

## **THE FRENCH REVOLUTION**

**Grade Level:** Sixth Grade

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**School:** Academy of Charter Schools, Denver, Colorado

**Unit length:** 3 weeks (This unit is designed to be 15 class days, 45 minutes for each period)

### **I. ABSTRACT**

This sixth grade unit focuses on the causes and influences, the pivotal characters, and the lasting effects of the French Revolution on world history.

### **II. OVERVIEW**

#### **A. Concept Objectives**

1. Students will recognize the causes and influences of conflict.
2. Students will develop an awareness of the pivotal characters involved in the conflict.
3. Students will understand the results of the conflict and its impact on world history.

#### **B. Content**

The section on the French Revolution found on page 140 of the revised Core Knowledge Sequence.

#### **C. Skills**

1. Students can identify several causes of and influences of the French Revolution.
2. Students will compare the three estates of France using Venn diagrams, outlines, etc.
3. Students will distinguish different individuals by their accomplishments.
4. Students will write mini-biographies of the various individuals involved in the Revolution.
5. Students will be able to produce a timeline of major events in the Revolutionary period.
6. Students will be able to analyze outcomes of the Revolution and compare with world history and current events.

### **III. BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE**

#### **A. For the teacher**

1. What Your Fifth Grader Needs To Know, by E.D. Hirsch, Jr.
2. What Your Sixth Grader Needs To Know, by E.D. Hirsch, Jr.
3. Encyclopedia Americana Version 2.0

#### **B. For the students**

Students should have had a prior exposure to medieval and feudal history, the American Revolution, Reformation, and European Cultures.

### **IV. RESOURCES**

- A. A teacher-made packet on the three concepts. (There is no grade-appropriate printed material available).
- B. Sightseers: Paris 1789, by Rachel Wright
- C. Life During the French Revolution by Gail B. Stewart
- D. Websites: Infoseek and Excite on the "French Revolution."

### **V. LESSONS**

#### **Lesson One**

- A. **Daily Objectives**
1. **Lesson Content**
    - a. Introduction, overview, and vocabulary
  2. **Concept Objectives**
    - a. Students will recognize the causes and influences of conflict.
  3. **Skill Objectives**
    - a. The students will read the packet and identify and define the vocabulary.
- B. **Materials**
1. Teacher-made packet
  2. pencil
  3. Paper
  4. Dictionaries
- C. **Background Notes**
1. See Teacher-made packet
- D. **Key Vocabulary**
1. **Debt**- something such as money or services owed to one person by another.
  2. **Nobles**- a person possessing high qualities, or having a high rank at birth.
  3. **Revolution**- a sudden, radical, or complete change.
  4. **Estates**- social standings or rank
  5. **Clergy**- the body of men and women duly ordained to the service of God.
  6. **Peasants**- uneducated person of low social status.
  7. **Bourgeoisie** - the French word for middle class.
  8. **Summon**- to call or command for specific action.
  9. **Riot**- violent public disorder; a disturbance of the peace.
  10. **Arsenal**- A storehouse or source of supply for arms, and ammunition.
  11. **Cahiers** - the French work for notebook.
  12. **Versailles**- southwestern suburb of Paris.
  13. **Siege**- A persistent of serious attack.
  14. **Bastille** - a tower in Paris used as a prison.
  15. **Constitution**- an established law or settled custom.
- E. **Procedures/Activities**
1. Students will read the Causes packet in a round-robin style.
  2. The teacher leads a discussion of vocabulary words as students highlight them in the packet.
  3. The teacher leads a discussion of the packet content.
  4. The students will begin a vocabulary booklet, completing only the Causes portion.
- F. **Evaluation/Assessment**
1. The students will demonstrate knowledge of vocabulary definitions by writing each word properly in a sentence.
- G. **Standards**
1. Colorado state sixth grade language arts standard VIII.

## Lesson Two

- A. **Daily Objectives**
1. **Lesson Content**
    - a. Understanding both the differences and similarities of the three Estates.
  2. **Concept Objectives**
    - a. Students will recognize the causes and influences of conflict.
  3. **Skill Objectives**
    - a. The student will compare and contrast the Three Estates.

- B. **Materials**
1. Teacher-made packet
  2. Pencil and Paper
  3. Venn Diagram handout
- C. **Background Notes**
1. Teacher-made packet
  2. Prior knowledge of Venn diagrams
  3. Prior exposure to the writing of 5-paragraph essays
- D. **Key Vocabulary**
1. All new vocabulary was covered in lesson one
- E. **Procedures/Activities**
1. Discuss the 3 social classes of society that we have today. What role they play, and what some characteristics of each class are.
  2. Students will read the Estate section from the packet aloud.
  3. The teacher will lead the class discussion over the material read.
  4. The teacher and students will do the Venn diagram activity together by asking questions. (this will be the students notes)
    - a. What are some characteristics that only the First Estate has? (Write the answers in the First Estate circle then repeat for the Second and Third Estates).
    - b. What are some characteristics that all three Estates have? (Write the answers in the proper location on the diagram).
    - c. What are some characteristics that the First and Second Estate have in common? (Write the answers in the proper location on the diagram and repeat comparing all Estates to each other).
  5. Using the Venn diagram students will compose an outline for their essay. The essay topic is to compare and contrast the three Estates.
  6. Using the outline and the Venn diagram the students will write a 5-paragraph essay. (The teacher can give topic sentence examples if they would like).
- F. **Evaluation/Assessment**
1. The essays will be graded using a rubric that the teacher has gone over ahead of time. Some items that should be included on the rubric are: correct spelling and grammar and content.
- G. **Standards**
1. Colorado state sixth grade language arts standard I.
  2. Colorado state sixth grade math standard IV.
  3. Colorado state sixth grade history standard III.

### **Lesson Three (A continuation of Lesson Two)**

- A. **Daily Objectives**
1. **Lesson Content**
    - a. Understanding both the differences and similarities of the three Estates.
  2. **Content Objectives**
    - a. Students will recognize the causes and influences of conflict.
  3. **Skill Objectives**
    - a. The student will compare and contrast the Three Estates.
- B. **Materials**
1. Teacher-made packets
  2. Pencil and Paper
  3. Venn diagram handout
- C. **Background Notes**

1. Teacher made packets
  2. Prior knowledge of Venn diagrams
  3. Prior knowledge of how to write a 5-paragraph essay
- D. **Key Vocabulary**
1. All new vocabulary was covered in lesson one
- E. **Procedures/Activities**
1. Discuss the 3 social classes of society that we have today. What role they play, and what some characteristics of each class are.
  2. Students will read the Estate section from the packet aloud.
  3. The teacher will lead the class discussion over the material read.
  4. The teacher and students will do the Venn diagram activity together by asking questions. (This will be for the student's notes)
    - a. What are some characteristics that only the First Estate has? (Write the answers in the First Estate circle then repeat for the Second and Third Estates).
    - b. What are some characteristics that all three Estates have? (Write the answers in the proper location on the diagram).
    - c. What are some characteristics that the First and Second Estate have in common? (Write the answers in the proper location on the diagram and repeat comparing all Estates to each other).
  5. Using the Venn diagram students will compose an outline for their essay. The essay topic is to compare and contrast the three Estates.
  6. Using the outline and the Venn diagram the students will write a 5-paragraph essay. (The teacher can give topic sentence examples if they would like).
- F. **Evaluation/Assessment**
1. The essays will be graded using a rubric that the teacher has gone over ahead of time. Some items that should be included on the rubric are: correct spelling and grammar and content.
- G. **Standards**
1. Colorado state sixth grade language arts standard I.
  2. Colorado state sixth grade math standard IV.
  3. Colorado state Sixth grade history standard III.

