**Year 11 ATAR MODERN HISTORY | THE FRENCH REVOLUTION**

COURSE REVISION QUESTIONS

**The origins of the revolution:**

Summary points:

* In the 18th century, France was one of the great European powers with worldwide aspirations.
* France was a kingdom whose monarch ruled by divine right.
* In its effort to maintain its international position, France accumulated a substantial debt, which could not be serviced through its existing taxation system.
* In the absolute monarchy there was no mechanism for the king’s subjects to express their consent or otherwise to the new taxes. The king’s ministers recognised the need for reform, but were unable to force the changes due to the lack of an institution representing the nation.
* The intellectual movement, which began in the 1720s, articulated new thinking and a new vision of society.
* The financial crisis caused by French support of the American War of Independence and the inability of the king’s government to reform France’s fiscal system turned into a political crisis, with demands for representation form all sections of French society.
* The emergence of public debate caused the shift in thinking about the organisation of society and the political roles of the king and nation.

Review questions:

1. What was the Enlightenment?
2. Who were the critical thinkers of the Enlightenment?
3. What was the position of France in the 18th century European context?
4. How did ordinary French people view the monarchy and the Church in the last decades of the 18th century?
5. Identify and discuss tensions between the three estates of France and their likely contributions to the revolutionary situation in 18th century France.
6. To what extent was the social structure of the ancien regime a cause of the French Revolution?
7. Explain why the taxation system, in 18th century France failed to meet the fiscal requirements of the nation.
8. What were the restrictions placed on trade and commerce by the traditional administrative divisions of France?
9. What was the relationship between the Bourbon monarchy and the French people in the century before 1789?
10. In what ways did the Roman Catholic Church support the monarchy?
11. What was the relationship between the French king and the Second estate?
12. How were the ideological foundations of the French monarchy challenged and possibly undermined by the Enlightenment philosophers and writers?
13. Identify and discuss two individuals who attempted to achieve fiscal and political reform in France during the 1780s. To what extent were they successful?
14. Explain what impact France’s involvement in the American War of Independence had on the development of the revolutionary situation.
15. What were the actions of the parlements that challenged royal authority?
16. What were the events of 1788 that led Louis XVI to announce the convocation of the Estates-General?
17. What factors and forces led to the failure of reformist policies in the 1780s?

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**The revolution of 1789:**

Summary points:

* The bankruptcy of the Crown speeded the king’s decision to issue the convocation of the Estates-General.
* The Parlement of Paris set the procedure for the meeting of the Estates General.
* Abbe Sieyes published his provocatively titled pamphlet *What Is the Third Estate?*
* The cahiers de doleances demanded changes but fell short of revolutionary demands.
* The opening ceremony of the Estates-General deliberately reinforced the social disparity between estates.
* The stalemate over the voting procedures resulted in the declaration by the deputies of the Third Estate that they represented the whole nation.
* The Tennis Court Oath challenged the king’s authority. The king capitulated in the face of the strong demands of the Third Estate.
* Jacques Necker’ dismissal caused anti-royalist agitation in Paris and resulted in the storming of the Bastille.
* With the news of the fall of the Bastille the social order of the ancien regime disintegrated with the wave of peasant insurrections known as the ‘Great Fear’.
* During the night of 4 August 1789, the Assembly abolished the feudal system in France. The *Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen* announced the principles of the new society.
* The king’s reluctance to endorse the August Decrees, and the Declaration of Rights incited Parisian market women to march to Versailles and forcibly bring the royal family to Paris, making them virtual prisoners of the revolution.

