

Module 5

The French Revolution and Napoleon 1789 – 1815

Essential Question:

How did the French Revolution change the balance of power in Europe?

Lesson 1

The French Revolution Begins



Setting the Stage

In the 1700s, France was considered the most advanced country of Europe. It had a large population and prosperous foreign trade. It was the center of the **Enlightenment**, and France's culture was widely praised and imitated by the rest of the world. However, the appearance of success was deceiving. There was great unrest in France, caused by bad harvests, high prices, high taxes, and disturbing questions raised by the Enlightenment ideas of **Locke, Rousseau, and Voltaire.**

#1 *French Society Divided*

- Under the *ancien regime*, or **old order**, everyone in France was divided into one of three social classes, or **estates**.
- **Pg. 188 -190**

<i>First Estate</i>	<i>Second Estate</i>	<i>Third Estate</i>
1. Who:	1.	1.
2. Privileges:	2.	2.
3. Taxes:	3.	3.
4. Population:	4.	4.

The Forces of Change & Financial Troubles

- Economic woes in France added to the social unrest and heightened tensions.
- First cause: **deficit spending** – when a government spends more money than it takes in.
- Second cause: Louis XIV left France deeply in debt from the Seven Years' War and the American Revolution strained the treasury.
- To close the gap between income and expenses, the government borrowed more and more money.
- Third cause: Half the government's income from taxes went to paying the interest on this enormous debt by 1789.
- Fourth cause: In the late 1780s, bad harvests sent food prices soaring and brought hunger to poorer peasants and city dwellers.
- Fifth cause: to solve the financial crisis, the governments would have to increase taxes, reduce expenses, or both.

Economic Reform Fails

- **Louis XVI** was well-meaning but weak and indecisive.
- He hired **Jacques Necker**, a financial expert, as an adviser. Necker urged the king to:
 - reduce extravagant court spending
 - reform spending
 - abolish burdensome tariffs on internal trade
 - proposed taxing the First and Second Estates
- The nobles & high clergy forced the king to dismiss him.
- As the crisis deepened, the wealthy and powerful classes demanded the king summon the **Estates-General**, the legislative body consisting of representatives of the three estates. They had not been called together in 175 years!

Estates-General meet in Versailles of 1789



Estates Prepare Grievance Notebooks

- In preparation, Louis XVI had all three estates prepare **cahiers**, or notebooks, listing their grievances.
- Many cahiers called for:
 - fairer taxes
 - freedom of the press
 - regular meetings of the Estates
 - each delegate casts a vote

#2

Your Cahiers

- Create your own **CAHIERS**.
 1. *Create an introduction declaring why you want these reforms.*
 2. *Make a list of at least **10 grievances** you want changed in the city of Alhambra and Alhambra High School.*
- Its one thing to complain about something, but how do you plan to turn these **cahiers** or grievances into positive changes?
- For example, the 3rd Estate broke off the Estates General and formed their own government and military to create democratic government.

The Tennis Court Oath



Delegates Take the Tennis Court Oath

- Delegates from the Third Estate were elected by propertied men.
- These Delegates were lawyers, writers, and middle-class officials familiar with writings of the Enlightenment *philosophes*.
- The Third Estate wanted all three estates to meet in a single body, with votes counted “by head.”
- Traditionally, each Estate voted separately and had only one vote. The First and Second Estate always had the majority vote: 2 to 1.
- After weeks of stalemate, delegates of the Third Estate claimed to represent the people of France, and declared themselves the **National Assembly**.
- Finding their meeting hall locked, the delegates moved to a nearby indoor tennis court and took their famous **Tennis Court Oath**.
- They swore “never to separate and to meet wherever the circumstances might require until we have established a sound and just constitution.”
- Louis XVI grudgingly accepted the National Assembly as royal troops gathered around Paris.

The Storming of the Bastille



Parisians Storm the Bastille

July 14, 1789

- Rumors spread that royal troops were going to occupy the capital of Paris.
- Fearful of attacks, Parisians assembled outside the **Bastille**, a grim medieval fortress used as a prison for political and other prisoners.
- The crowd demanded weapons and gunpowder believed to be stored there.
- The commander of the Bastille refused to open the gates and opened fire on the crowd.
- Many were killed, and the enraged mob broke through the defenses. They killed the commander and five guards and released prisoners. They found **NO** weapons!
- The Bastille was a symbol to the people of France representing years of abuse by the monarchy.
- Since 1880, the French celebrate Bastille Day as their national independence day.

Bread

- Read pg. 193



Political Crisis Leads to Revolt

- In 1789 the worst **famine** coincided with **political crisis** in France.
- Starving peasants flocked to towns, and increased the number of the unemployed.
- People had to spend as much as 80 percent of their income on bread as grain prices soared.

A “Great Fear” Sweeps France

- In such desperate times, rumors ran wild and set off what was later known as the “Great Fear”
- Rumors:
 - tales of attacks on villages spread panic.
 - government troops were seizing peasant crops.
- Inflamed by famine and fear, peasants unleashed their fury on **nobles**, who were trying to impose medieval **dues**.
- Peasants reacted by setting fire to manor records and stealing grain from storehouses.



à Versailles à Versailles le 3. Octobre 1789.



Women March on Versailles

- On October 5th of 1789, six thousand women marched 13 miles in the pouring rain from Paris to Versailles shouting “Bread”!
- They demanded to see the King, but their anger was directed at **Marie Antoinette**, the Austrian-born queen, who lived a life of great extravagance.
- She was against reforms, and often retreated to the **Petit Trianon**, a small chateau on the palace grounds where she lived a life of amusement.
- The women refused to leave Versailles until King Louis XVI returned to Paris.
- The next morning the king was escorted by the women back to Paris along with Marie Antoinette.
- Women were perched on barrels of seized cannons.
- For three years, the royal family were prisoners at **Tuilleries**.