## **Lesson Four**

- A. **Daily Objectives**
1. **Lesson Content**
    - a. Understanding the economy of France at the start of the French Revolution.
    - b. Learn what the importance was of the Declaration of Rights.
    - c. Know why the March to Versailles to place.
  2. **Concept Objectives**
    - a. Students will recognize the causes and influences of conflict.
  3. **Skill Objectives**
    - a. Students will be able to identify several causes of and influences of the French Revolution.
- B. **Materials**
1. Teacher-made packet
  2. Pencil and paper
  3. Handout
- C. **Background Notes**
1. Teacher-made packet

2. Prior knowledge of answering questions in complete sentences.
- D. **Key Vocabulary**
1. All new vocabulary was covered in lesson 1.
- E. **Procedures/Activities**
1. Have the students silently read the sections on the Economy, Declaration of Rights and the March to Versailles.
  2. Break the class into groups of 3 or 4.
  3. Have the students discuss these questions in their group. They should write down the best answer they come up with for each question.
    - a. What was the condition of France's economy before the revolution started?
    - b. What were some contributing factors to this poor economy?
    - c. What was the Declaration of Rights and why was it important?
    - d. What was the March to Versailles?
    - e. What were the results of the March to Versailles?
  4. Share the group answers with the class. The teacher should write the best answers on the board. The students should copy these into their notes.
  5. Assign homework: The students should read the section on the Bastille and answer these three questions:
    - a. What was the Bastille and why did the common people want to attack it?
    - b. Who was Launay? Did he give up easily?
    - c. What was the outcome of this siege?
- F. **Evaluation/Assessment**
1. Each member of the group will be evaluated on their level of participation during the class discussion.
  2. The homework will be collected for a grade the next day of class.
- G. **Standards**
1. Colorado state sixth grade language arts standard VIII.
  2. Colorado state sixth grade history standards IV and VI.

## Lesson 5

- A. **Daily Objectives**
1. **Lesson Content**
    - a. Testing the students knowledge of the causes and influences of the French Revolution.
  2. **Concept Objectives**
    - a. Students will recognize the causes and influences of conflict.
  3. **Skill Objectives**
    - a. Students will be able to identify and explain both the causes and influences of the French Revolution.
- B. **Materials**
1. Teacher-made packet
  2. Pencil and paper
  3. Bastille homework
- C. **Background Notes**
1. See Teacher-made packet
- D. **Key Vocabulary**
1. All new vocabulary was covered in lesson 1.
- E. **Procedure/Activities**
1. Students will switch homework papers with a neighbor.
  2. Correct the Bastille homework.

3. Students now have a few minutes to ask the teacher questions over the material that has been covered that week.
  4. Students are to take a short quiz to test their understanding of the causes of the French Revolution. This quiz should be done independently and without the help of their notes.
- F. **Evaluation/Assessment**
1. Students will be evaluated based on the number of questions that they get correct on their quiz.
- G. **Standards**
- None apply here.

## Lesson Six

- A. **Daily Objectives**
1. **Lesson Content**
    - a. Introduction, overview, and vocabulary for part 2 of unit (characters).
  2. **Concept Objectives**
    - a. The students will develop an awareness of the pivotal characters' roles in the conflict.
  3. **Skill Objectives**
    - a. The students will read section 2 of the teacher-made packet, identify and define vocabulary.
- B. **Materials**
1. pencil and paper
  2. teacher-made packets
  3. dictionaries
  4. highlighters
- C. **Background Notes**
1. See Teacher-made packet
- D. **Key Vocabulary**
1. **Jacobins** – members of an extremist or radical political group, especially those engaging in terrorist activity during the French Revolution
  2. **Louis XIV**, Louis XV, and Louis XVI – members of a French ruling dynasty during the 18<sup>th</sup> century
  3. **Marie-Antoinette** – Queen of France, married to Louis XVI
  4. **Napoleon Bonaparte** – French military commander and emperor
  5. **Robespierre** – French revolutionary
  6. **coup d'état** – the violent overthrow or alteration of an existing government by a small group
  7. **deputy** – a member of the lower house of some legislative assemblies
  8. **equality** – the state of being equal
  9. **execution** – a putting to death as a legal penalty
  10. **exile** – the state or a period of forced absence from one's country or home
  11. **fraternity** – persons of the same class, profession, character or tastes
  12. **guillotine** – a machine for beheading by means of a heavy blade that slides down in vertical guides
  13. **liberty** – the state of being free
- E. **Procedures/Activities**
1. The students will read part 2 of the packet in a round-robin style.
  2. The teacher will lead a discussion of vocabulary words as students highlight them in the packet.
  3. The students will begin a vocabulary booklet, completing only those for part 2.

- F. **Evaluation/Assessment**
  - 1. The student will demonstrate knowledge of vocabulary words by writing each one properly in a sentence related to the unit content.
- G. **Standards**
  - 1. Colorado state 6<sup>th</sup> grade language standard VIII.

### **Lesson Seven**

- A. **Daily Objectives**
  - 1. **Lesson Content**
    - a. Character recognition
  - 2. **Concept Objectives**
    - a. The students will develop an awareness of the roles played by the conflict's pivotal characters.
  - 3. **Skill Objectives**
    - a. The students will write persuasive letters to one of the key figures, demonstrating a comprehension of that character's role in the conflict.
- B. **Materials**
  - 1. teacher-made packets
  - 2. paper and pencils
- C. **Background Notes**
  - 1. Teacher-made packets
  - 2. Previous letter-writing experience
- D. **Key Vocabulary**
  - 1. All new vocabulary for the week was covered in lesson six.
- E. **Procedures/Activities**
  - 1. Have the students write a letter to one of the key characters, attempting to persuade him/her to make changes for the improvement of living conditions during the time of the French Revolution.
  - 2. Students are to proofread each other's letters for spelling and other mechanical errors.
- F. **Evaluation/Assessment**
  - 1. The letter should show an accurate historical representation of the lifestyle and needs of the character. In addition, the student should use proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
- G. **Standards**
  - 1. Colorado state history standard III and language standard II

### **Lesson Eight**

- A. **Daily Objectives**
  - 1. **Lesson Content**
    - a. Character recognition
  - 2. **Concept Objectives**
    - a. The student will develop an awareness of the roles played by the pivotal characters in the conflict.
  - 3. **Skill Objectives**
    - a. The students will work in groups to create a newspaper page giving news from 18<sup>th</sup> century France during the revolution.
- B. **Materials**
  - 1. Paper and pencils
  - 2. Construction paper
  - 3. Local newspaper

