Chapter Menu

**Chapter Introduction**

**Section 1:** The French Revolution Begins

**Section 2:** Radical Revolution and Reaction

**Section 3:** The Age of Napoleon

**Visual Summary**
Social inequality and economic problems contributed to the French Revolution.
GUIDE TO READING

Content Vocabulary

- estate
- taille

Academic Vocabulary

- consumer
- exclusion
GUIDE TO READING

People and Events

• Louis XVI
• Tennis Court Oath
• Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen
• Olympe de Gouges
Background to the Revolution

**MAIN IDEA**

The Third Estate, that vast majority of the French people, was heavily taxed and discontented.
Background to the Revolution (cont.)

• French society was divided legally into three status groups or **estates**.
  – First Estate: clergy
  – Second Estate: nobility
  – Third Estate: everyone else, from peasants to wealthy merchants
Background to the Revolution (cont.)

- The First and Second Estates controlled most of the wealth but were exempt from paying the **taille**, or tax.
- The Third Estate had to pay taxes to the government. In addition, peasants owed duties to the nobles, such as harvesting their crops.

The Three Estates in Pre-Revolutionary France
The bourgeoisie, or middle class, was unhappy not to have the same privileges granted to the nobility.

The immediate cause of the revolution was a near collapse of the French economy.
Background to the Revolution (cont.)

- Causes of the financial crisis:
  - bad harvests
  - slowdown in manufacturing
  - food shortages
  - rising prices of food
  - unemployment
Background to the Revolution (cont.)

- **Louis XVI** and his ministers continued to spend enormous sums of money on wars and court luxuries.

- When the government invested large sums of money to support the American colonists against the British, the budget went into total crisis.

- France needed to increase taxes. Louis XVI called a meeting of the Estates-General to discuss the tax increase.
From Estates-General to National Assembly

**MAIN IDEA**

The Third Estate claimed the right to have its votes count as much as those of the First and Second Estates.
From Estates-General to National Assembly (cont.)

• The Estates-General met to discuss the needed tax increase on May 5, 1789.

• The Third Estate wanted the clergy and nobility to pay taxes too.

• Under the current system, each estate had one vote, so the Third Estate could easily be outvoted by the First and Second Estates.
From Estates-General to National Assembly (cont.)

• The Third Estate wanted each deputy to have a vote to give themselves more power, but the king favored the current system.

• Challenging the king’s authority, the Third Estate declared that it was the National Assembly and would draft a new constitution.
From Estates-General to National Assembly (cont.)

• When the National Assembly was locked out of Versailles and had to meet in an indoor tennis court, they swore that they would continue meeting until they had a constitution. This oath is known as the Tennis Court Oath.

• Louis XVI prepared to use force against the Third Estate, but on July 14, 1798, Parisians stormed the Bastille.
From Estates-General to National Assembly (cont.)

• Fearing that foreign armies would stop the work of the National Assembly, peasant rebellions sprang up around the country.
End of the Old Regime

The National Assembly affirmed the “rights of man” and set up a limited monarchy in the Constitution of 1791.
End of the Old Regime  (cont.)

• The National Assembly adopted the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen.
  – All men were free and equal before the law.
  – Appointment to public office should be based on talent.
  – No group should be exempt from taxation.
  – Freedom of speech and press were affirmed.
End of the Old Regime (cont.)

• **Olympe de Gouges** refused to accept the exclusion of women from the declaration and wrote about it.

• The king did not support the National Assembly’s decrees but was forced by a mob of Parisian women to accept the decrees and return to Paris.
End of the Old Regime (cont.)

- The National Assembly tried to reform the Catholic Church.
  - Church lands were sold off.
  - The Church was brought under the control of the state.
  - Church officials would be elected by the people, not appointed by the pope.
  - The state would pay the salaries of bishops and priests.
End of the Old Regime (cont.)

- The new Constitution of 1791 set up a limited monarchy. There would still be a king, but a Legislative Assembly would make laws.
- Europeans feared that revolution would spread to other countries, and the rulers of Austria and Prussia wanted to restore Louis XVI to full power.
- The Legislative Assembly declared war on Austria in 1792.
End of the Old Regime (cont.)

• With food shortages and the war going badly, angry citizens wanted more radical changes. They formed the Paris Commune and organized a mob attack to take the king captive.

