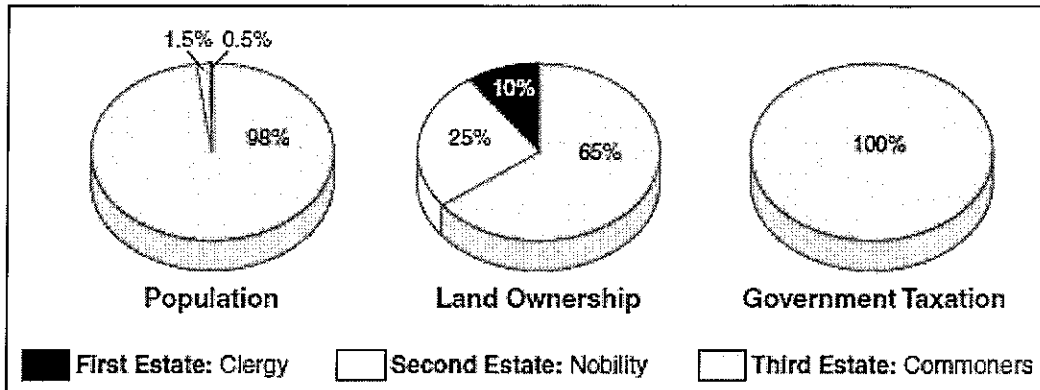


Three Estates of France

The Three Estates in Pre-Revolutionary France



Source: Jackson J. Spielvogel, *World History*, Glencoe/McGraw-Hill, 2003 (adapted)

Based on the Graphs what conclusions can be drawn about?

1. Society
2. Government
3. Economy

CAUSES OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

DBQ

This task is based on the accompanying documents. Some of these documents have been edited for the purpose of this task. This task is designed to test your ability to work with historic documents. As you analyze the documents, take into account both the source of the document and the author's point of view

➤ Historical Context

The French Revolution of 1789 had many long-range causes. Political, social, and economic conditions in France contributed to the discontent felt by many French people-especially those of the third estate. The ideas of the intellectuals of the Enlightenment brought new views of government and society. The American Revolution also influenced the coming of the French Revolution.

➤ Directions

The following question is based on the accompanying documents. As you analyze the documents, take into account both the source of the document and the author's point of view. Be sure to:

1. Carefully read the document-based question. Consider what you already know about the topic. How would you answer the question if you had no documents to examine?
2. Now, read each document carefully, underlining key phrases and words that address the document-based question. You may also wish to make notes. Answer the questions which follow each document.
3. Based on your own knowledge and on the information found in the documents, formulate a thesis that directly answers the question.
4. Organize supportive and relevant information into a brief outline.
5. Write a well-organized essay proving your thesis. The essay should be logically presented and should include information both from the documents and from your own knowledge outside the documents.

Document 1: This excerpt is adapted from *Travels in France* by Arthur Young, who traveled through France from 1787 to 1789.

In the south of France there is a taille [tax on the land and its produce]. There is an injustice in levying the amount each person must pay. Lands held by the nobility are taxed very little. Lands held by commoners are taxed heavily...

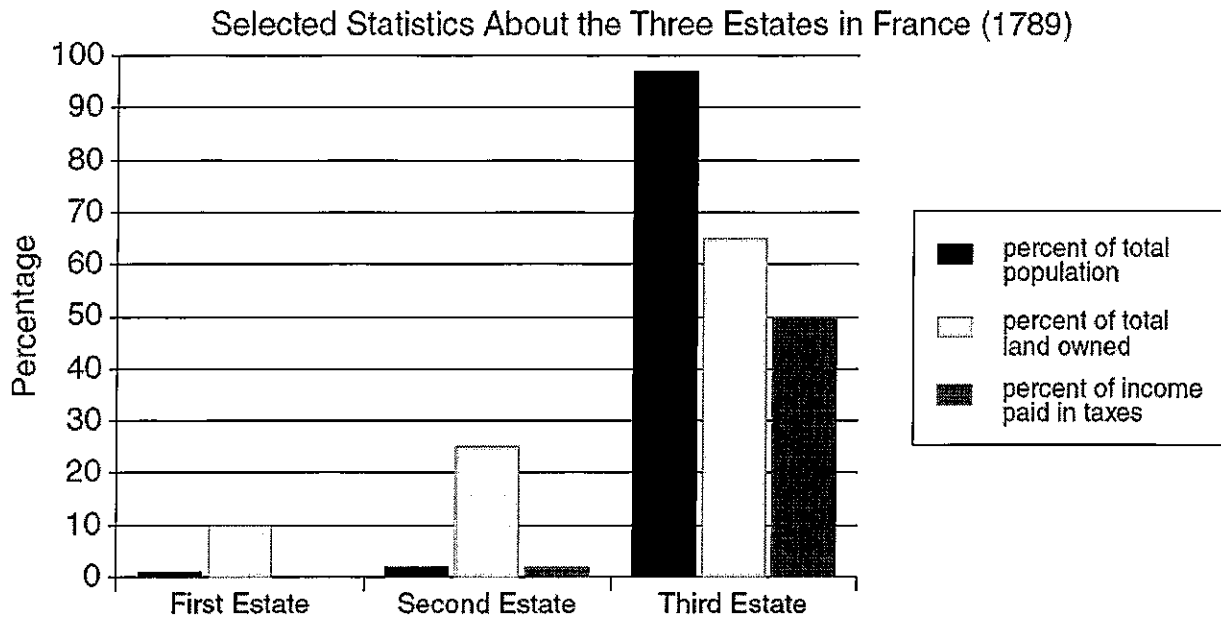
September 5, 1788: The poor people seem very poor indeed. The children are terribly ragged.

