

The French Revolution Begins

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CHAPTER 23 Section 1

THE OLD ORDER---HOW WAS FRENCH SOCIETY UNEQUAL?

In the 1700s, France was the leading country of Europe. It was the center of the new ideas of the Enlightenment. However, beneath the surface there were major problems. Soon the nation would be torn by a violent revolution.

One problem was that people were not treated equally in French society. A political and social system called the **Old Regime** remained in place. The French were divided into three classes, or **estates**. The **First Estate** consisted of the Roman Catholic clergy. The **Second Estate** was made up of nobles. Only about 2 percent of the people belonged to these two estates. Yet they owned 20 percent of the land. They had easy lives.

Everybody else belonged to the **Third Estate**. This huge group included three types of people: **1.** the *bourgeoisie*—mostly well-off merchants and skilled workers who lacked the status of nobles **2.** city workers—cooks, servants, and others who were poorly paid and often out of work **3.** peasants—farm workers, making up

more than 80 percent of the French people

Members of the Third Estate were angry. They had few rights. They paid up to half of their income in taxes, while the rich paid almost none. **1. What were the three classes of French society?**

TERMS AND NAMES

Old Regime System of feudalism

estate Social class of people

Louis XVI Weak king who came to French throne in 1774

Marie Antoinette Unpopular queen; wife of Louis XVI

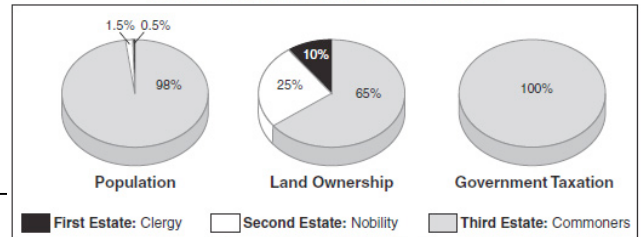
Estates-General Assembly of representatives from all three estates

National Assembly French congress established by representatives of the Third Estate

Tennis Court Oath Promise made by Third Estate representatives to draw up a new constitution

Great Fear Wave of panic

The Three Estates in Pre-Revolutionary France



THE FORCES OF CHANGE--WHY WERE THE FRENCH READY FOR THE REVOLUTION?

Three factors led to revolution. **First**, the Enlightenment spread the idea that everyone should be equal. The powerless people in the Third Estate liked that. **Second**, the French economy was failing. High taxes kept profits low, and food supplies were short. The government owed money. **Third**, King **Louis XVI** was a weak leader. His wife, **Marie Antoinette**, was unpopular. She was from Austria, France's long-time enemy, and was noted for her extravagant spending.

In the 1780s, France was deep in debt. Louis tried to tax the nobles. Instead, they forced the king to call a meeting of the **Estates-General**, an assembly of *delegates* of the three estates. **2. What three factors led to revolution?**

DAWN OF THE REVOLUTION---HOW DID THE REVOLUTION BEGIN?

The meeting of the Estates-General began in May 1789 with arguments over how to count votes. In the past, each *estate* had cast one vote. The Third Estate now wanted each *delegate* to have a vote. The king and the other estates did not agree to the plan because the Third Estate was larger and would have more votes.

The Third Estate then broke with the others and met separately. In June 1789, its delegates voted to rename themselves the **National Assembly**. They claimed to represent all the people. This was the beginning of *representative government* for France.

At one point, the members of the Third Estate found themselves locked out of their meeting. They broke down a door leading to a tennis court. Then they promised to stay there until they made a new constitution. This promise was called the **Tennis Court Oath**.

Louis tried to make peace. He ordered the clergy and nobles to join the National Assembly. However, trouble erupted. Rumors flew that foreign soldiers were going to attack French citizens. On July 14, an angry crowd captured the *Bastille*, a Paris prison. The *mob* wanted to get gunpowder for their weapons in order to defend the city.

3. Why did the National Assembly form?



A GREAT FEAR SWEEPS FRANCE---WHAT WAS THE GREAT FEAR?

A wave of violence called the **Great Fear** swept the country. Peasants broke into and burned nobles' houses. They tore up documents that had forced them to pay fees to the nobles. Late in 1789, a mob of women marched from Paris to the king's palace at *Versailles*. They were angry about high bread prices and demanded that the king come to Paris. They hoped he would end hunger in the city. The king and queen left Versailles, never to return.

