CHAPTER 17 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How did the Enlightenment change basic Western attitudes toward reform, faith, and reason? What were the major formative influences on the *philosophes*? How important were Voltaire and the *Encyclopedia* in the success of the Enlightenment?

2. Why did the *philosophes* consider organized religion to be their greatest enemy? What were the basic tenets of deism? How did Jewish writers contribute to Enlightenment thinking about religion? What are the similarities and differences between the Enlightenment evaluation of Islam and its evaluations of Christianity and Judaism?

3. What were the attitudes of the *philosophes* toward women? What was Rousseau’s view of women? What were the separate spheres he imagined men and women occupying? What were Mary Wollstonecraft’s criticisms of Rousseau’s view?

4. How did the views of the mercantilists about the earth’s resources differ from those of Adam Smith in his book *The Wealth of Nations*? Why might Smith be regarded as an advocate of the consumer? How did his theory of history work to the detriment of less economically advanced non-European peoples? How did some Enlightenment writers criticize European empires?

5. How did the political views of Montesquieu differ from those of Rousseau? Was Montesquieu’s view of England accurate? Was Rousseau a child of the Enlightenment or its enemy? Which did Rousseau value more, the individual or society?

6. Were the enlightened monarchs true believers in the ideals of the *philosophes*, or was their enlightenment a mere veneer? Was their power really absolute? What motivated their reforms? What does the partition of Poland indicate about the spirit of enlightened absolutism?