Review questions:

1. What was the role of the Estates-General?
2. When was the last time the Estates-General were summoned before 1789?
3. How did the views of society differ between the nobles and the peasants in France in 1789?
4. What was the key demand of the Third Estate when Louis XVI called the meeting of the Estates-General in 1789?
5. On what grounds did the Third-Estate proclaim itself the National Assembly?
6. What were the cahiers de doleances and what did they suggest about the concerns of the French people on the eve of the revolution?
7. What was the impact of the failure of French harvests in the late 1780s on the economy and on the lives of ordinary people?
8. Who was Abbe Sieyes and what contribution did he make to the development of the revolution, both in ideological and practical terms?
9. Explain how issues of procedure and voting created divisions within the Estates-General when it met in May 1789.
10. Why did the National Assembly form in June 1789?
11. What were the context, reasons and outcomes of the sacking of Jacques Necker on 11 July 1789?
12. Why has the storming of the Bastille become the best-known event of the French Revolution? What were the outcomes of this event, in both real and symbolic terms?
13. What were the causes and outcomes of the Great Fear?
14. Why did the newly formed National Assembly move to abolish feudalism in France on 4 August?
15. Why did the king, his family and the Assembly relocate to Paris and what impact did this have on the revolution?
16. How did the women’s march mark a turning point in the relationship between the king and the people?

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COURSE REVISION QUESTIONS

**The reform and restructure of France, 1789-1792:**

Summary points:

* The reform of the National Assembly aimed for a national revival, but were divisive as they forced French people to choose between their private convictions and the benefit of the nation as a whole.
* Nationalism of Church property was designed to solve France’s national debt.
* Administrative reform simplified the territorial administration of France with new departements replacing the provinces.
* Economic reforms that abolished the many taxes, dues, and custom duties were aimed at liberalising the economy and facilitation growth in trade.
* The Le Chapelier Law banned any form of workers’ association and the right to strike.
* The Civil Constitution of the Clergy made the Catholic Church in France an auxiliary of the State within France by introducing salaried clergy and the election of bishops and restricting the power of the Pope to govern the Church.
* The requirement for the clergy to swear an oath to the Civil Constitution of the Clergy heralded further punitive measures against the opponents of the reforms.
* The king’s flight to Varennes and the capture of the royal family resulted in open questioning of the need for the continuation of the monarchy.
* The Assembly split along the factional lines over the fate of the king, further alienating the moderates and the radicals.
* The new electoral law created divisions between the French based on their wealth by disfranchising the ‘passive’ citizen.
* The legislative Assembly was comprised predominantly of the representatives of the middle class.
* The king’s veto of the laws requiring émigré nobles to return to France by the end of 1791 under the sanction of the loss of property and death further eroded any trust in the king’s support of the revolution.

Review questions:

1. What were the earliest reforms undertaken by the National Assembly?
2. Why did the National Assembly decide to confiscate the Church’s property in France? What were the consequences of this decision?
3. What were the divisions created by the reforms and how did they divide the revolutionary consensus?
4. How did the National Assembly hope to liberalise the national economy?
5. Did all the economic reforms result in benefits to the workers?
6. How did the enactment of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy effectively lead to the split in the Catholic Church?
7. What were the main arguments behind the introduction of the clerical oath?
8. How did the king’s flight to Varennes increase the chances of France becoming a republic?
9. What were the reasons for the split in the Jacobin Club, which led to the establishment of the Feuillants Club?
10. What were the requirements for a Frenchman to become an ‘active’ citizen?
11. How did the king’s actions during 1791 further erode trust in him as an individual and in the monarchy in general?

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COURSE REVISION QUESTIONS

**The republic and beyond:**

Summary points:

* The revolution’s impact on the rest of Europe brought France into conflict with monarchs who feared the influence of the ideal of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen.
* Austria and Prussia issued the joint Declaration of Pillnitz against the revolution, expressing their support for Louis XVI.
* The French emigres residing in various German principalities and refractory priests became the perceived threat to the revolution.
* War was seen as the answer to external threat.
* Most of the Assembly supported the declaration of war on Austria in April 1792.
* A new faction emerged in the Assembly, the future Girondins.
* ‘La Marseillaise’, the new song sung by the volunteers, became the popular revolutionary sign of unity.
* The Parisian crowd invaded the Tuileries Palace in June 1792, humiliating Louis XVI.
* The king was initially suspended, then imprisoned, awaiting the decision of the National Convention.
* The September Massacres stained the reputation of the revolution across Europe.
* The National Convention was elected by universal male suffrage.
* France was declared a republic on 22 September 1792.

