

# **The French Revolution and Napoleon**

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**1789 - 1815**

# The French Revolution Begins

- **Main Idea**

- *Economic and social inequalities in the Old Regime helped cause the French Revolution.*

- **Why It Matters Now**

- *Throughout history, economic and social inequalities have at times led peoples to revolt against their governments.*

# The French Revolution Begins

During the 1700's France experienced bad harvests, high prices, and high taxes.

## The Old Order

- Using a system called the Old Regime, French society was divided into three large social classes called estates.
- The first and second estates were made up of the clergy and the rich nobles. The third estate was everyone else and made up 97% of the population. Most of the third estate were peasants.
- Members of the third estate paid as much as half of their income in taxes and tithes. The first and second estate members paid little or no taxes.

# The French Revolution Begins

## The Forces of Change

- Inspired by the American Revolution and Enlightenment ideas, third estate members began to question the Old Regime.
- Despite the high taxes, France had a large government debt. The King and Queen ignored the problem and spent lavishly.
- King Louis XVI attempted to tax the nobility to secure more funds.
- Instead, he was forced to call a meeting of the representatives from the estate system, the Estates-General.

# The French Revolution Begins

## Dawn of Revolution

- The Third Estate tried to change the voting system of the Estates-General; the king did not allow the change.
- Instead of giving in, the Third Estate voted to name themselves the National Assembly and began to pass new laws in an act of revolution.
- As Louis gathered his guards, people began to gather weapons, including storming the Bastille prison to search for gunpowder.

# The French Revolution Begins

## A Great Fear Sweeps France

- Fearing the nobles, peasants armed with tools as weapons rioted across Paris and the countryside. They burned down manor houses and marched on Versailles. A large group of Parisian women forced the King and Queen to leave the palace and return to the city.



# Revolution Brings Reform and Terror

- **Main Idea**

- *The Revolutionary government of France made reforms but also used terror and violence to retain power.*

- **Why It Matters Now**

- *Some governments that lack the support of a majority of their people still use fear to control their citizens.*

# Revolution Brings Reform and Terror

## The Assembly Reforms France

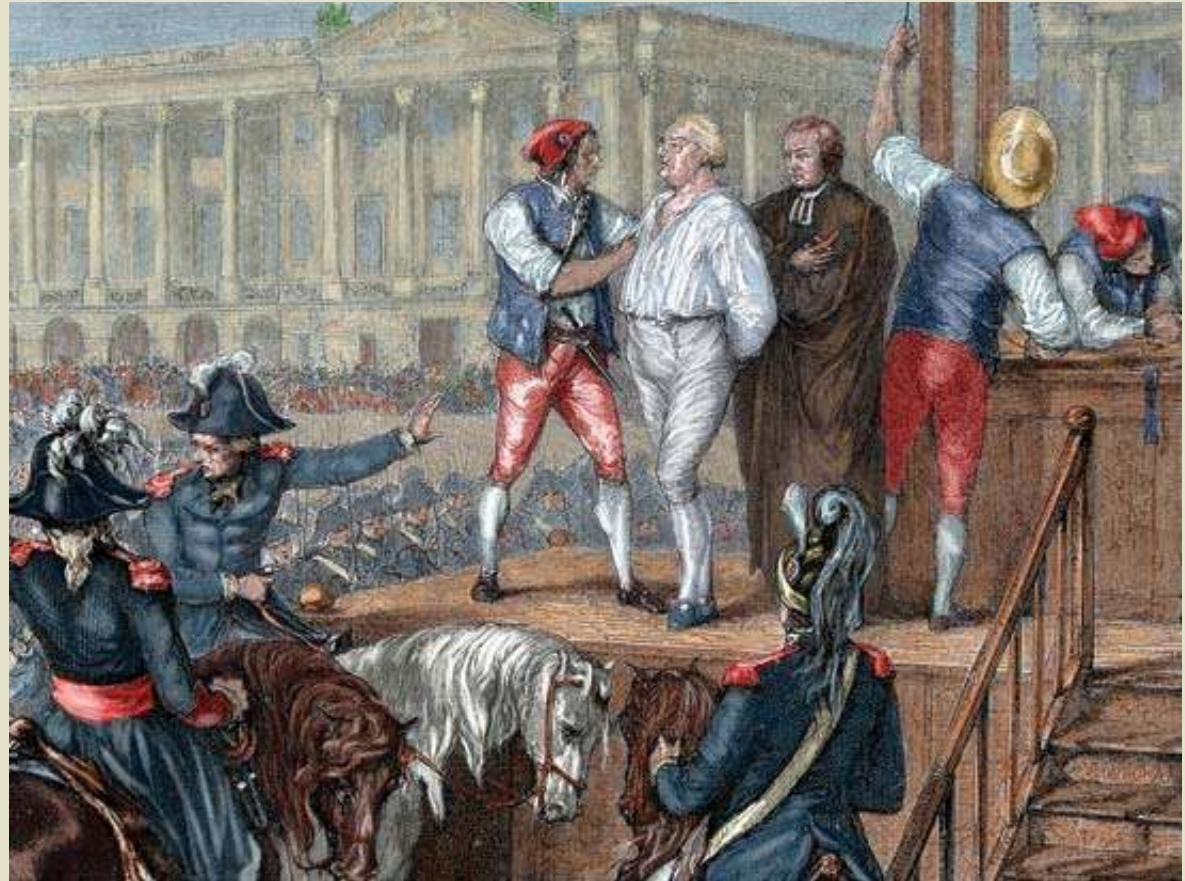
- The National Assembly adopted a statement of revolutionary ideals, the Declaration of Rights of Man and of the Citizen.
- Men are born and remain free and equal in rights.
- Guaranteed equal justice, freedom of speech, and freedom of religion.
- The National Assembly took away the lands of the church and sold them to pay off debt.
- Many peasants were angry at the National Assembly for trying to take control of the church.