4. What happened during the Great Fear?

Revolution Brings Reform and Terror

CHAPTER 23 Section 2

THE ASSEMBLY REFORMS FRANCE---WHAT REFORMS RESULTED FROM THE REVOLUTION?

In August 1789, the National Assembly took steps to change France. It made a revolutionary statement called the *Declaration of the Rights of Man*. One new law ended all the special rights that members of the First and Second Estates had enjoyed. Another law gave all French men equal rights. Though women did not get these rights, it was a bold step. Other laws gave the state power over the Catholic Church.



Declaration of the Rights of Man

The new laws about the church divided people who had supported the Revolution. Catholic peasants remained loyal to the church. They were angry that the church would be part of the state. Thereafter, many of them opposed the Revolution's reforms.

For months, the assembly worked on plans for a new government. During this time, Louis was fearful for his safety. One night, he and his family tried to escape the country. They were caught, brought back to Paris, and placed under guard. This escape attempt made the king and queen more unpopular. It also increased the power of his enemies. **1. What new laws came into being?**

TERMS AND NAMES

Legislative Assembly Assembly that replaced the National Assembly in 1791

émigrés Nobles and others who left France during the peasant uprisings and who hoped to come back to restore the old system

sans-culottes Radical group of Parisian wage-earners

Jacobin Member of the Jacobin Club, a radical political organization

guillotine Machine for beheading people

Maximilien Robespierre Revolutionary leader who tried to wipe out every trace of France's past monarchy and nobility

Reign of Terror Period of Robespierre's rule

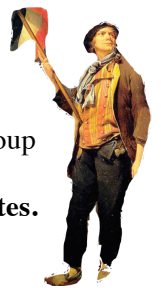
DIVISIONS DEVELOP---WHAT GROUPS CALLED FOR DIFFERENT KINDS OF CHANGES?

In the fall of 1791, the assembly drew up a new constitution. It took away most of the king's power. The assembly then turned over its power to a new assembly, the **Legislative Assembly**.

This new assembly soon divided into groups. *Radicals* wanted sweeping changes in the way government was run. Moderates wanted some changes in government, but not as many as the radicals. *Conservatives* upheld the idea of a limited monarchy and wanted few changes in government.

There were groups outside the Legislative Assembly who wanted to influence the government, too. One group wanted an end to revolutionary changes. This group included the **émigrés**, nobles and others who had fled France during the uprisings. Another group wanted even greater changes. This group included the **sans-culottes**. These wage-earners and small shopkeepers wanted a greater voice in government.

2. In what ways did the émigrés and sans-culottes have opposite goals?



Sans-culottes with long pants

WAR AND EXECUTION---WHAT CAUSED THE FRENCH TO TAKE EXTREME MEASURES?

At the same time, France faced serious trouble on its borders. Kings in other countries feared that revolution would spread to their lands. They wanted to use force to restore control of France to Louis XVI. Soon foreign soldiers were marching toward Paris. Many people thought that the king and queen were ready to help the enemy. Angry French citizens imprisoned them. Many nobles were killed in other mob actions.

The government took strong steps to meet the danger from foreign troops. It took away all the king's powers. In 1792, the National Convention— another new government— was formed. **Jacobins**, members of a radical political club, soon took control of this new government. They declared Louis a common citizen. He was then tried for treason and convicted. Like many others, the king was beheaded by a machine called the **guillotine**. The National Convention also ordered thousands of French people into the army. **3. What happened to the king?**



THE TERROR GRIPS FRANCE ---WHAT WAS THE REIGN OF TERROR?

Maximilien Robespierre became leader of France. He headed the *Committee of Public Safety*. It tried and put to death “enemies of the Revolution.” Thousands were killed. Robespierre’s rule, which began in 1793, was called the **Reign of Terror**. It ended in July 1794, when Robespierre himself was put to death.

The French people were tired of the killing and the unrest. They wanted a return to order. Moderate leaders drafted a new, less revolutionary plan of government. **4. Where did the Reign of Terror lead?**

Napoleon Forges an Empire

CHAPTER 23 Section 3

NAPOLEON SEIZES POWER---HOW DID HE RISE TO POWER?

Napoleon Bonaparte was born in 1769 on the Mediterranean island of Corsica. When he was nine years old, his parents sent him to military school. In 1785, he finished school and became an artillery officer. When the revolution broke out, Napoleon joined the army of the new government.