June 10, 1789: The lack of bread is terrible. Stories arrive every moment from the provinces of riots and disturbances, and calling in the military, to preserve the peace of the markets....The price of bread has risen above people's ability to pay. This causes great misery.

July 1789:I was joined by a poor woman who complained of the hard times. "The tailles and feudal dues [rents owed the lords] are crushing us," she said.

Q: List three observations this traveler made about the life of the peasant in France between 1787 and 1789.

Document 2: This diagram illustrates the three estates in 1789 and the land each held during the Old Regime.



Q: What conclusions can you draw about the relationship between the percentage of the population in each estate and the percentage of land owned by that estate?

What unfair conditions existed in pre-revolutionary France?

Document 3: These excerpts from *cahiers* (lists of grievances about the king, taxing, and voting in the Estates General) brought to the Estates General..

*That the king be forced to reform the abuses and tyranny of letter de cachet.
That every tax.... Be granted [by the Estates General] only for a limited time.
That the taille [a tax on land] be borne equally by all classes....
The meetings of the Estates General.... Shall be scheduled for definite times....
In order to assure the third estate the influence it deserves because of its numbers... its votes in the assembly should be taken by head...*

Q: What three changes did the third estate demand be made in the French government?

Document 4: In *The French Revolution*, historian Albert Mathiez claims that leadership fell to the middle class with their knowledge of the ideas of the Enlightenment.

The Revolution had been accomplished in the minds of men long before it was translated into fact....

The middle class... was sensitive to their inferior legal position. The Revolution came from them—the middle class. The working classes were incapable of starting or controlling the Revolution. They were just beginning to learn to read.

Q: What was the result of the middle class's knowledge of the ideas of the Enlightenment?

Document 5: Lord Acton suggested another point of view.

The condition of France alone did not bring about the overthrow of the monarchy... for the suffering of the people was not greater than they had been before. The ideas of the philosophers were not directly responsible for the outbreak...[but] the spark that changed thought into action was supplied by the Declaration of American Independence... The American example caused the Revolution to break out...