- C. **Background Notes**
  - 1. See Teacher-made packet
- D. **Key Vocabulary**
  - 1. All new vocabulary for the week was covered in lesson six.
- E. **Procedures/Activities**
  - 1. The teacher will share the local newspaper with the class, paying particular attention to the front page headlines, birth and wedding announcements, and obituaries.
  - 2. Discuss the elements of each section, such as names, dates, events and format.
  - 3. Divide the class into groups of 3-4 students.
  - 4. Let the students select which article or announcement each will write within the group. Each will write at least one; some students may be assigned two.
  - 5. The students will write their rough drafts in class.
  - 6. Upon completion, students will proofread each other's work within the group.
  - 7. The students may brainstorm to name their newspaper.
  - 8. First students to finish writing may experiment with the layout of their group's newspaper.
- F. **Evaluation/Assessment**
  - 1. Note whether or not the students worked in class by the completion of their rough drafts. Final evaluation will be given upon completion of their finished newspaper.
- G. **Standards**
  - 1. Colorado state language standard III and history standard III.

### Lesson Nine

- A. **Daily Objectives**
  - 1. **Lesson Content**
    - a. Character recognition
  - 2. **Concept Objectives**
    - a. The students will develop an awareness of the roles played by the conflict's pivotal characters.
  - 3. **Skill Objectives**
    - a. The students will work in groups to create a newspaper page.
- B. **Materials**
  - 1. pencil and paper
  - 2. teacher-made packets
  - 3. rough draft of newspaper article or announcement
  - 4. scissors
  - 5. glue or rubber cement
  - 6. markers
  - 7. construction paper
- C. **Background Notes**
  - 1. See Teacher-made packet
- D. **Key Vocabulary**
  - 1. All new vocabulary for the week was covered in lesson six.

- E. **Procedures/Activities**
  1. Students get into the previous day's groups.
  2. Work on final copy of newspaper articles.
  3. Students who have finished their article may create an extra article or advertisement for their groups.
  4. Students cut and paste layout for newspaper on construction paper.
- F. **Evaluation/Assessment**
  1. Students' work will be graded for factual content as well as correct spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- G. **Standards**
  1. Colorado state history standard III and language standard III

### **Lesson Ten**

- A. **Daily Objectives**
  1. **Lesson Content**
    - a. Character recognition
  2. **Concept Objectives**
    - a. The students will develop an awareness of the roles played by the conflict's pivotal characters.
  3. **Skills Objectives**
    - a. The students will present their newspapers to the class, reading aloud and sharing their articles.
    - b. The students will review and/or summarize their knowledge of part 2 of the unit material, in the form of a quiz.
- B. **Materials**
  1. completed newspaper
  2. pencil and paper
  3. printed quizzes
- C. **Background Notes**
  1. See Teacher-made packet
- D. **Key Vocabulary**
  1. All new vocabulary for the week was covered in lesson six.
- E. **Procedures/Activities**
  1. Groups may volunteer to present their newspapers.
  2. Each writer reads aloud his/her article to the class as other group members hold up their newspaper.
  3. Audience members may ask questions or give feedback.
  4. After all groups have presented, the teacher will lead a review/discussion for lessons six through ten. (Game show formats are informative and fun, if time allows.)
  5. A written quiz will be given over lessons six through ten.
- F. **Evaluation/Assessment**
  1. Knowledge of the characters will be assessed in the written quiz.
- G. **Standards**
  1. Colorado state history standards III and IV; language standard VIII

### **Lesson Eleven**

- A. **Daily Objectives**
  1. **Lesson Content**
    - a. Introduction, overview and vocabulary
  2. **Concept Objectives**

- a. The students will understand the results of the conflict and its impact on world history.
  - 3. **Skill Objectives**
    - a. The students will read the packet, identify and define the vocabulary.
- B. **Materials**
  - 1. Teacher-made packet
  - 2. Pencil and paper
  - 3. Dictionaries
  - 4. Highlighter
- C. **Background Notes**
  - 1. See Teacher-made packet
- D. **Key Vocabulary**
  - 1. **aristocracy**-upper class of hereditary nobility
  - 2. **regime**-government in power
  - 3. **coup d'etat**-unconstitutional seizure of government power using surprise or violence
  - 4. **monarchy**-government with a hereditary head of state
  - 5. **artisan**-craftsman
  - 6. **sans culottes**-extreme radical republican during the French Revolution
  - 7. **democracy**-the absence of hereditary or arbitrary class distinctions and privileges
  - 8. **liberate**-to set at liberty or free
  - 9. **radical**-political group advocating policies of extreme change
  - 10. **journeyman**-experienced, skilled worker employed by the day
  - 11. **nationalism**-loyalty and devotion to one's nation above all other groups
- E. **Procedures/Activities**
  - 1. Students will read the Results packet in a round-robin style.
  - 2. Teacher leads discussion of vocabulary words as students highlight words in the packet.
  - 3. Teacher leads discussion of packet content.
  - 4. Students will complete vocabulary booklet (all three sections due at end of this week).
- F. **Evaluation/Assessment**
  - 1. The students will demonstrate knowledge of vocabulary definitions by writing each word properly in a sentence.
- G. **Standards**
  - 1. Colorado state sixth grade language standard VIII

## Lesson Twelve

- A. **Daily Objectives**
  - 1. **Lesson Content**
    - a. Timeline of major events in the revolutionary period
  - 2. **Concept Objectives**
    - a. The students will understand the results of the conflict and its impact on world history.
  - 3. **Skill Objectives**
    - a. The students will be able to sequence and produce a timeline of major events of the revolutionary period.
- B. **Materials**
  - 1. Teacher-made packet
  - 2. Pencil and paper, Eraser, Ruler

3. Crayons, Markers, Colored pencils
- C. **Background Notes**
  1. See Teacher-made packet
  2. Students should be familiar with timeline format, sequencing events, and using a ruler.
- D. **Key Vocabulary**
  1. All new vocabulary words for Lesson 12 were introduced in Lesson 11.
- E. **Procedures/Activities**
  1. Teacher hands out list of dates to be included on timeline.
  2. Using Results packet, students research each date on the list to use in labeling timeline.
  3. Teacher models a timeline on the board, with events and dates correctly labeled, spaced, and sequenced.
  4. Students work on timelines, illustrating at least one event.
  5. (Optional—if time permits, class may make a large wall-sized timeline.)
- F. **Evaluation/Assessment**
  1. The students can correctly order random events on a quiz.
- G. **Standards**
  1. Colorado state sixth grade history standard I
  2. Colorado state sixth grade math standard V

### **Lesson Thirteen**

- A. **Daily Objectives**
  1. **Lesson Content**
    - a. Identify main results of French Revolution in class discussion while students take notes.
  2. **Concept Objectives**
    - a. The students will understand the results of the conflict and its impact on world history.
  3. **Skill Objectives**
    - a. The students will brainstorm connections between main outcomes of the French Revolution and later historical events.
- B. **Materials**
  1. Teacher-made Results packet
  2. Pencil and paper
- C. **Background Notes**
  1. Teacher-made Results packet
  2. Students should be familiar with taking notes in a lecture/discussion situation.
  3. Students should be familiar with brainstorming.
- D. **Key Vocabulary**
  1. All new vocabulary words for Lesson 13 were introduced in Lesson 11.
- E. **Procedures/Activities**
  1. Students volunteer outcomes of French Revolution to be listed on board.
  2. Class discusses and decides which outcomes are of more lasting impact historically.
  3. Students copy list from board.
  4. Class brainstorms connections to other, more recent world and U.S. history, including current events.
  5. Students are assigned to find three different events, whether historical or current, which they can link to outcomes of the French Revolution (may use textbooks, newspapers, TV news, books, magazines, etc.)

