The French Revolution
And Napoleon
(1789–1815)
The Old Regime

Under the *ancient regime*, or old order, everyone in France belonged to one of three classes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIRST ESTATE</th>
<th>SECOND ESTATE</th>
<th>THIRD ESTATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The CLERGY</strong></td>
<td><strong>The NOBILITY</strong></td>
<td><strong>The BOURGEOISIE and PEASANTS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoyed enormous wealth and privilege</td>
<td>Owned land but had little money income</td>
<td>Peasants were 90% of French population</td>
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<tr>
<td>Owned about 10 percent of land, collected tithes, and paid no taxes</td>
<td>Hated absolutism</td>
<td>Resented privilege of first and second estates</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provided some social services</td>
<td>Feared losing traditional privilege, especially exemption from taxes</td>
<td>Burdened by taxes</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Many earned miserable wages and faced hunger and even starvation</td>
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</table>
Economic Trouble

- Economic woes added to the social unrest and heightened tension.

- For years, the French government had engaged in deficit spending that is, a government’s spending more money than it takes in.

- Louis XIV had left France deeply in debt. Recent wars, a general rise in costs in the 1700s, and the lavish court were incredibly costly. To bridge the gap between income and expenses, the government borrowed more and more money.

- Bad harvests in the late 1780s sent food prices soaring and brought hunger to poorer peasants and city dwellers.
Failure of Reform

- Louis XV (1715-1774) pursued pleasure before business and ran up more debt.

- He chose Jacques Necker as advisor. He advised the king to reduce court spending, reform government, abolish internal tariffs, and proposed taxing the 1\textsuperscript{st} and 2\textsuperscript{nd} Estates.

- The nobles and high clergy forced his dismissal.
Meeting of the Estates General

France’s economic crisis worsened, bread riots spread, and nobles denounced royal tyranny.

Louis XVI summoned the Estates General, requesting each estate to draw up cahiers, or grievances.

The Third Estate declared themselves to be the National Assembly and invited delegates from the other two estates to help them write a constitution.

When reform-minded clergy and nobles joined the Assembly, Louis grudgingly accepted it.
The Tennis Court Oath

- The National Assembly met in May 1789 to draw up a new constitution, but they were deadlocked over the issue of voting.

- A few months later the Assembly found the doors locked and moved their meetings to an indoor tennis court.

- They took the Tennis Court Oath, swearing “never to separate and to meet whenever the circumstances might require until we have established a sound and just constitution.”
On July 14, 1789, more than 800 Parisians gathered outside the Bastille, a medieval fortress used as a prison. They demanded weapons believed to be stored there. The commander of the Bastille opened fire on the crowd, and a battle ensued, in which many people were killed.

The storming of the Bastille quickly became a symbol of the French Revolution, a blow to tyranny. Today, the French still celebrate July 14 as Bastille Day.
Four Phases of the French Revolution

- **1789 – 1791**: The moderate phase of the National Assembly turned France into a constitutional monarchy.

- **1792 – 1793**: Violence escalated leading to the Reign of Terror.

- **1793 – 1794**: Reign of Terror

- **1795 – 1799**: Period of reaction to the extremism, known as the Directory.

- **1799 – 1815**: The Age of Napoleon consolidated many revolutionary changes.
# Reforms of the National Assembly

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political</th>
<th>Social and Economic</th>
<th>Religious</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Proclaimed all male citizens equal before the law</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Limited the power of the monarchy</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Established the Legislative Assembly to make laws</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Granted all tax-paying male citizens the right to elect members of the Legislative Assembly</td>
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<td>- Abolished special privileges of the nobility</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Announced an end to feudalism</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Called for taxes to be levied according to ability to pay</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Abolished guilds and forbade labor unions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Compensated nobles for lands seized by peasants</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>- Declared freedom of religion</td>
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<td>- Took over and sold Church lands</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Placed the French Catholic Church under control of the state</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>- Provided that bishops and priests be elected and receive government salaries</td>
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</table>
Popular Revolts

The political crisis of 1789 coincided with the worst famine in memory. Starving peasants roamed the countryside or flocked to the towns. Even people with jobs had to spend most of their income on bread.

- In such desperate times, rumors ran wild and set off what was later called the “Great Fear.”

- Moderates looked to Marquis de Lafayette, the aristocrat who had fought alongside George Washington in the American Revolution to lead the National Guard (militia) against royal troops in Paris.

