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| **Mary Wollstonecraft and *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman***  Throughout most of history, women were treated as inferior to men and those actions were supported by ideas in culture, religion, and law. In 18th century Europe, women were not as educated as men, and they were restricted by laws and customs that made women look to marriage as a means of stability and made them dependent on men. Due to their favored position in society, men were able to excel in public life and in science, philosophy, religion and politics, while women were expected to marry, have children, and take care of the home.  Using Enlightenment ideas, some women, including **Mary Wollstonecraft**, argued for more equal rights for men and women. Mary Wollstonecraft was a British intellectual, writer, philosopher, and early feminist. She wrote several novels, essays, and children's books, but is best known for her book, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792).  Wollstonecraft argued that all men and women had equal **natural rights**, and that an ideal society could not be realized until everyone was free to exercise those rights. She spoke out against the situation of women in the eighteenth century, declaring that they were educated to be submissive [obedient] to men and to value physical attractiveness over character and intelligence. |

1. How were women affected by ideas of the Enlightenment?

2. Give examples of Wollstonecraft’s influence on the modern women’s rights movement.