- F. **Evaluation/Assessment**
  - 1. Students turn in article copies or notes of three different events, and explain how each event connects to a major result of the French Revolution.
- G. **Standards**
  - 1. Colorado state sixth grade geography standard VI
  - 2. Colorado state sixth grade history standard III

### **Lesson Fourteen**

- A. **Daily Objectives**
  - 1. **Lesson Content**
    - a. Find similarities between events or results of the French Revolution and more recent events.
  - 2. **Concept Objectives**
    - a. Students will understand the results of the conflict and its impact on world history.
  - 3. **Skill Objectives**
    - a. Students will describe the connection between main outcomes of the French Revolution and later historical events.
- B. **Materials**
  - 1. Teacher-made Results packet
  - 2. Pencil and paper
  - 3. Articles or notes from Lesson 13 assignment
- C. **Background Notes**
  - 1. Teacher-made Results packet
  - 2. Students should be able to make a brief oral presentation in front of the class.
- D. **Key Vocabulary**
  - 1. All new vocabulary words for Lesson 14 were introduced in Lesson 11.
- E. **Procedures/Activities**
  - 1. Each student works with a partner to compare articles/notes for Lesson 13 assignment.
  - 2. Partners compare events and link them to events and results of the French Revolution.
  - 3. Each student decides which event and its revolutionary connection she/he wants to explain to class. (partners may NOT use the same event)
  - 4. Each student prepares notes for a one-minute speech to connect the modern and revolutionary event for the class.
  - 5. Students may practice the presentation with partner or another student if finished early.
  - 6. Each student gives his/her presentation to class.
  - 7. Discuss if time permits.
- F. **Evaluation/Assessment**
  - 1. Students will make brief oral presentations to class to demonstrate their understanding of the connection between a historical/current event and the Revolution.
- G. **Standards**
  - 1. Colorado state sixth grade geography standards IV, V, VI
  - 2. Colorado state sixth grade history standards I, II, III, V, VI

### **Lesson Fifteen**

- A. **Daily Objectives**
  - 1. **Lesson Content**

- a. Review this week’s activities, summarize, and take quiz on important events and results of the French Revolution and its impact on more recent world events.
- 2. **Concept Objectives**
  - a. The students will understand the results of the conflict and its impact on world history.
- 3. **Skill Objectives**
  - a. Students will be able to describe events and results of the French Revolution, explaining the impact on world history.
- B. **Materials**
  - 1. Paper and pencil
  - 2. Student notes and written work for this week
- C. **Background Notes**
  - 1. Teacher-made Results packet
  - 2. Student notes and work for Week 3 of unit
  - 3. Students will benefit from experience in debate and persuasive speaking.
- D. **Key Vocabulary**
  - 1. All new vocabulary words for Lesson 15 were introduced in Lesson 11.
- E. **Procedures/Activities**
  - 1. Students review main events and results of the French Revolution (this may be done in a discussion, debate, or game format).
  - 2. Students prioritize events/results in terms of lasting/major impact on world history.
  - 3. Students may wish to discuss or debate ethics or morality of revolutionary methods, if time permits.
  - 4. Students take quiz on Results packet.
- F. **Evaluation/Assessment**
  - 1. Students will orally discuss results of French Revolution and their impact on world history.
  - 2. Students will take quiz on this week’s material.
- G. **Standards**
  - 1. Colorado state sixth grade geography standards VI, V, VI
  - 2. Colorado state sixth grade history standards I, II, III, V, VI

## VI. **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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## CAUSES OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION--Packet 1

One of the most important events of European history in the 18th century was the French Revolution. This event affected social values and political systems first in France, then Europe, and finally throughout the world. This packet is designed to help explain the causes and influences of the French Revolution.

### The Enlightenment

After the Renaissance in the 15th century, there began a period known as the Enlightenment, which lasted into the 19th century. The Enlightenment was marked by the creative ideas and writings of scientists, mathematicians, and philosophers, who began to look beyond the traditional teachings of the Catholic Church and the conventional wisdom of their times. People like Rene Descartes, Isaac Newton, and John Locke had new and different ideas that they were able to logically explain to others, and these ideas led to still other new ideas.

John Locke, for example, wrote about a contract between the citizens of a nation and those who ruled the nation. His writings, along with those of a French writer named Montesquieu (who described a government with a legislative, executive, and judicial branch to protect the balance of power), had a tremendous influence on Thomas Jefferson and others who created the American system of government. People began to question the things they had always been taught, including the idea that a king had a divine right to rule his people, and that he had no direct responsibilities toward the people, only to God. They began to believe that they had the right to demand certain things from their king. In fact, after the Americans won their Revolution and set up their own government without a king, other nations began to pay attention.

In addition, the French had an influential role in helping the Americans win the Revolution. They helped provide money, leadership and ships, all of which were in very short supply in America. This exchange of ideas, resources, and people had a great influence on the French, who began to wonder if the problems in their own country could be solved if they got rid of their king, too.

### The Three Estates

In France in 1789 there existed a social class system called the Old Regime, which had its roots in the feudal system of medieval Europe. The Old Regime divided people into three social classes called "estates". These classes were very rigid, and a person could not move from one class to another, since the levels were primarily determined by the family into which a person was born. A person born into a certain estate was only allowed to do certain types of work, own certain kinds of property, or live in certain places, and if he were born into the third estate, he would not be allowed to hold a high political office.

The First Estate consisted of the clergy, or religious leaders. This group was very wealthy and powerful, owned about one-tenth of the land of France and one-fourth of its wealth, but they paid no taxes. They did help the people, however, by running schools, hospitals, and orphanages. There were two groups within the First Estate which had different influences on French society. The Higher Clergy came from wealthy families, lived like the aristocrats, and had considerable political power in the government, as well as holding all the important church government offices. Many of the Higher Clergy came from noble families, and often they purchased their offices, or received the positions as reward for some service to the church or one of leaders. Many did not even know much about the church or its doctrines or policies. The Lower Clergy was made up of the parish or village priests, who had no political power, but had tremendous influence in the daily lives of the people. The Lower Clergy were usually commoners, worked hard for very little, and lived much like the people they served. During the events of the Revolution, they usually sided with the common people, not the rest of the First Estate.