In 1795, Napoleon led soldiers against French *royalists* who were attacking the National Convention. For this, he was thought of as the savior of the French republic.

By 1799, the unsettled French government had lost the people’s support. In a bold move, Napoleon used troops to seize control of the government. This was a **coup d’état**, or a sudden takeover of power. Napoleon then assumed dictatorial powers.

1. How did Napoleon get control of the government?

TERMS AND NAMES

Napoleon Bonaparte Military leader who seized power in France

coup d’état A sudden takeover of a government

plebiscite Vote by the people

lycée Government-run public school

concordat Agreement

Napoleonic Code Complete set of laws set up by Napoleon that eliminated many injustices

Battle of Trafalgar British defeat of Napoleon’s forces at sea

Napoleon in his Study



NAPOLEON RULES FRANCE---HOW DID HE USE THE REVOLUTION’S IDEAS IN HIS GOVT.?

Napoleon pretended to be the rightfully elected leader of France. In 1800, a **plebiscite**, or vote of the people, was held to approve a new constitution. The people voted for it overwhelmingly, and Napoleon took power as first consul.

Napoleon made several changes that were meant to build on the Revolution’s good ideas:

1. He made tax collection more fair and orderly. As a result, the govt. could count on a steady supply of money.
2. He removed dishonest government workers.
3. He started **lycées**—new public schools for ordinary citizens.
4. He gave the church back some of its power. He signed a **concordat**, or agreement, with the pope. This gave him the support of the organized church.
5. He wrote a new set of laws, called the **Napoleonic Code**, which gave all French citizens the same rights.

However, the new laws took away many individual rights won during the Revolution. For example, they limited free speech and restored slavery in French colonies. **2. What changes did Napoleon make?**

NAPOLEON CREATES AN EMPIRE---WHAT GOALS DID HE HAVE BEYOND FRANCE?

Napoleon had hoped to make his empire larger in both Europe and the New World. In 1801, he had sent soldiers to retake the island of present-day Haiti. Slaves in that colony had seized power during a civil war. But his troops failed.

Napoleon then gave up on his New World plans. In 1803, he sold the largest part of France's North American land—the huge Louisiana Territory—to the United States.

Napoleon had been stopped in the Americas. So he then moved to add to his power in Europe. In 1804, he made himself *emperor* of France. He took control of the Austrian Netherlands, parts of Italy, and Switzerland. Napoleon's only loss during this time was to the British navy in the **Battle of Trafalgar**. This loss kept him from conquering Britain. **3. Where did Napoleon succeed in adding lands, and where did he fail?**

CHAPTER 23 Section 4

Napoleon's Empire Collapses

NAPOLEON'S COSTLY MISTAKES ---WHAT MISTAKES DID NAPOLEON MAKE ABROAD?

Napoleon's own personality posed a threat to his empire. His love of power pushed him to expand his empire. His efforts to extend French rule led to his empire's collapse.

Napoleon made three costly mistakes. His first mistake was caused by his desire to crush Britain. He wanted to hurt the British economy. So in 1806 he ordered a **blockade**. This was an effort to stop

all trade between Britain and the other European nations. Napoleon called this policy the **Continental System**. It was supposed to make continental Europe more self-sufficient.

The effort failed because some Europeans secretly brought in British goods. At the same time, the British put their own blockade around Europe. Because the British navy was so strong, it worked well. Soon the French economy, along with others on the European continent, weakened.

Napoleon's second mistake was to make his brother king of Spain in 1808. The Spanish people were loyal to their own king. With help from Britain, bands of peasant fighters called **guerrillas** fought Napoleon for five years. Napoleon lost 300,000 troops during this **Peninsular War**. (The war gets its name from the Iberian Peninsula on which Spain is located.)

Napoleon's third mistake was perhaps his worst. In 1812, he tried to conquer Russia, far to the east. He entered Russia with more than 400,000 soldiers. As the Russians retreated, however, they followed a **scorched-earth policy**. They burned their fields and killed their livestock so Napoleon's armies could not eat what they left behind.

Although the French got as far as Moscow, winter was coming. Napoleon was forced to order his soldiers to head back. On the way home, bitter cold, hunger, and Russian attacks killed thousands. Thousands more *deserted*. By the time Napoleon's army left Russian territory, only 10,000 of his soldiers were able to fight.

1. What happened to Napoleon in Russia?

NAPOLEON'S DOWNFALL---WHAT OTHER DEFEATS DID NAPOLEON SUFFER?