- A radical group called the Paris Commune replaced the royalist government of Paris. Various factions, or small groups, competed for power.

- In the countryside, peasants attacked the homes and manors of nobles.
Events in France stirred debate all over Europe.

- Supporters of the Enlightenment applauded the reforms of the National Assembly. They saw the French experiment as the dawn of a new age for justice and equality.

- European rulers and nobles denounced the French Revolution.

- In 1791, the monarchs of Austria & Prussia issued the Declaration of Pilnitz, in which they threatened to intervene to protect the French monarchy.

- Revolutionaries from the working-class, called sans-culottes, in France took the threat seriously and prepared for war.
Radicals and the Convention

Radicals took control of the Assembly and called for the election of a new legislative body called the **National Convention**.

In April 1792, war of the worlds between French Revolutionaries and European monarchs moved to the battlefield.

They granted **suffrage**, or the right to vote, to all male citizens, not just to property owners.

The convention set out to erase all traces of the old order.

It voted to abolish the monarchy and declare France a republic.

The **Jacobins**, who controlled the Convention, seized lands of nobles and abolished titles of nobility.
By early 1793, France was at war with most of Europe. Within France, peasants and workers were in rebellion against the government. The Convention itself was bitterly divided.

- To deal with threats to France, the Convention created the Committee of Public Safety.
- The Reign of Terror lasted from about July 1793 to July 1794. Under the guidance of Maximilien Robespierre, some 40,000 people were executed at the guillotine.
- In reaction to the Reign of Terror, moderates created another constitution, the third since 1789. The Constitution of 1795 set up a five-man Directory and a two-house legislature.
Women in the Revolution

- Women of all classes participated in the revolution from the beginning.
- Many women were very disappointed when the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen did not grant equal citizenship to women.
- The Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen, written by Olympe de Gouges (1791), is ironic and sought to expose the failure of the French Revolution which had been devoted to gender equality.

Women did gain some rights for a time. However, these did not last long after Napoleon gained power.
Changes in Daily Life

By 1799, the French Revolution had dramatically changed France. It had dislodged the old social order, overthrown the monarchy, and brought the Church under state control. Many changes occurred in everyday life:

- New symbols, such as the tricolor, emerged.
- Titles were eliminated.
- Elaborate fashions were replaced by practical clothes.
- People developed a strong sense of national identity.
- **Nationalism**, a strong feeling of pride and devotion to one’s country, spread throughout France.
From Napoleon’s 1796 Speech to His Troops

“Destitute of everything, you have supplied everything. You have won battles without cannon crossed rivers without bridges, made forced marches without shoes, camped without brandy and often without bread. Only republican phalanxes, soldiers of liberty, could have endured what you have endured. Soldiers, you have our thanks.”

- How would you describe the relationship Napoleon wants his troops to feel they have with him?
- Why do you think he calls them “soldiers of liberty”? Do you think that is what they were? Why or why not?
Rise of Napoleon

- **1769**: Born on island of Corsica
- **1793**: Helps capture the port of Toulon from British; promoted to brigadier general
- **1795**: Crushes rebels opposed to the National Convention in the Thermidorian Reaction
- **1796–1797**: Becomes commander in chief of the army of Italy; wins victories against Austria
- **1798–1799**: Loses to the British in Egypt and Syria
- **1799**: Overthrows Directory and becomes First Consul of France
- **1804**: Crowns himself emperor of France
"EXIT LIBERTÈ a la FRANCOIS!

Or BUONAPARTE closing the Farce of Egalitè, at St. Cloud near Paris Nov. 10th. 1799", British satirical depiction of the 18 Brumaire coup d'état, by James Gillray.
France Under Napoleon

Napoleon consolidated his power by strengthening the central government. Order, security, and efficiency replaced liberty, equality, and fraternity as the slogans of the new regime.

Napoleon instituted a number of reforms to restore economic prosperity.

Napoleon developed a new law code, the Napoleonic Code, which embodied Enlightenment principles. He also created the bank of France and promoted the university system.

Napoleon undid some of the reforms of the French Revolution:

- Women lost most of their newly gained rights.
- Male heads of household regained complete authority over their wives and children.
Building an Empire

As Napoleon created a vast French empire, he redrew the map of Europe.