The Second Estate consisted of the nobles, who were also highly privileged, and this was a very small group, making up just over 1% of the population, or about 35,000 people. Even though the Second

Estate owned almost one-fourth of France's land, they paid practically no taxes. Not all of the nobles were rich, but all of them valued their privileges very highly, and lost no opportunities to take advantage of the common people, believing that they were superior to the commoners. Most nobles either owned land, businesses, or property, or held positions in the military, royal courts, government, or the church. Yet the nobles were not allowed to actually do the work of their business, but had to have others perform the work. Had they done any physical work, their noble status would have been lost, so many of them preferred to be poor and noble, rather than have money while being forced to give up their privileges and live as the commoners did.

This group also held a great deal of political power. Those nobles who did not have other responsibilities kept busy trying to expand their wealth and influence with the royal court. Like the First Estate, the nobles had tremendous power over the lower classes. They collected taxes and fees from all kinds of activities, even though the peasants actually did all the work (like growing food, raising cattle, grinding grain into flour, etc.). The nobles hunted wild game through peasant grain fields and vegetable gardens, and demanded payment that amounted to most of the crops produced by the peasants, simply because the land belonged to the nobles.

The Third Estate was also divided into two groups, the bourgeoisie (pronounced boor/JWAH/zee) and the peasants. The bourgeoisie consisted of middle-class workers, such as bankers, lawyers, doctors, merchants, and skilled craftsmen and tradesmen. While this group was not considered wealthy, they often owned small properties such as shops, offices, tools, equipment, etc., and most of them could read. The peasants were the poorest group in French society, and usually owned little or nothing. They were usually unskilled and illiterate, often little more than slaves, and worked as servants, farmers or day laborers, being paid just enough to eat and perhaps keep a roof over their heads.

The Third Estate was the largest of the three, consisting of 98% of the population. The peasants had the largest number of people of all three estates, and they had to struggle to make a living, but they paid the heaviest taxes because they had no political power. The bourgeoisie had money and education, but they also paid taxes and lacked the prestige and influence that came with noble birth in 18th century France.

### Economy

At his death, King Louis XIV, the "Sun King", had left the country deeply in debt. This was partly due to the French alliance with the United States during the American Revolution from 1776-1781. The assistance France gave to the U.S. was a major part of the French government's money problems, but the extravagant lifestyles of the royal family were also a contributing factor. In addition, the fall harvests of both 1787 and 1788 were very poor ones, and the winter of 1788-1789 was particularly hard. To make matters worse, the population of France had grown by one-third between 1740 and 1790, with no increase in food production. Although the country has some of the richest farmland in all of Europe, the farming practices were very primitive. Since it was already so hard to feed families, the farmers were afraid to try any new techniques.

Because of the crowding caused by the population increase, landlords nearly doubled rents. Since many families could no longer pay the high costs of food, rent, and the oppressive taxes, they lost their homes. This caused widespread homelessness. These families were now forced to beg for a living, which became so common that it was considered just another job. All the vagrants wandering the countryside looking for a handout frightened the country people. This group was afraid to turn the beggars away, but they also had barely enough food for their own families. Sometimes when the beggars could not beg food, they turned to crime, and robbery outside the cities was frequent. Sometimes the beggars banded together into roving gangs of outlaws. By the spring of 1789 there was widespread hunger in France, especially among the poor people. By late summer of the same year, the peasant unrest in the countryside was so dangerous that this time became known as the Great Fear.

By this time the economy of France was falling apart. The government tried to bring in money by raising taxes, but the decline in the economy (which resulted in widespread unemployment) and the food shortages caused riots to break out. King Louis XVI wanted to tax the nobles and perhaps even the

church, but, knowing this would be unpopular with these two estates, he sought the support of the people's representatives. Previously unused for 179 years, he summoned a group called the Estates General to meet in Versailles.

### Estates General

The three estates were told to organize *cahiers* (KAH/hee/ay), or notebooks. In these notebooks, the people throughout all the regions of the country were allowed to have someone list their opinions on the problems of France (this was unusual, since they did not vote, and most of the time no one seemed to care what they thought). Most of the cahiers called for fairer taxes and freedom of the press. This list was then to be discussed with the Estates General, which was a committee of representatives from each of the three estates, whose task was to solve the country's problems.

In the Estates General, each estate had one vote. Since the First and Second Estates usually had similar interests (like not paying taxes and protecting wealth and power), they usually also voted together. Once the Third Estate realized that they would be out-voted again by the other two groups, they took a daring step. They declared themselves a new governing body called the National Assembly. They then claimed that the National Assembly was the only true representative of the French people, and set out to write a constitution. They were no longer allowed to meet in the room they had been assigned, so they went to a nearby indoor tennis court to meet. They all took the "Oath of the Tennis Court", in which they vowed not to disband until they had drawn up a constitution for France. Eventually, King Louis XVI was forced to accept this constitution.

### The Declaration of Rights

It took the National Assembly three months to draft the constitution. They also wrote a Declaration of Rights. This was an outline that would indicate the intentions of the constitution. The publication of the Declaration of Rights also represented, for many Frenchmen, the death of the Old Regime.

### The March to Versailles

Because of the problems with the economy, merchants were forced to raise their prices. Bread was the most important part (about 75%) of the French diet, and most people in France spent three-fourths of their wages just to buy bread for their families. Few people had ovens to bake their own bread, so the people were very dependent on the baking industry. When the price of bread went up because grain was scarce, men encouraged the women to protest. On March 5, 1789, the women (and a few men in disguise) began their march from Paris to Versailles, armed with pitchforks, muskets, and crowbars. Versailles was a small but important town outside Paris where the government officials worked, and it was also where the royal court and king's palace were located. The common people believed that Versailles, a place of extravagance, wealth, and parties, had a plentiful supply of food.

Over 6000 women participated in this march. Along the way they killed a baker who was trying to sell his bread at a very high price. When the women reached Louis XVI's palace, they stormed through the gates, carrying the dead baker's head on a pole. They demanded that more bread be available at lower prices. Louis XVI was frightened and immediately gave in to the women's demands. He ordered all the bread from Versailles to be delivered to Paris. He was also forced to move his royal court to Paris so that he could be in closer touch with the French people and their lives and needs.

### The Fall of the Bastille

The Bastille was a famous prison in Paris, governed by an old nobleman named de Launay. On July 14, 1789, a mob marched to the Bastille in search of the gun powder and prisoners that Louis XVI had taken, since the Bastille was also used to store weapons and military supplies. De Launay had heard rumors that there would be a mob attack on him and his men, so he began his preparations on July 7. A small group of Swiss mercenaries on guard duty helped with the defense. The Bastille was ready for a disorganized mob attack, but not a siege. The huge mob easily broke into the Arsenal and the First

Courtyard. At first, de Launay was not ready to surrender, and turned his cannons on the crowd. The mob broke down the huge doors with axes, and de Launay's men opened fire. Over 80 of the mob were killed, but the rest brought a stolen cannon up to the gates. De Launay surrendered, but the mob no longer cared. They stormed through the gates, and de Launay and several of his men were captured. The mob dragged the defenders of the Bastille through the streets, and cut off de Launay's head to be displayed on a pole. This dramatic event has generally been considered the beginning of the French Revolution.