• Members of the Paris Commune began calling themselves **sans-culottes** and wore long trousers to identify themselves as ordinary patriots.
Click the mouse button to return to the Chapter Menu.
GUIDE TO READING

The BIG Idea

**Struggle for Rights** Radical groups controlled the revolution, which many people in France and abroad opposed.
GUIDE TO READING

Content Vocabulary

• faction
• elector

• coup d’état

Academic Vocabulary

• domestic
• external
The Move to Radicalism

MAIN IDEA
When the new government was faced with many internal crises and external threats, it broke into factions.
The Move to Radicalism  (cont.)

- In 1792, **Georges Danton** rallied the sans-culottes to attack the palace. The royal family sought protection from the Legislative Assembly.

- Violence in the streets increased and an uprising in September left thousands dead. **Jean-Paul Marat** published a radical journal defending the massacres.
The Move to Radicalism  (cont.)

• In September of 1792, the newly elected National Convention met and decided to end the monarchy and establish the French Republic.

• Political factions, such as the Girondins and the Jacobins, had different opinions about the fate of Louis XVI.

• In 1793, the Jacobins convinced the National Convention to execute King Louis XVI.
The Move to Radicalism (cont.)

- On January 21, 1793, the king was beheaded on the guillotine.
- Neither the Girondins nor Jacobins could agree on a new constitution.
- A coalition of European powers attacked French armies, and the revolution was in jeopardy.
The Move to Radicalism (cont.)

- In 1793, the National Convention gave the Committee of Public Safety broad powers, and the radical Jacobin Maximilien Robespierre came to power.
The Reign of Terror

While the Committee of Public Safety was in power, thousands were executed.
The Reign of Terror (cont.)

- To defend France from domestic threats, the Committee of Public Safety adopted policies known as the **Reign of Terror**.
- During the Reign of Terror, almost 40,000 people of all classes were executed.
- Revolutionary courts prosecuted people accused of being counter revolutionaries and traitors.
The Committee of Public Safety also attempted to reform French society by:
- mandating education,
- abolishing slavery,
- controlling prices.
The Committee also attempted to de-Christianize France.

- The word “saint” was removed from street signs.
- In Paris, the cathedral of Notre Dame, the center of the Catholic religion in France, was designated a “temple of reason.”
The Reign of Terror (cont.)

– A new calendar renumbered years from the first day of the French Republic, not from the birth of Christ.

– Sundays, Sunday worship services, and church holidays were eliminated.

• Most people did not accept these regulations, and France remained overwhelmingly Catholic.
A Nation in Arms

**MAIN IDEA**

A huge revolutionary army defended France against invasion.
A Nation in Arms (cont.)

- To save the republic from foreign troops, the Committee of Public Safety raised an army of over 1 million soldiers.

- By 1794, the French had defeated their foreign enemies, and there was less need for the Reign of Terror. However, Robespierre continued to arrest and execute enemies of the revolution.
A Nation in Arms (cont.)

• In July of 1794, the National Convention voted to have Robespierre executed.

• Robespierre’s death weakened the Jacobins, and the Reign of Terror ended.

Percentages of Victims of the Terror by Class

- First Estate—Clergy 8%
- Second Estate—nobility 10%
- Third Estate—proletariat 82%

Source: Control over France for Revolution Portraits
The Directory

The Constitution of 1795 set up a new government, but it was unable to inspire trust or solve economic problems.
The Directory (cont.)

- After the Reign of Terror, the Committee of Public Safety was weakened and churches were allowed to reopen.

- The new government had two legislative houses.
  - A lower house, the Council of 500, drafted laws.
  - An upper house of 250, the Council of Elders, accepted or rejected proposed laws.
The Directory (cont.)

- Members of both houses were chosen by electors, men who owned or rented property of a certain amount.

- The executive branch was made up of a five-man committee known as the Directory.

- The new government proved ineffective. In 1799, the popular and successful military commander Napoleon Bonaparte toppled the government in a coup d’état.
Click the mouse button to return to the Chapter Menu.
GUIDE TO READING

The BIG Idea

Self-Determination  As Napoleon built his empire across Europe, he also spread the revolutionary idea of nationalism.
The Rise of Napoleon

**MAIN IDEA**

Napoleon, a popular general, overthrew the Directory, set up a new government, and eventually took complete power.
The Rise of Napoleon (cont.)

