

# 23 chapter the french revolution and napoleon 1789 1815

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The French Revolution and Napoleonic Era: A Period of Radical Transformation\*\*

### **Origins of the Revolution**

The French Revolution was a tumultuous period that spanned from 1789 to 1815. It was triggered by a combination of social, economic, and political grievances that had been simmering in French society for decades.

### **Events of 1789**

1789 marked a critical year in the revolution. In May, the Estates-General, a representative body of the three social classes (clergy, nobility, and commoners), failed to resolve the financial crisis facing the monarchy. This led to the formation of the National Assembly, dominated by the commoners, who declared themselves the true representatives of the people.

### **Abolition of Monarchy**

The National Assembly gradually stripped the monarchy of its authority. In August 1789, the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen proclaimed the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity. The king was reduced to a constitutional monarch, and the aristocracy was abolished.

### **Rise of Napoleon Bonaparte**

In the midst of the revolution, a young artillery officer named Napoleon Bonaparte emerged as a military commander. He played a pivotal role in the suppression of

counter-revolutionary uprisings and led a successful campaign in Italy.

## **Napoleonic Empire**

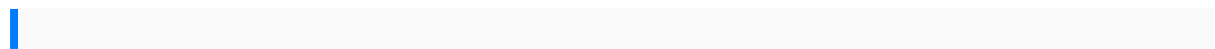
In 1799, Napoleon seized power in a coup d'état and declared himself First Consul. Ten years later, he crowned himself Emperor of the French. Under his rule, France experienced a period of military conquest and territorial expansion.

## **Restoration of Monarchy**

Napoleon's downfall came after his disastrous invasion of Russia in 1812. He was defeated by a coalition of European powers and exiled to Elba. In 1815, he escaped exile and returned to France for the Hundred Days, but was defeated again at Waterloo. The monarchy was restored under Louis XVIII.

## **Legacy of the Revolution**

The French Revolution had a profound impact on France and the world. It abolished feudalism, established the principles of democracy and republicanism, and inspired revolutionary movements elsewhere. The Napoleonic era further spread the ideas of the Enlightenment and left a lasting mark on European politics and society.



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