Other leaders saw that Napoleon was now weaker. Britain, Russia, Prussia, Sweden, and Austria joined forces and attacked France. Napoleon was defeated at the Battle of Leipzig, in Germany, in 1813. In 1814, Napoleon gave up his throne and was exiled, or sent away, to the tiny island of Elba off the Italian coast.

Louis XVIII took the throne in Paris. But he quickly became unpopular. The peasants feared the new king would undo the land reforms of the Revolution.

News of Louis XVIII's trouble was all Napoleon needed to try to regain his empire. In March 1815, he escaped from Elba and boldly returned to France. He took power and raised another army.

The rest of the European powers raised armies to fight against Napoleon. Led by the Duke of Wellington, they defeated Napoleon in his final battle near a Belgian town called **Waterloo**. This defeat ended Napoleon's last attempt at power, which was called the **Hundred Days**. He was then sent to the far-off island of St. Helena in the southern Atlantic Ocean. He died there in 1821. **2. What was Napoleon's last attempt at power, and where did it end?**

TERMS AND NAMES

blockade Forced closing of ports

Continental System Napoleon's policy of preventing trade and communication between Great Britain and other European nations

guerrilla Spanish peasant fighter

Peninsular War War that Napoleon fought in Spain

scorched-earth policy Policy of burning fields and slaughtering livestock so that enemy troops would find nothing to eat

Waterloo Battle in Belgium that was Napoleon's final defeat

Hundred Days Napoleon's last bid for power, which ended at Waterloo



Napoleon's retreat from Moscow

The Congress of Vienna

CH. 23 section 5

TERMS AND NAMES

Congress of Vienna Meetings in Vienna for the purpose of restoring order to Europe

Klemens von Metternich Key leader at the Congress of Vienna

balance of power Condition in which no one country becomes a threat to the other

legitimacy Bringing back to power the kings that Napoleon had driven out

Holy Alliance League formed by Russia, Austria, and Prussia

Concert of Europe Series of alliances to help prevent revolution

METTERNICH'S PLANS FOR EUROPE---WHAT WAS THE CONGRESS OF VIENNA?

In 1814, leaders of many nations met to draw up a peace plan for Europe. This series of meetings was called the **Congress of Vienna**. The most important person at the Congress of Vienna was the foreign minister of Austria, **Klemens von Metternich**. He shaped the peace conditions that were finally accepted.

Metternich had three goals at the congress. First, he wanted to make sure that the French would not attack another country again. Second, he wanted a **balance of power** in which no one nation was strong enough to threaten other nations. Third, he wanted **legitimacy**. This meant restoring monarchs to the thrones they had before Napoleon's conquests. The other leaders agreed with Metternich's ideas.

Metternich achieved his first goal when the congress strengthened the small nations that surrounded France. Meanwhile, France was not punished too severely. It remained independent and kept some overseas possessions. This helped achieve Metternich's second goal to create a balance of power.

The congress also worked to fulfill Metternich's third goal. Many rulers were returned to power in states throughout Europe, including France.

The Congress of Vienna created very successful peace agreements. None of the great powers fought against one another 40 years. Some did not fight in a war for the rest of the century. **1. What three goals did Metternich have?**

The Congress of Vienna



POLITICAL CHANGES BEYOND VIENNA---HOW DID EUROPEAN LEADERS RESPOND TO THE EFFECTS OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION?

Many European rulers were nervous about the effects of the French Revolution. In 1815, Czar Alexander, Emperor Francis I of Austria, and King Frederick William III of Prussia formed the **Holy Alliance**. Other alliances created by Metternich were called the **Concert of Europe**. The idea of these alliances was for nations to help one another if revolution came.

Across Europe, conservatives held control of European governments. Conservatives were people who opposed the ideals of the French Revolution. They also usually supported the rights and powers of royalty. They did not encourage individual liberties. They did not want any calls for equal rights.

But many other people still believed in the ideals of the French Revolution. They thought that all people should be equal and share in power. Later they would again fight for these rights.

People in the Americas also felt the desire for freedom. Spanish colonies in the Americas revolted against the restored Spanish king. Many colonies won independence from Spain. National feeling grew in Europe, too. Soon people in areas such as Italy, Germany, and Greece would rebel and form new nations. The French Revolution had changed the politics of Europe and beyond.

2. What happened to ideas about freedom and independence?