## **Historical Characters of the French Revolution-Packet 2**

### King Louis XIV (1638-1715)

Louis XIV became king of France at the age of four at the death of his father. He was called the "Gift of God", since his parents had not been able to have a child in over twenty years of marriage. He called himself the "Sun King", comparing the French people's relationship with him to the planets orbiting the sun. He was also known as the Great Monarch, since he seemed unusually well-suited to his position as king. He was a good ruler, with one exception. He was famous for his expensive life-style and extravagant habits. He danced in ballets until he was 31 years old, and set the standard for culture and royal behavior around the world. The French court became the envy of royalty everywhere during Louis XIV's reign.

Louis XIV also enlarged France's borders, but this did not make him any friends among other European countries and royalty. He married his cousin, a Spanish princess, but the marriage was not popular with the French people.

### King Louis XV (1710-1774)

King Louis XV, the great grandson of Louis XIV, became king at age 5 when Louis XIV died. France was governed by a regent (an adult substitute who was often a relative) until Louis XV reached the age of thirteen, when he took over the throne. Louis XV was handsome and intelligent, but he was also lazy and unwilling to apply himself to his royal responsibilities. Many issues needed his attention, but he refused to become concerned about the lives and problems of his country and his people. Instead of allowing his ministers to do their jobs, he got political advice from his mistresses for 30 years, and the royalty as well as the government was weakened.

Shortly before his death, Louis XV tried to change laws that would allow the aristocracy to have to pay taxes. He might have been able to make this change work, but he died before the law was actually changed. His successor, Louis XVI, reinstated the old laws and destroyed Louis XV's one chance to redeem his disastrous reign.

### King Louis XVI (1754-1793)

Louis XVI was the grandson of Louis XV, and the great-great grandson of Louis XIV. This Louis was neither handsome nor intelligent, and he had also been poorly educated. He was generally an honest man, and was sensitive to the problems of the people, but often did not seem to know what he should do to solve them. When critical decisions needed to be made, he usually took the path of maintaining the power of the king, like so many before him, instead of recognizing the very real needs of his people. He believed that the French people loved him, and that all those riots about bread and freedom were not as important to the people as having him be their king. He did disapprove of the extravagances of his grandfather and the Sun King, but he was weak, easily influenced, and unable to meet the challenges of the Revolution. He was crowned king in May 1774.

Louis XVI was just as much a victim of circumstances as he was a poor ruler. It appears that he meant well, and he did make efforts to make changes, but those changes were too little and too late. He was not able to control the clergy, the nobility, or even his wife, and too often decided to do nothing or wait and see, instead of taking decisive action.

In addition, Louis married Marie Antoinette in 1770, and she did not help his efforts. She was an Austrian princess, and considered to be vain, thoughtless, and unaware of the plight of the people. She spent vast amounts of money on silly pursuits, and seemed to understand very little about her people. She seemed more interested in fashion, social life, and preserving her husband's position than helping France solve its problems. Partly because she was a foreigner, she was very unpopular among the French people, and she became a favorite target of ridicule and hatred. This unpopularity did not help Louis XVI, and rumors of extravagant parties, expensive clothing, and foolish games and pastimes added to the anger of the common people toward their king and queen.

Louis was unable to stop the attack on the Bastille because he did not have enough loyal soldiers left in the army (most had deserted or sided with the commoners, and he knew he could not trust them to attack other commoners to defend him). He also may not have believed that the citizens were as hungry and frustrated as they actually were. He professed to support the Revolution, but secretly planned to overthrow the new government.

Louis felt that the Revolution could be overturned if France were attacked by an outside force, and he was encouraged by French nobility in exile that he could be reinstated. For this reason, as well as support among the people who wanted to blame their country's problems on someone else, he declared war on Austria. Then he secretly met with Austria, with his wife's support, and when the Austrian army was successful against the untrained National Guard (a citizen militia), the French people became convinced that Louis was a traitor. He and his family tried to escape, but were captured and imprisoned. Letters were found in a secret cupboard in the former royal residence that showed Louis had tried to get help from Austria's king, Marie Antoinette's brother, during the war. After being held in prison for about 18 months, Louis XVI was tried for treason, found guilty, and beheaded on January 21, 1793.

#### Marie Antoinette (1755-1793)

Marie Antoinette was a young, beautiful Austrian princess, who, with her extravagant and showy lifestyle, became the unpopular queen of France just before and during the French Revolution. The poor, hungry, hard-working people felt she had expensive and decadent hobbies, and this scandalized her husband's reign. The French people called Marie Antoinette "Madame Deficit", and while she was not the most important influence on the political and economic problems, the French people found her a convenient culprit to blame for all their troubles.

Marie Antoinette was, at one time, the height of fashion in Paris, which was already the fashion center of the world. She spent huge sums of money on new dresses, some of which she never even wore. Her hairstyles changed for each new outfit, and sometimes her stylist even placed tiny figures and scenes in the middle of her tall hair. She had a village built outside the palace at Versailles, called the Petit Trianon, which was carefully made to look like a country village. She and her friends would pretend to be servants and milkmaids, watching other servants take care of shampooed sheep and perfumed cows.

The queen was considered to be foolish and empty-headed, but she was ambitious and very protective of her husband's powers. She felt humiliated when the National Assembly took away his authority and then imprisoned him. She also had offended the French people as a young queen, when she had often refused to follow endless traditions that the queens before her had followed since anyone could remember. It often took her over two hours to be dressed in the morning, because she had a long line of servants whose job it was to perform only one simple task. She found this tiresome and pointless, but when she dismissed those servants, some of which were nobles, many serving women were deeply offended. In time, it began to be seen as less of a privilege to assist the hated queen.

After the royal family tried to escape from Paris, where they had been living for two years since the march on Versailles, they were recognized and captured. The National Guard took the open carriage through the countryside for four days to complete the one-day trip, so that more people could see and ridicule them. The royals were insulted and threatened the entire time, and it was said that Marie Antoinette's hair, ash blonde before, turned completely gray during that long and humiliating trip.

After Louis XVI was guillotined, Marie Antoinette was separated from her children and placed in solitary confinement. Nearly ten months later, on October 16, 1793, she was beheaded at the guillotine.

### Maximilien Robespierre (1758-1794)

Maximilien Robespierre was a lawyer who had a great influence during the early days of the Revolution. He was a supporter of the Revolution who was elected to represent the Third Estate in the National Assembly. He was also a leader of the Jacobins, a secret society in France that plotted to overthrow the monarchy. (The Jacobins got their name because they originally held their meetings in a Jacobin or Dominican-order convent.)

Robespierre was a great debater, and a popular public speaker. He served as the “prosecutor” at the public trial of Louis XVI, although the trial was little more than a display of hatred toward the royal family. Robespierre also served on the Committee of Public Safety, a powerful group that tried to search out anti-revolutionary forces and individuals that were thought to be a threat to the new French Republic. His tactics were quite ruthless, and thousands were arrested, imprisoned, and executed during the Reign of Terror from 1793-94, often due to his powerful influence. He made sure that a former friend and revolutionary leader, Georges Danton, was guillotined for not supporting the goals of the Revolution, but he himself was overthrown not long after. Three months after Danton’s death, he shot himself in the jaw in a failed suicide attempt, and was guillotined the same day.

