



# FRENCH REVOLUTION

## 1. The French Society during the Late 18th Century

The French Society comprised

- 1<sup>st</sup> Estate** Clergy including priests, who ran both the Catholic church and some aspects of the country
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Estate** Nobility including members of the royal family, except for the King; did not have to pay any taxes.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Estate** Big businessmen, merchants, court officials, peasants, artisans, landless laborers, servants, etc.

## 2. The Growing Middle Class- New Wave

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Educated → inspired by ideas of Locke and Rousseau → believed that no group in society should be privileged by birth

Locke → "Two Treaties of Government" → refuted divine & absolute rights of monarch

Rousseau → "Social Contract" between people and representatives

Montesquieu → "The Spirit of Laws" → division of powers between organs of Government.

## 3. The Outbreak of the Revolution : Important timelines

**1770s-1780s**

Economic Crisis: French Government in deep debt.

**1774**

Louis XVI ascended to the throne

**1788-1789**

Bad harvest, high prices, food riots.

**May 5, 1789**

Estates-General convened, demanded reforms.

**July 14, 1789**

National Assembly formed. Bastille stormed on July 14. French Revolution started.

**August 4, 1789**

Ends the rights of the aristocracy, the surrender of feudal rights.

**June 20, 1789**

Tennis Court Oath → members of the French Third Estate gathered in a tennis court at the Palace of Versailles.

**August 26, 1789**

Declaration of Rights of Man

**1790**

Civil Constitution of the Clergy nationalizes the Church

**1791**

A constitution is framed to limit the powers of the king and to guarantee basic rights to all human beings

**1792**

France becomes a republic, the king is beheaded. Overthrow of the Jacobin republic, a Directory rules France

**1792**

Austria and Prussia attack revolutionary France, Robespierre, elected the first Deputy for Paris to the National convention

**1793**

Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette were executed

**1792-1794**

In 1793, the reign of terror occurred due to extreme policies of Robespierre. Austria, Britain, the Netherlands, Prussia, and Spain are at war with France.

**1794**

Robespierre is executed. France is governed by a Directory, a committee of five men. The Reign of Terror ends.

**1795**

National convention dissolved

## 4. Women's participation in the revolution

Women were active participants in the events → Most of the women of the third estate had to work for a living → Wages were lower than men → So demanded equal pay for equal work.

To discuss and voice their interests → women started their own political clubs and newspapers → main demand → women must enjoy the same political rights as men  
(The Society of Revolutionary and Republican Women were one of the most prominent executive clubs during the French Revolution established May 10, 1793, which lasts in less than five months.)

1946 → women in France won the right to vote.

## 5. The Abolition of Slavery

Triangular slave trade among Europe, Africa, and America → 1794 convention made it free to all slaves → 10 years later slavery was reintroduced by Napoleon → In 1848 slavery was abolished in the French colonies

## 6. The Revolution and Everyday Life

• After 1789 → many changes in the lives of men, women, and children in France → One important law passed → the abolition of censorship.

• Most important legacy of the French Revolution → The ideas of liberty and democratic rights

## 7. Napoleon

- In 1804, Napoleon crowned himself emperor of France.
- He set out to conquer neighboring European countries and created kingdoms where he placed members of his family.
- He saw his role as a modernizer of Europe.
- He was finally defeated at Waterloo in 1815