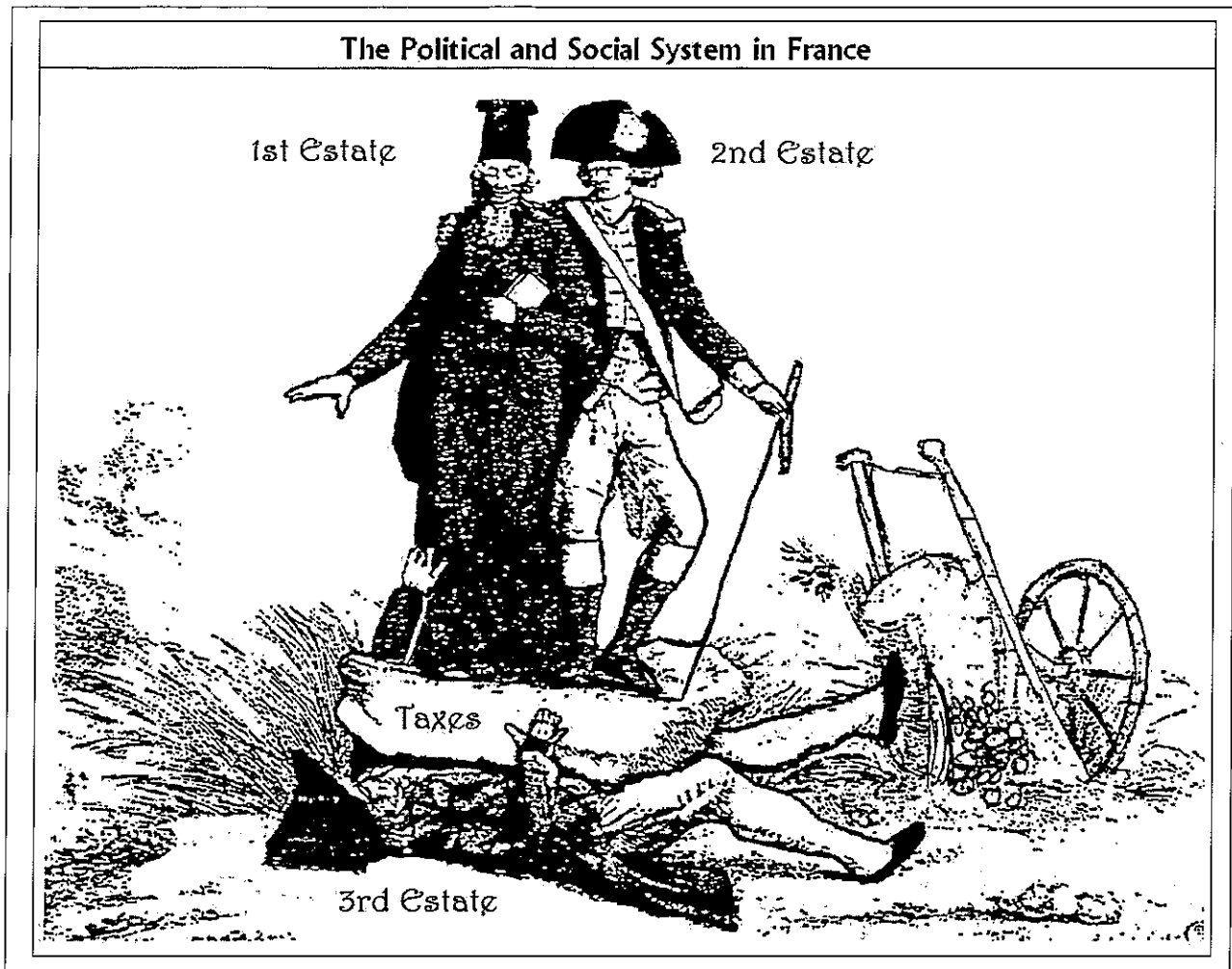
Q: What did Lord Acton believe caused the French revolution?

Document 6: Comte D'Antraigues as quoted in an excerpt from *Citizens: A Chronicle of the French Revolution*.

“The Third Estate is the People and the People is the foundation of the State; it is in fact the State itself; the other estates are merely political categories while by the immutable (unchangeable) laws of nature the People is everything. Everything should be subordinated (inferior) to it... It is in the People that all national power resides and for the People that all states exist.”

Q: What does Comte D'Antraigues see as the rightful role of the Third Estate in France?

Document 7: The Political and Social System in France



Q: What is the cartoonist saying about the relationship among the three estates in France?

Document 8: Excerpt from the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen* (1789).

1. *Men are born and remain free and equal in rights; social distinctions can be established only for the common benefit.*
2. *The aim of every political association is the conservation of the imprescriptible rights of man; these rights are liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression....*
4. *Liberty consists in being able to do anything that does not harm another person..*
10. *No one may be disturbed because of his opinions, even religious, provided that their public demonstration does not disturb the public order established by law.*
11. *The free communication of thoughts and opinions is one of the most precious rights of man: every citizen can therefore freely speak, write, print...*
16. *Any society in which guarantees of rights are not assured nor the separation of powers determined has no constitution.*

Q: According to this document, what are the natural rights of man?

ESSAY

What were the most important causes of the French Revolution? (Discuss three.)

- **Task:** Using information from the documents and your knowledge of world history write an essay in which you:
- Explain the causes of the French Revolution.
 - Use at least 5 documents in your response.

Be sure to include specific historical details. Your essay must also include additional information from your knowledge of world history.

