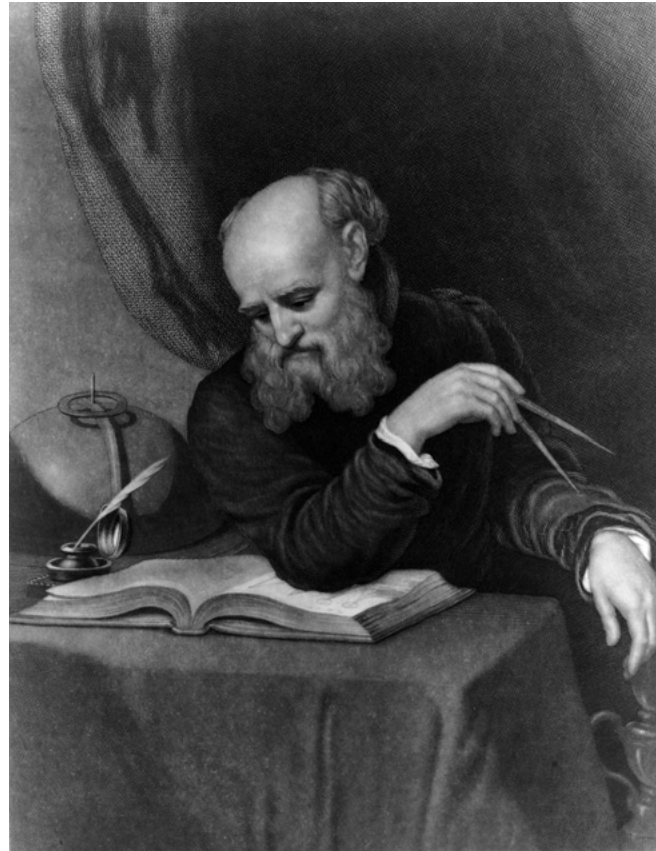


Biography Activity

The Enlightenment and Revolutions

Galileo Galilei (1564–1642)

Italian astronomer and mathematician Galileo Galilei helped launch the Scientific Revolution. He asserted that the world could only be understood by using the language of mathematics. To try to explain this, Galileo dropped different objects from the Tower of Pisa, thereby establishing that the speed of falling objects does not depend on their weight. He was the first person to make regular observations of the sky using a telescope, and this led to his discoveries of four moons of Jupiter, sunspots, and mountains on Earth’s moon. Because his work supported the heliocentric model of the universe, Galileo ran into trouble with the Catholic Church. He was brought before Church officials on the suspicion of heresy and forced to take back his statements.



More About the Image: This portrait of Galileo sitting at a desk and reading a book was engraved by Samuel Sartain from a painting by H. W. Wyatt. Sartain (born in 1830) was from a family of engravers and was well known for his book illustrations.

- 1. Interpreting Significance** What disturbed the Catholic Church about the heliocentric model?

- 2. Constructing Arguments** Imagine that you are Galileo’s attorney appearing before Church officials. Summarize the case in support of Galileo.