Many historians consider Robespierre to be the principal founder of French democracy, and to have been the Revolution’s greatest leader. He was devoted to the ideals of the Revolution, but never identified with the people it was supposed to benefit. He preferred political discussions to anything else, but had little patience with the human preferences of most of the people. He was disappointed that so many Frenchmen cared more about less work and more food, than about the ideals of freedom and equality.

### Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821)

Napoleon Bonaparte (the little-known Italian spelling is “Buonoparte”), often called simply Napoleon, was one of the greatest military commanders of all time. He was born to an Italian family on Corsica (an island off the coast of Italy), which had only been acquired by France the year before his birth. He was the son of Carlo, who had a law degree and much political influence. Carlo died at age 39, when Napoleon was 17, and Carlo left a widow to raise his eight children. Napoleon was the second-oldest child in the family.

As a child, Napoleon attended royal military school on a scholarship secured by his father, as a courtesy from King Louis XVI. Napoleon graduated from the school of future generals at the age of 16, and in school he had excelled in math and science. He became a military leader as a young man, partly because there was a shortage of officers after the French Revolution, and was promoted to the rank of general at the age of 24.

Napoleon had an impressive record of success in command of his army. His forces fought and defeated the hated British at the French harbor city of Toulon, and his quick rise to high command was a result of his brilliant strategies and decisive action. He was only 5 feet, 2 inches tall, which was not uncommon for a soldier, but was quite unusual for an officer. (It was thought that an officer needed to be taller than his men, since size commanded respect.) Napoleon became world-famous for his military successes, and in one year alone, he brought millions in captured treasure to the French treasury.

Napoleon was briefly jailed during the Reign of Terror, from 1793-94, but was released. He had been supportive of the Revolution. He defeated Austria in 1797, and made northern Italy a French possession. He was then elected to the position of first consul from 1799-1804. Then he declared himself emperor of France, and reigned for ten years. During that time, he made France’s government much more efficient and organized. One of the longest-lasting effects of his reign was the Napoleonic Code, a legal system that he designed to be fair, simple, and efficient, unlike the old traditional laws that France had used for centuries. He also restored order after the chaos of the Revolution, and filled the void in the government created by the king’s execution. Had there not been a revolution, he may never have become an emperor at all.

Napoleon married Josephine, a widowed aristocratic woman six years his senior. They had two children. After being elected First Consul for life, he declared himself the emperor of France on December 2, 1804, and he ruled the country in that office until 1814. He divorced Josephine, at least partly because she had no sons to rule after him, and married an Austrian princess named Marie-Louise, who was only 18 years old.

His army was defeated after he tried to attack Russia, but his strategy did not take into account the distance from France and his sources for food and supplies, or the cold Russian winter. His huge army of 450,000 men was reduced to only 40,000 (a loss of over 90%) when he returned in defeat. His former father-in-law, angry about the divorce, betrayed Napoleon, which led to his capture, conviction, and exile to the island of Elba in the Mediterranean in 1814. Napoleon later escaped from Elba, and returned briefly to power again in 1815 as the emperor of France. As soon as he was back in Paris, he went to war. This time, however, Napoleon's weakened army was finally defeated by the British general Wellington and an alliance of European nations. This defeat occurred at the Battle of Waterloo. Napoleon was then exiled to the tiny island of St. Helena, off the coast of Africa in the South Atlantic. Guarded night and day, he remained there until he died of cancer in 1821.

### **Results of the French Revolution-Packet 3**

There were numerous long-lasting effects of the French Revolution on France, Europe, and the world. The five most important effects were: changes in the European political structure, social and political changes, the rise of nationalism, acceptance of the revolutionary process, and the creation of a political climate that set up the problems of the 20th century. Some of these changes came about during or as a result of Napoleon's reign as emperor, which would not have occurred if France's monarchy had not been overthrown during the Revolution.

#### European Political Structure

Napoleon established republics in the Netherlands, Switzerland, northern Italy, Rome, and Naples. He then turned them, except for Switzerland, into monarchies. He created satellite kingdoms under his own power in Westphalia, Poland, and Spain. He made three of his brothers kings in Spain, Holland, and Westphalia.

Napoleon was an able administrator, and along with these political changes, he brought many reforms to these countries. The Napoleonic Code, a system of laws which was far superior to that of the feudal system, is still the basis of law in most of Europe today. The metric system was developed and adopted in 1803, and is used today by all major countries of the world except the United States. Most of Europe wrote constitutions, and legislatures began to seize property belonging to the Church. Institutions that supported the aristocracy and inherited privilege were suppressed. Napoleon also paved the way for the Italian and German unification movements of the 19th century (see the nationalism section below). Napoleon was responsible for arranging the sale of the Louisiana Purchase to the United States in 1803, since France could not maintain its American possessions and fight Europe at the same time, and the treasury also needed the money.

Many of these changes were reversed after Napoleon's first defeat in 1814. Even France flirted with monarchy again--twice--during the Bourbon Restorations, when Louis XVIII ruled the country briefly (Louis XVII was beheaded along with his mother, and never ruled France). However, none of these reforms was ever completely restored to its pre-revolutionary state.

#### Political and Social Change

The Revolutionary period is considered a watershed in modern history. It changed forever the way common people in Europe viewed their status, political power, and participation in government. Its effect on Western society was much more lasting and powerful than the Enlightenment. It allowed radically different ideas like individual liberty, separation of powers, and written constitutions to become accepted in mainstream society and become political reality.

The Revolution also permitted a system in which all classes shared in the political process. Before this time, the common people had no voice in their own government. Even though the American Revolution addressed these same issues, that conflict had little impact in Europe. However, when France, the standard of culture, fashion, and education, went through its violent changes, other nations took notice. At one time, France was the envy of the world. If revolution could happen there, it could happen anywhere.

The French monarchy was destroyed, and the privileges of the nobility were taken away. The large feudal estates were broken up, and more common people were able to own land and property. Wealth was eventually distributed more evenly than in pre-revolutionary times, which had 2% of the population living in luxury, and 98% living in terrible poverty, on the verge of starvation.

Women also gained more rights and were treated with greater respect. In pre-revolutionary days, a woman was completely at the mercy of her husband and the government. She could not divorce her husband, even if he were abusive or a criminal. She could not own or inherit any property, even if she were an only child. Instead, the property would go to a male relative, who had no obligation to take care of her. She could not vote or provide testimony in court. As a result of the upheaval of the French Revolution, women were permitted to divorce, own and inherit property, and eventually vote.

### The Rise of Nationalism

During the French Revolution, the common people gained an identity as a group. They all spoke the same language, had the same culture, traditions, problems, and history. As a result, the French people began to identify with one another and feel proud of this heritage. They felt distinct from other Europeans as a national group, and this began to affect political decisions. While France claimed to support revolutionary movements in other countries, most of their political decisions were made to benefit France first, not the revolutionaries.

