The Age of Reason Notes
Cotton Mather & Smallpox epidemic (1721)
* inoculation—it worked
* doctors—no playing God
A. Seemingly opposite characters can exist simultaneously
B. Practical approach to social change & scientific research
C. Thought in action

The Age of Reason - The Enlightenment

Rationalism: the belief that we can arrive at truth by using our reason rather than relying on the authority of the past, on religious faith, or on intuition.

1. Scientific discoveries changed views of world.
   A. Copernicus: helio-centric view of universe
   B. Galileo: telescope/microscope
   C. Newton: gravity, motion, calculus
   D. Descartes: Cartesian coordinates, circulatory system

Big idea: The universe organized around unchanging universal laws & people could discover them by using reason and making experiments.
2. Puritan's vs. Rationalist's view of God:

A. Puritan: God actively and mysteriously involved in the workings of universe. (Divine Providence)

B. Rationalist: Metaphor

i. Newton—God as a clock-maker, who, after having created the perfect mechanism of the universe, left His creation to run on its own. Makes no sense to ask God to interfere.

   God not actively involved. Ability to think in an ordered logical manner
   "I think, therefore I am." Cogito, ergo sum.

ii. God's special gift to man: reason (both physical & spiritual truths)

iii. People have the ability to regulate & improve their own lives.

* American Pragmatism

> Common Sense

"We hold these truths to be self-evident..."
AMERICAN LIT. IN AGE OF REASON

- Literature
  * Rooted in reality rather than imagination

- Persuasion
  * Pamphlets—concentrating on social, political and scientific improvements
  * Essays

- Poetry

"Ben Franklin's Autobiography

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Answer: Qs #1-4 on pg 135
Crit. Thinking Qs #1-4 on pg 136

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Red textbook