# Revolution Brings Reform and Terror

## War and Execution

- For two years, France was in turmoil. They were at war with Austria and Prussia.
- They arrested and executed their king, Louis XVI on the guillotine.



# Revolution Brings Reform and Terror

## Terror Grips France

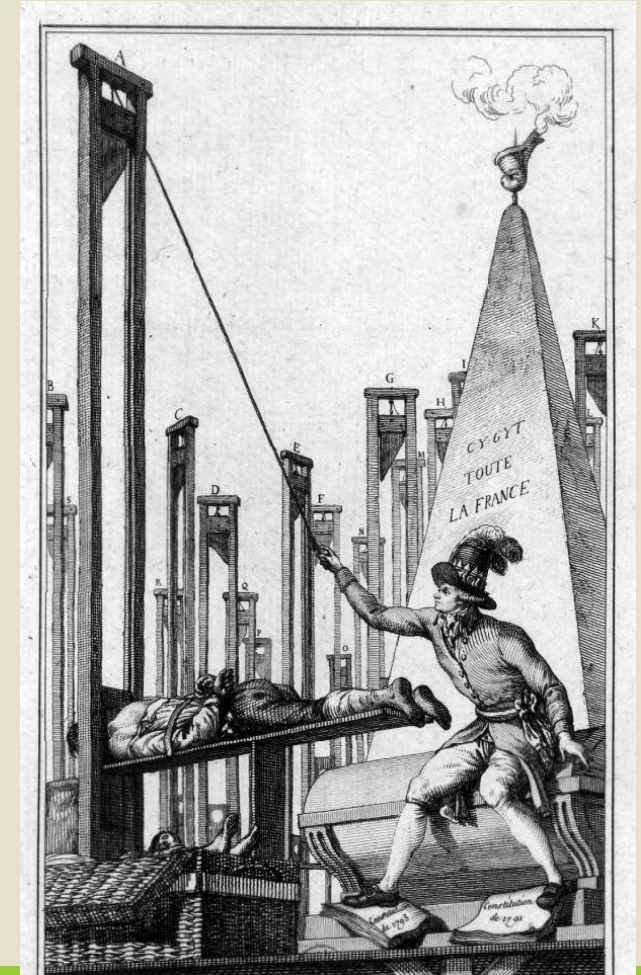
- In 1793, Jacobin leader Maximilien Robespierre gained power. Robespierre led the Committee of Public Safety as a cruel dictator. His rule was known as the Reign of Terror.
- Anyone who disagreed with or challenged Robespierre could be executed. Thousands of people, mostly peasants, were sent to the guillotine.