- He annexed, or added outright, some areas to France.
- He abolished the Holy Roman Empire.
- He cut Prussia in half.

Napoleon controlled much of Europe through forceful diplomacy.

- He put friends and relatives on the thrones of Europe.
- He forced alliances on many European powers.

Britain alone remained outside Napoleon’s empire.
What part of the Italian peninsula was French territory? *Rome and much of the west-central part of the peninsula.*

Do you think the spread of nationalism would weaken or strengthen Napoleon’s power? Explain.
1. Why is Napoleon shown dropping the scepter and the sphere?
2. Why are the Russian building shown in the bottom right corner?
3. When do you think this cartoon was drawn?
## Causes and Effects of the French Revolution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Long-Term Causes</th>
<th>Immediate Causes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corrupt, inconsistent, and insensitive leadership</td>
<td>Huge government debt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prosperous members of Third Estate resent privileges of First and Second estates</td>
<td>Poor harvests and rising price of bread</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spread of Enlightenment ideas</td>
<td>Failure of Louis XVI to accept financial reforms</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Formation of National Assembly</td>
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<td>Storming of Bastille</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Immediate Effects</th>
<th>Long-Term Effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen adopted</td>
<td>Napoleon gains power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France adopts its first written constitution</td>
<td>Napoleonic Code established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monarchy abolished</td>
<td>French public schools set up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revolutionary France fights coalition of European powers</td>
<td>French conquests spread nationalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reign of Terror</td>
<td>Revolutions occur in Europe and Latin America</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Challenges to Napoleon’s Empire

The impact of nationalism

Many Europeans who had welcomed the ideas of the French Revolution nevertheless saw Napoleon and his armies as foreign oppressors.

Resistance in Spain

Napoleon had replaced the king of Spain with his own brother, but many Spaniards remained loyal to their former king. Spanish patriots conducted a campaign of guerrilla warfare against the French.

War with Austria

Spanish resistance encouraged Austria to resume hostilities against the French.

Defeat in Russia

Nearly all of Napoleon’s 400,000 troops sent on a campaign in Russia died, most from hunger and the cold of the Russian winter.
Downfall of Napoleon

- 1812—Napoleon’s forces were defeated in Russia.
- Russia, Britain, Austria, and Prussia form a new alliance against a weakened France.
- 1813—Napoleon was defeated in the Battle of Nations in Leipzig.
- 1814—Napoleon **abdicated**, or stepped down from power, and was exiled to Elba, an island in the Mediterranean Sea.
- 1815—Napoleon escaped his exile and returned to France.
- Combined British and Prussian forces defeated Napoleon at Waterloo.
- Napoleon was forced to abdicate again, and was this time exiled to St. Helena, an island in the South Atlantic.
- 1821—Napoleon died in exile.
Legacy of Napoleon

- The Napoleonic Code consolidated many changes of the revolution.
- Napoleon turned France into a centralized state with a constitution.
- Elections were held with expanded, though limited, suffrage.
- Many more citizens had rights to property and access to education.
- French citizens lost many rights promised to them during the Convention.
- On the world stage, Napoleon’s conquests spread the ideas of the revolution and nationalism.
- Napoleon failed to make Europe into a French empire.
- The abolition of the Holy Roman Empire would eventually contribute to the creation of a new Germany.
- Napoleon’s decision to sell France’s Louisiana Territory to America doubled the size of the United States and ushered in an age of American expansion.
What were the goals of the Congress of Vienna?

The chief goal of the Congress was to create a lasting peace by establishing a balance of power and protecting the system of monarchy.

To achieve this goal, the peacemakers did the following:

- They redrew the map of Europe. To contain French ambition, they ringed France with strong countries.
- They promoted the principle of legitimacy, restoring hereditary monarchies that the French Revolution or Napoleon had unseated.
- To protect the new order, Austria, Prussia, Russia, and Great Britain extended their wartime alliance into the postwar era.
Why did the Congress enlarge some of the countries around France?

To prevent France from expanding and upsetting the balance of power.
Small Group Activity

Find evidence that supports or refutes each of the following generalizations.

1. Other nations in Europe benefited from the reforms of the French Revolution.

2. Nationalism was a major reason for Napoleon’s downfall.

3. Geography played an important role in Napoleon’s defeat in Russia.

4. The French people supported Napoleon.

5. The Congress of Vienna achieved its goals.