Before long, this idea of nationalism spread to other parts of Europe. In 1796 Napoleon invaded Italy, which led to Italian unification. Had the Italians been one country instead of separate, warring city-states, he might not have been so successful. Napoleon also successfully invaded Germany, and immediately consolidated the country's more than 350 states into one country. Napoleon made the practical advantages of consolidation so obvious that the entire country united to defeat him.

The effects of nationalism are still felt today in much of Europe. In addition to World Wars I and II, the modern conflicts in Bosnia, the Chechin Republic, and Kosovo are just a few of the many wars which list nationalism as a key cause. Europe has also struggled economically with the attempt to simplify business dealings with the Eurodollar. While most countries recognize the value of a common currency throughout Europe, they fear its adoption will cause a loss of national distinctiveness. Since the time of Napoleon, countries have begun to value this national identity, and often make decisions whose main goal seems to be the preservation of the national culture and traditions. This preservation may even occur at the cost of efficient business relations and political strategies.

### Acceptance of the Revolutionary Process

Although the Americans had created the first constitutional representative democracy, the French Revolution was far more chaotic and violent, as well as being less successful at the creation of a republic. Instead of fighting outsiders who oppressed them, the French were fighting themselves in a bloody civil war. The common people's desperation led them to accept the idea that their goal—freedom and equality—justified any means, including imprisonment, riots, torture, executions, and loss of individual rights and freedoms.

The French Revolution is considered to be the first modern revolution. While it shared some similarities with the American struggle for independence, it was different in important ways. It was violent, bloody, destructive, and left the French people searching for an effective way to govern themselves into the mid-19th century. Unlike the American Revolution, the French people felt justified in destroying anyone and anything if they thought it might help them gain their freedom. Poor, illiterate and starving, they felt they had nothing to lose by using any methods available, including terrorism.

Revolutionary movements since then have studied the French methods, tactics and writings, and even structured their secret societies after the French model. The French Revolution made terrorism, violence, and intimidation legitimate tools to be used as political weapons by people who felt they were oppressed. In addition, the writings of French revolutionaries have been used ever since to sanction and inspire the efforts of other radicals, and to justify any strategies they want to use.

### Creation of the Modern Political Climate

After the French royal family was executed and the rest of the aristocracy killed or exiled, royal and aristocratic families all over Europe were terrified that this popular movement would spread to their countries as well. The feudal practice of using royal marriages to create national alliances often made the monarchs more loyal to their relatives ruling another country than to their own people. With the growing influence of nationalism, monarchs discovered that it was now in their own best interest to favor their own country's needs over those of a relative. This began to change the political structure of Europe, as rulers realized that they were also vulnerable to revolution if they did not respond to their people's needs.

Napoleon conquered most of Europe, and after creating satellite governments in neighboring countries, he gathered an army of about 500,000 men. This was the largest army ever raised, and all of Europe was afraid of him. It was only after he tried to conquer Russia and failed, losing nearly all of his army, that the nations of Europe were able to challenge his power. They combined to form a military alliance to defeat him, and in the Congress of Vienna of 1814-1815, they finally managed to redraw the map of Europe. These leaders, kings or nobles of Austria, Russia, Britain, and France, wanted to restore monarchies. The Congress also intended to make sure that France could never again try to take over the continent. This was done by surrounding France with other strong countries, and it proved to be fairly successful.

Defeating Napoleon was extremely expensive and destructive. All of Europe wanted to avoid this type of war in the future. Austria's ruler, Prince Metternich, pushed for the creation of the Concert of Europe, an organization set up to help keep the peace. The leaders of this group agreed to control any uprisings and keep any one country from becoming too powerful. When problems began to occur, the Concert was forced to redraw boundaries, but they made no allowances for cultural differences among different groups of people. The peace lasted for 100 years, when the assassination of an Austrian leader led to the First World War.

Was the French Revolution successful? The answer must depend on the definition of success. If it is measured in terms of destroying the aristocracy's monopoly, yes. It gave the common people an opportunity to have a voice in their own destiny, which they had never enjoyed before. It took power away from those who only held it because of the families into which they were born, and allowed all the citizens of France the chance to participate in their own government.

If, however, the question of success relates to the transfer of wealth from one class to another, the answer is not clear. While the Republic confiscated property belonging to the Church, it was mostly sold to nobles and townsmen. Even those who lost feudal rights still owned considerable properties. Wealth was generally transferred within classes, not from one class to another as occurred during the Communist revolution in Russia.

## APPENDIX A

### Conclusions

Two important theories have been developed to explain the causes of the French Revolution. The first explains that the Revolution occurred because the rationalism of the Enlightenment changed people's thinking in such a fundamental way that it set the stage for the Revolution to begin. The second theory follows Marxist doctrine, which describes a growing and self-aware bourgeoisie that discarded the aristocratic/feudal system to replace it with new institutions better suited to capitalism, restoring balance.

However, modern scholars generally believe that neither of these theories adequately explain the events and results of the Revolution. The Enlightenment, while certainly a factor, was probably not the cause for four reasons: 1) the Enlightenment philosophers did not anticipate nor recommend revolution; 2) they did not have enough of a public stage or support for their ideas; 3) the Revolution began two decades after Enlightenment thoughts and writings matured; and 4) the revolutionary state of mind in France was shaped by the political crisis, not the Enlightenment. The Marxist theory does not hold up for two reasons: 1) the wealth of both well-to-do commoners and revolutionaries came from the same sources (such as land, city property, offices and pensions) as the wealth of their victims, so no wealth was developed from new sources, as Marxist theory would predict; and 2) this theory fails to explain the realities of the Revolution.

The current theory that does fit what is known about the Revolution is that the economic breakdown of 1789 coincided with a revolutionary frame of mind. Many scholars believe that the Revolution actually was two separate revolutions. The first was aristocratic in nature, since the nobles and patricians wanted to subject the monarchy to their power, instead of being controlled by the king. The second revolution was a reaction of the common people to the first revolution, and it was much more radical. The peasants wanted a new social structure, a democracy, to force the government to bend to the will of the people, and to make society free of inequalities due to birth and status.

The second revolution was a grassroots movement, and it took ideas from the Enlightenment and American Revolution (although often out of context) to create a political discussion and ideology. The common people, the Third Estate, demanded to have at least as much power as the clergy and nobility combined.

### The *Sansculottes*

By 1791, the working-class people of Paris were the only group whose lives had not improved since the Revolution began. They grew increasingly angry and frustrated, especially since they felt they had done most of the work and taken most of the risks. About this time, a group of these urban poor began calling themselves the *sansculottes* (SAH /coo /lot). This term means "without knee breeches", and it referred to the fact that this class wore long pants, unlike the nobles, who wore silk pants, fitted just below the knee. This group usually leaned toward the more radical groups, the most important of which was called the Cordelier (cor /DEL /ee /ay) Club, and they began to urge more violent methods as they grew tired of waiting for results. The long pants became almost as much a badge of the Revolution as the red, white, and blue cockade, or the red woolen cap with an end piece hanging down behind like a ponytail.