- **Napoleon Bonaparte** was born in Corsica and came from minor nobility. He went to military school, read philosophy, and studied military campaigns.

- In 1796, Napoleon led the French army to victories in Italy.

- His tactics of speed, surprise, and decisiveness earned him the devotion of his troops, and he returned to France as a hero.
• In 1799, Napoleon took part in the coup d´état that overthrew the Directory and set up a new government, the consulate.

• The consulate was called a republic, but Napoleon had absolute power to appoint officials, control the army, and conduct foreign affairs.

• In 1802, Napoleon was made consul for life, and in 1804, he crowned himself Emperor Napoleon I.
Napoleon’s Domestic Policies

MAIN IDEA

Napoleon brought stability to France and established a single law code that recognized the equality of all citizens before the law.
Napoleon’s Domestic Policies (cont.)

• Peace with the Church
  - Napoleon made peace with the Catholic Church by recognizing Catholicism as the religion of a majority of the French people in exchange for not returning confiscated Church lands.
Napoleon’s Domestic Policies (cont.)

• Codification of the Laws
  – Napoleon created a single law code for the entire nation.
  – The **Civil Code** preserved many of the principles the revolutionaries had fought for.
  – The Civil Code was a step back for women, who were now “less equal than men.”
Napoleon’s Domestic Policies (cont.)

• A New Bureaucracy
  – Government officials and military officers were promoted on the basis of merit and ability, not birth.
  – A new nobility was created based on civil and military service.
Napoleon’s Domestic Policies (cont.)

- Napoleon remained true to the revolutionary ideals by emphasizing equality in his legal and government reforms.
- Napoleon also destroyed some revolutionary ideals by replacing liberty with despotism.
- Despite protests by citizens, such as the prominent writer Anne-Louise-Germaine de Staël, Napoleon banned books, shut down newspapers, insisted all manuscripts be subject to government scrutiny, and had mail opened by police.
Napoleon’s Empire

As Napoleon conquered Europe, he spread nationalist ideas. Inspired by those ideas, conquered peoples resisted Napoleon’s armies and helped bring about the collapse of his empire.
Napoleon’s Empire (cont.)

- Napoleon was the military master of Europe. He defeated Austria, Prussia, and Russia in battles from 1805 to 1807.

- By 1812, his empire included the French Empire, Spain, Holland, Italy, the Swiss Republic, the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, and a confederation of German states.
Napoleon’s Empire (cont.)

- In the conquered regions of Europe, Napoleon attempted to spread the liberal ideals of the French Revolution, such as religious toleration and social equality.
Napoleon’s Empire (cont.)

• Napoleon’s empire collapsed for two reasons:
  – British Resistance
    • Napoleon was never able to defeat Britain due to their superior naval power.
    • Napoleon tried to weaken the British economically with the Continental System, but allied states resented being told by Napoleon that they could not trade with the British.
Napoleon’s Empire (cont.)

– **Nationalism**

• Conquered peoples recognized the power and strength of national feeling exemplified by the Grand Army of France.

• Conquered peoples became united in their hatred of the invaders.
The Fall of Napoleon

MAIN IDEA

After major losses in Russia and Austria, Napoleon was defeated at Waterloo.
The Fall of Napoleon (cont.)

• Russia refused to comply with the Continental System, and Napoleon was forced to invade.

• The Russians avoided fighting the French army. As they retreated, they burned their own villages to keep Napoleon’s army from finding food.

• When the French reached the capital of Moscow, they found it ablaze. Lacking food and supplies, Napoleon retreated to France.
The Fall of Napoleon (cont.)

- Thousands of soldiers starved and froze during the “Great Retreat” and fewer than 40,000 of the original 600,000 men returned.
- Other European countries took advantage of the opportunity and attacked France.
- Paris was captured in 1814, and Napoleon was exiled to the island of Elba; off the coast of Italy. King Louis XVIII was put in power by the European states.
The Fall of Napoleon (cont.)

- The new king had little support, and Napoleon regained power in 1815. Napoleon raised a new army of devoted veterans.

- In 1815, Napoleon’s French army was defeated by an Allied force under the command of the Duke of Wellington at Waterloo in Belgium.

- Napoleon was exiled to St. Helena and died in 1821.