©1999 J. Weston Walch

Causes of the French Revolution

After reading and answering the documents address the following:

1. What were three causes of the French Revolution?

2. What were two things that could have been prevented the French Revolution?

3. Predict one thing that will occur during the French Revolution?





The French Revolution Begins

In 1789, the French were divided into three social groups called Estates. The First Estate was made up of Church leaders, and the Second Estate was made up of nobles. The Third Estate included everybody else, and more than 95 percent of the French people belonged to it. Like in other European countries, a king who had absolute power ruled the country. France also had a group of representatives called the Estates-General. That group was made up of representatives from each Estate.



France was having serious money trouble. The government had huge war debts to pay. Prices of goods were rising, and many people were out of work. Because of a bad harvest, there was very little food. In 1789, the country's economy was about to fall apart. King Louis XVI called the Estates-General to meet and come up with a solution.

At the meeting, representatives from the Third Estate said the best solution would be to change the government. Although the poorest people made up the Third Estate, it was the only one that had to pay taxes. The representatives thought France could start a constitutional government like the one the United States had just started. The new government would make the First and Second Estates pay taxes too. This would raise money for the country.

The First and Second Estates did not like this idea. By tradition, each Estate got one vote. So, the Third Estate was outvoted two to one by the other Estates. Third Estate representatives argued that, to be fair, each member should get a vote instead of each Estate. In the current government, the largest group of people had nearly no say in the government. King Louis said no to the proposed change.

Set on making changes, the Third Estate voted to rename itself the National Assembly on June 17, 1789. This action was the symbolic end of absolute monarchy and the beginning of representative government. Members of the National Assembly planned to write a constitution. But when they arrived at the meeting hall three days later, the doors were locked. Determined to meet, the delegates moved to a nearby tennis court. They swore to keep meeting until they had written a constitution. This famous pledge is called the Tennis Court Oath.

The king had to give in. He told the other two Estates to join with the Third Estate in the National Assembly. At the same time, however, King Louis was getting troops ready. He would tell the troops to force the National Assembly to stop meeting. The French Revolution had begun.



The French Revolution Begins

Multiple Choice

Circle the best answer, and write the letter in the box.

1. The _____ Estate included more than 95 percent of the French people.

A. First
B. Second
C. Third
D. Fourth

2. France's _____ was made up of representatives from each Estate.

A. Parliament
B. Estates-General
C. Congress
D. Senate

3. France was having money trouble because _____.

A. the government had huge war debts to pay
B. prices of goods were rising
C. many people were out of work
D. all of the above

4. The _____ Estate voted to rename itself the National Assembly.

A. First
B. Second
C. Third
D. none of the above

5. National Assembly members made a famous oath called the _____.

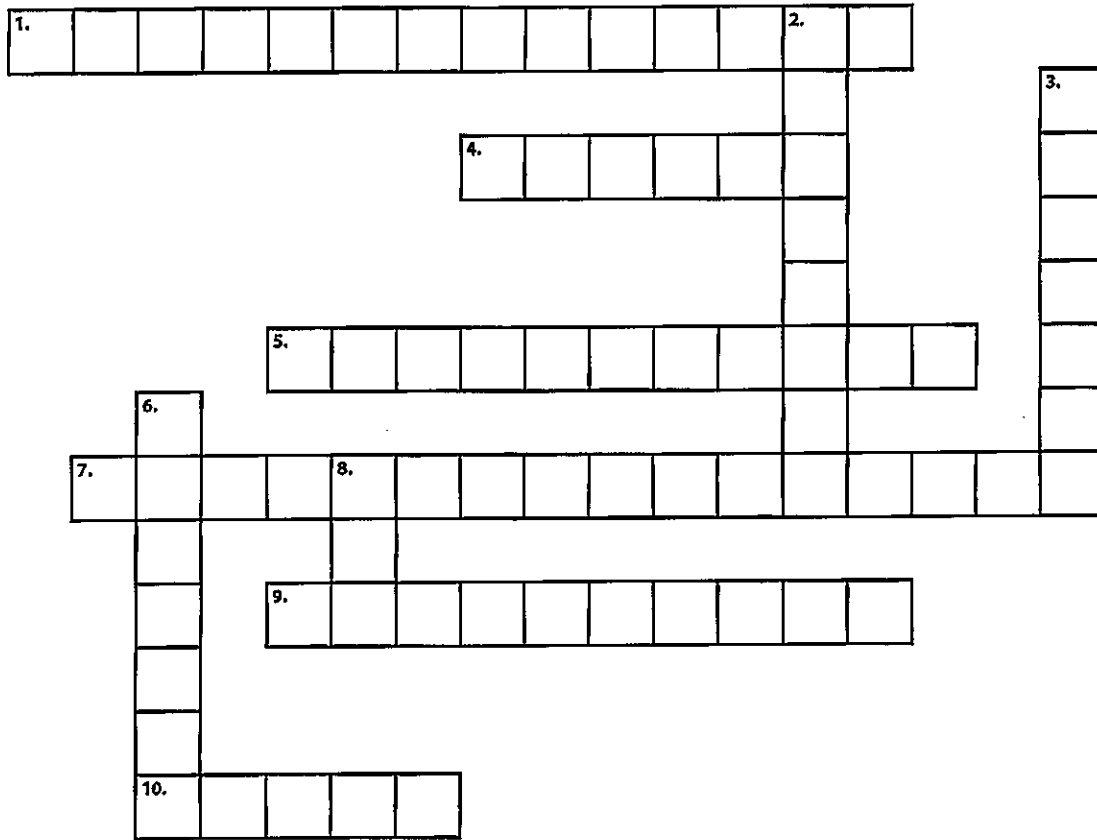
A. Tennis Court Oath
B. Racquetball Court Oath
C. Squash Court Oath
D. Constitution Hall Oath