Review questions:

1. Who were the sans-culottes?
2. Why did 10 August mark the end of the influence of the Feuillant faction and later the Girondins?
3. Can the events of 10 August be seen as a logical progression from the storming of the Bastille?
4. Why did the Brunswick Manifesto, which aimed to ensure the safety of Louis XVI and his family, have the opposite effect?
5. Why would the army volunteers have been suspicious of their officers?
6. Why was the fear of traitors within and without France so high in 1792?
7. What actions of Louis XVI led the public to mistrust him even more?
8. How far was the supply of food an important factor in the development of the crisis?
9. Why did the deputies elect war rather than concentrate on managing the new society?
10. Was the attack on the Tuileries Palace organised or spontaneous?
11. What were the causes of the September Massacres?
12. Many groups and individuals actively participated in the development of the revolutionary situation in France. The following groups and individuals had varying effects on the failure of the constitutional monarchy:
    * National Assembly deputies
    * Legislative Assembly deputies
    * Louis XBI and Marie Antoinette
    * The Jacobins
    * The emigres
    * The sans-culottes
    * The Feuillants
    * The Cordeliers Club
    1. Summarise how each group or individual listed above contributed to the failure of the constitutional monarchy?
    2. Use the continuum line below to place each individual or group according to your understanding of their contribution to the revolutionary situation.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| No role in failure | | Limited role in failure | | Important role in failure | | Critical role in failure | |

* 1. In three of four points, summarise who you think bears the greatest responsibility for the failure of the constitutional monarchy. Rank them according to their placement on the continuum.

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COURSE REVISION QUESTIONS

**The Terror and the Thermidorian reaction:**

Summary points:

* The Convention was deeply divided along factional lines about the new society they wanted to establish.
* The central issue for the Convention was the extent of the participation of the lower classes in the political process.
* The popular movement gained in influence from strong leaders both within the Convention and in the Paris Commune.
* The Convention and Paris Commune aimed to centralise control of France in their hands.
* Disagreements about the roles of the sans-culottes brought down the Girondins.
* The Constitution of 1793 was the most democratic of the French constitutions yet, nut it was never put into practice because of internal and external threats.
* The Law of the Maximum guaranteed the level of prices and wages for the sans-culottes.
* The Terror combined political, economic and social measures designed to bring the nation in line, and focused on defending the revolution.
* The factors were eliminated by the Committee of Public Safety one by one.
* The Cult of the Supreme Being became the state religion.
* Robespierre’s idealistic approach to the progress of the revolution alienated his fellow deputies and resulted in his arrest and death.
* After the death of Robespierre the institutions of the Terror were dismantled.
* The Constitution of 1795 resembled the Constitution of 1791, but included a bicameral parliament.

Review questions:

1. Why did the Convention decide to put Louis XVI on trial?
2. What was the impact of the execution of the king on France and Europe?
3. How did the conscription affect the revolution?
4. What were the grievances faced by the people of the Vendee region?
5. What was the function of the Committee of Public Safety?
6. What were the key differences between the Girondins and the Montagnards?
7. What was the aim of the Maximim?
8. What were the policies that formed the economic terror?
9. What was revolutionary about the Constitution of 1793?
10. What is the significance of Marat’s death?
11. What was the military terror?
12. In what way did the declaration of ‘revolutionary government’ radicalise the revolution?
13. What was the constitution of terror?
14. What was the role of dissent in radicalising the revolution?
15. What was the reasons for the fall of Robespierre?
16. What was the main aim of the authors of the Constitution of 1795?