that is known for being an “enlightened” individual. For this project, you will research this individual. Make sure you are familiar with and understand your individual’s point of view on the following issues by completing the biography sheet.

❖ Definition of justice and the need (or lack thereof) for capital punishment
❖ Relationship between the individual and government
❖ The role of a monarch/ruler
❖ Rights that people possess
❖ Is government good, a necessary evil, or an abomination?
❖ Economics
❖ Human nature
❖ Slavery
❖ Attitudes about religion, social classes, education, religious wars, and an individual’s right to revolt

Salon Discussion/Speed Dating: On the day of our salon, you should be prepared to answer questions on your own beliefs, ask others questions about their beliefs, raise ideas (how to fix issues, a better way to run government, etc), and challenge the ideas of others. You will be graded on your preparation (after the discussion you will turn in your biography sheet) and your participation in the discussion (contributing to the discussion, answering questions, etc).

Roles in the Discussion:

Denis Diderot          King Frederick the Great of Prussia
Emmanual Kant          Maria Theresa
John Locke             Mary Wollstonecraft
Montesquieue           Peter the Great
Jean Jacques Rousseau  David Hume
Voltaire               Thomas Hobbes
Adam Smith             Edward Gibbon
Benjamin Franklin      Isaac Newton
Catherine the Great    Condorcet
Cesare Beccaria        Louis XIV

Your role _________________________________  Date of Salon (due date) MONDAY 3/5