The French Revolution Begins

Crossword Puzzle

Write the best answer in each blank, and complete the crossword puzzle.



ACROSS

1. The Third Estate representatives thought France could start a/an _____ government like that of the United States.
4. The king was getting _____ ready to force the National Assembly to stop meeting.
5. With the _____ Oath, the National Assembly delegates swore to keep meeting until they had written a constitution.
7. The king told the other two Estates to join the _____.
9. The French _____ started in 1789.
10. The Third Estate was the only one that paid _____.

DOWN

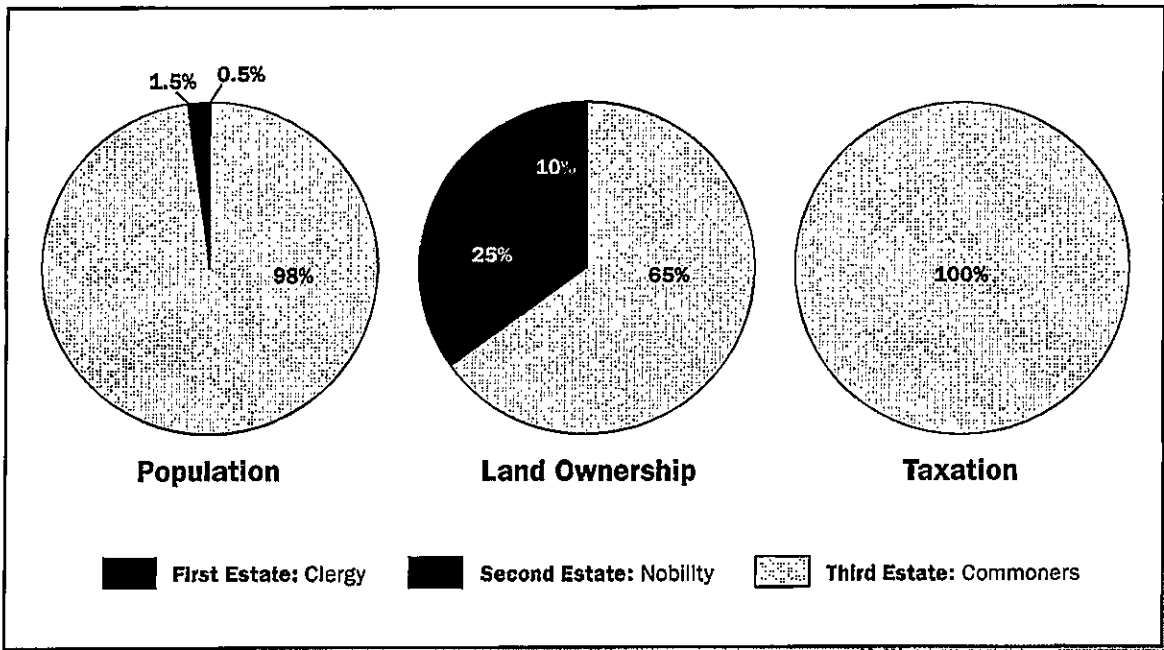
2. King Louis XVI had _____ power.
3. In 1789, France's _____ was about to fall apart.
6. The _____ group of people had nearly no say in the government.
8. By tradition, each Estate got _____ vote.