# Revolution Brings Reform and Terror

## End of the Terror

- After a year and half, the National Convention turned on Robespierre. He was arrested, tried, and executed at the guillotine.
- The new leaders drafted another new plan for government. Their most important decision was the selection of a new general to lead the armies, Napoleon Bonaparte.



# Napoleon Forges an Empire

- **Main Idea**

- *Napoleon Bonaparte, a military genius, seized power in France and made himself emperor.*

- **Why It Matters Now**

- *In times of political turmoil, military dictators often seize control of nations.*

# Napoleon Forges an Empire

## Napoleon Seizes Power

- As a young officer, Napoleon was hailed as a hero for defending the National Convention against a royalist attack.
- He moved up in the ranks and led French victories against Austria.
- In 1799, he staged a coup d'état in Paris and assumed power as dictator.

# Napoleon Forges an Empire

## Napoleon Rules France

- In 1800, the people of France voted to approve a new constitution which gave power to Napoleon.
  - He improved tax collection and established a national banking system.
  - He set up lycees, or government run public schools.
  - He established new relationship between the church and state.
  - He gave the country a uniform set of laws which eliminated many injustices, the Napoleonic Code.
- In 1804, French voters supported his decision to crown himself Emperor of France.

# Napoleon Forges an Empire

## Napoleon Creates an Empire

- Napoleon's first thought was to establish an empire of Europe and the Americas. A successful revolt in Haiti changed his plans.
- To raise money, he sold the Louisiana Territory to the United States.
- He used this money to conquer much of Europe. His only loss was the Battle of Trafalgar which kept Great Britain out of the French Empire.



# Napoleon Empire Collapses

- **Main Idea**

- *A revolution in intellectual activity changed Europeans' view of government and society*

- **Why It Matters Now**

- *The various freedoms enjoyed in many countries today are a result of Enlightenment thinking.*



# Napoleon Empire Collapses

## Napoleon's Costly Mistakes

- In 1806, Napoleon set up a blockade around Europe to prevent Great Britain from trading with the continent. The blockade was not tight enough and had little effect.
- In 1808, Napoleon invaded Spain and made his brother King of Spain. Spanish peasant fighters called guerrillas ambushed French troops. Napoleon eventually lost 300,000 men and the French Empire was weakened.

# Napoleon Empire Collapses

## Napoleon's Costly Mistakes

- In 1812, Napoleon decided to invade Russia. His Grand Army of over 420,000 soldiers marched towards Moscow. While retreating, the Russian soldiers practiced scorched-earth policy: they burned all fields and killed all livestock to leave nothing for the enemy to eat.
- The Russians burned Moscow just before Napoleon entered. With winter starting, Napoleon's troops begin retreating. Only 10,000 make it out of Russia.

# Napoleon Empire Collapses

## Napoleon's Downfall

- Napoleon's enemies took advantage and joined forces against him. Within months, Napoleon was defeated.
- The victors banished Napoleon to a small island, Elba, off the Italian coast.

# Napoleon Empire Collapses

## Napoleon's Downfall

- Napoleon escaped after only one year. The people of France welcomed him back and he quickly raised an army. He met the British army at the Battle of Waterloo. Prussian forces soon joined the British and Napoleon was defeated for the final time.

# The Congress of Vienna

- **Main Idea**

- *After exiling Napoleon, European leaders at the Congress of Vienna tried to restore order and reestablish peace.*

- **Why It Matters Now**

- *International bodies such as the United Nations play an active role in trying to maintain world peace and stability today.*

# The Congress of Vienna

## Metternich's Plan for Europe

- European leaders met at the Congress of Vienna to establish a long lasting peace and stability for the continent.
- Borders were redrawn to surround France with strong countries.
- France remained intact to establish a balance of power; no country in Europe could easily overpower another.
- Several monarchs were put back on the throne to stabilize political relations among the nations.

# The Congress of Vienna

## Political Changes Beyond Vienna

- The Congress of Vienna tried to contain the ideas of liberty, equality, and fraternity from the French Revolution. However, the idea of a democratic government was set in motion and continued to spread.