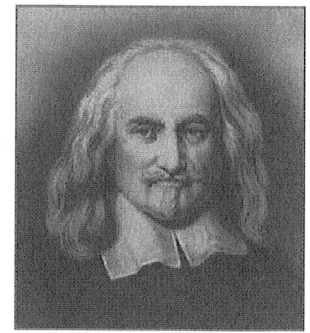


Nope, Not the Cartoon Tiger (the *other* Hobbes)

Thomas Hobbes was an English scholar and philosopher. He was born in 1588 and later became a tutor to a very wealthy family. As a tutor Hobbes had access to many books, traveled often, and met many important thinkers. Hobbes lived in Paris through the English Civil Wars and was interested in the nature of government. He wrote about many topics, including politics, geometry, physics, religion, and history. Hobbes was one of many scholars who tried to answer the question, "Why do we have government?"



Thomas Hobbes

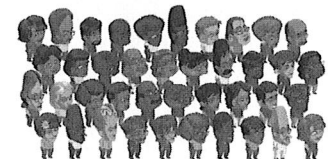
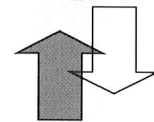
In such condition...
the life of man,
solitary, poor, nasty
brutish and short.
- T. Hobbes

Poor, Nasty, Brutish, and Short

Hobbes saw humans as naturally selfish and quick to fight. He believed that before there were governments, people lived in a **state of nature**. In a state of nature, everyone had a right to everything. In order to get what they wanted, people would always be at war with everyone else. Nobody would produce anything like inventions, art, or even crops or tools because they would be afraid other people would take them away. Hobbes didn't paint a very pretty picture of life without government.

Social Contract

Hobbes lived at a time when many philosophers were thinking about the nature of government. He was one of the first of his era to discuss the idea of a **social contract** between people and their government. A *contract* is an agreement in which both sides agree to something in order to reach a shared goal. In Hobbes' view, people agreed to give up some rights and power in exchange for protection. But for Hobbes, the social contract was no two-way street. He believed that once the people agreed to hand over power in exchange for protection, they lost the right to overthrow, replace, or even question the government.



Cover art from *Leviathan*.

Leviathan

Hobbes wrote a book called *Leviathan* (luh-VI-uh-then) to explain how he thought governments should work. Hobbes wrote *Leviathan* during the English Civil War. He wrote about the social contract, and he spent much of the book trying to show that a strong central authority was the only way to avoid the evils of war. Hobbes believed a single **sovereign**, or ruler, should have total authority over the people. He believed in a monarchy led by a king. That's because he thought that government would work best if all the power rested in one place. No three branches for Hobbes!

Monarchy? Not Democracy?

Many political thinkers—including America's Founding Fathers—built on Hobbes' ideas, especially the idea of a social contract. Hobbes was more concerned with protection and order than rights. But people like John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau changed the focus from monarchy to democracy—power with the people instead of a sovereign. They began to see that people have rights that must be protected even from government.

Thomas Hobbes

Name: _____

A. State of Nature. Read the excerpt from Hobbes' book *Leviathan* and think about what you have already learned about Hobbes. Then complete the chart below describing life with and without government. Check the correct boxes for each condition.

"In such condition, there is no place for industry; ... no knowledge of the face of the earth; no account of time; no arts; no letters; no society; and which is worst of all, continual fear, and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short."
— from *Leviathan*

Without Government

- Life would be peaceful and productive.
- Everyone would have a right to everything.
- There would be a constant state of fear and danger.
- Arts and science would thrive.
- People wouldn't have spare time to make things or farm the land.
- People would constantly fight with each other.

With Government

- Rules could be made and enforced.
- The life of men would be short, poor, lonely.
- People could expect protection from a ruler.
- There would more time to work, create, and discover.
- Power would be shared with everyone.
- People would give up some power and rights.

B. Cover Art. Sometimes you can judge a book by its cover. Look at a portion of the title page from *Leviathan* and answer the questions below. (Look closely, the big guy in the middle is made up of people!)



1. List five things you see in this image.
2. Circle the item that represents monarchy, or the king.
3. Draw a square around the item or items that represent power.

4. How might this look different if Hobbes supported a democracy rather than a monarchy?