

# RELATIVELY RADICAL VOICES

## Introduction

What does it mean to be radical? What kinds of beliefs or positions or actions qualify a person as radical? Well, it really depends on the context. Radical is a relative term. It means to support or advocate for changes or actions that are extremely different from the norm, from the “status quo.” It often carries the implication that the person is an extremist, that they are rebellious, that they are dangerous. But what is considered the status quo varies from setting to setting, therefore what is considered radical must vary with it. For instance, at one time in American history, the view that women should have the right to vote, or that a black man should be able to marry a white woman, were considered radical positions, extreme and dangerous to society. So when determining whether or not a person or idea is radical, we must always consider the context.



**Directions:** Read about the eight different Enlightenment Era philosophers and thinkers, and choose three philosophers who you think have the most radical views. Remember to take into account the context of the time as well as the place. What was the socio-political environment of their country at the time they were writing? How would these views have been received in that setting? Once you have decided on your three choices, write an explanation and justification of your choice in the space provided.

PHILOSOPHER	EXPLANATION/JUSTIFICATION
#1	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
#2	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
#3	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

## Questions

1. What general observations can be made about which thinkers were most radical and which were least?
2. How did their socio-political environments shape their positions?
3. Do you think people in their own society agreed with their views? If so, which parts of society?
4. Who would and would not have had access to their writings and ideas?