The French Revolution Begins

Pie Chart – The Three Estates

Use the pie chart to answer the following questions. Write the answers in complete sentences.



1. What percentage of the population was made up of the First Estate?

2. Which Estate owned 25 percent of the land?

3. What percentage of the taxes were paid by the Third Estate?



The French Revolution Begins

Extension Activities

Choose one of the following activities to complete. Write the answer in complete sentences.

1. The *bourgeoisie* was a part of the Third Estate. What was the *bourgeoisie*? Look in your textbook, on the Internet, or at the library to find out.

2. Pretend you are a member of the Third Estate. Write a journal entry describing a day in your life.

3. The National Assembly wrote the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen. What was this document based on? Look in your textbook, on the Internet, or at the library to find out.



Quiz: The French Revolution Begins

True/False

Decide if each statement is true or false, and write "true" or "false" in the blank.

- _____ 1. The Estates-General was made up of representatives from each Estate.
- _____ 2. The National Assembly voted to rename itself the Third Estate.
- _____ 3. The Tennis Court Oath was a promise to lower taxes.
- _____ 4. King Louis XVI had absolute power.
- _____ 5. The largest group of people made all the government decisions.

Multiple Choice

Circle the best answer, and write the letter in the box.

6. The _____ Estate was the only one that paid taxes.
- A. First
 - B. Second
 - C. Third
 - D. all of the above

7. In the Estates-General, each Estate got _____.
- A. one vote
 - B. one vote for each member
 - C. 33 votes
 - D. 1,789 votes

Short Answer

Answer the following question in complete sentences.

8. List one reason that France was having money problems.



Execution of a King

In 1792, as the French Revolution continued, a group met in Paris at the National Convention. At this meeting, revolutionary leaders decided that France would no longer be ruled by a king. France was now a republic.

For some people, it was not enough to take away the king's power. Many blamed the country's problems on the king. The National Convention put King Louis XVI on trial as a traitor to France. They found him guilty of treason, or betraying his country, and sentenced him to death.



On January 21, 1793, Louis walked calmly to the guillotine. The guillotine was a machine that chopped a person's head off with a huge blade. It was on a platform in a public square. A large audience watched and cheered as Louis climbed to the top of the platform. He was put under the blade of the guillotine. With one stroke, it cut off his head. One of the guards picked up the king's severed head and showed it to the crowd. The audience cheered and shouted, "Long live the republic!"

Not everyone was happy about the king's death. People in some areas of France did not accept the National Convention's authority. They had been loyal to the king. Also, other countries were angry that French revolutionaries had killed the king. A group of countries, including Austria, Prussia, Spain, Portugal, Britain, and the Dutch Republic, joined together. They got ready to invade France. Their goal was to stop the French Revolution.

To protect the revolution, the National Convention started the Committee of Public Safety. Its job was to defend France from foreign threats and from threats at home. The way that the Committee of Public Safety dealt with the crisis became known as the Reign of Terror. The Committee arrested, imprisoned, and killed anyone it thought might be against the revolution. In one year, more than 30,000 people were killed. Of these, about 16,000 people were beheaded by the guillotine. Others died in prison or were killed when their towns were raided.

The Committee faced the international threat by raising a huge army. With over one million soldiers, France's army was the largest in European history. It pushed back the invaders and defeated most of its foreign enemies.

Maximilien Robespierre led the Committee. He was very powerful, and some leaders thought he went too far. In 1794, the National Convention voted to execute Robespierre. He was beheaded. A more moderate set of leaders took over the Committee, and the Reign of Terror ended.



Execution of a King

Multiple Choice

Circle the best answer, and write the letter in the box.

1. The National Convention decided that France would no longer be ruled by a/an _____.

- A. king
- B. president
- C. committee
- D. assembly

2. Louis XVI was found guilty of _____.

- A. stealing
- B. murder
- C. treason
- D. assault

3. The job of the Committee of Public Safety was to _____.

- A. defend France from foreign threats
- B. defend France from threats at home
- C. protect the revolution
- D. all of the above

4. During the Reign of Terror, more than _____ people were killed.

- A. 300
- B. 3,000
- C. 30,000
- D. 300,000

5. Maximilien Robespierre was the leader of the _____.

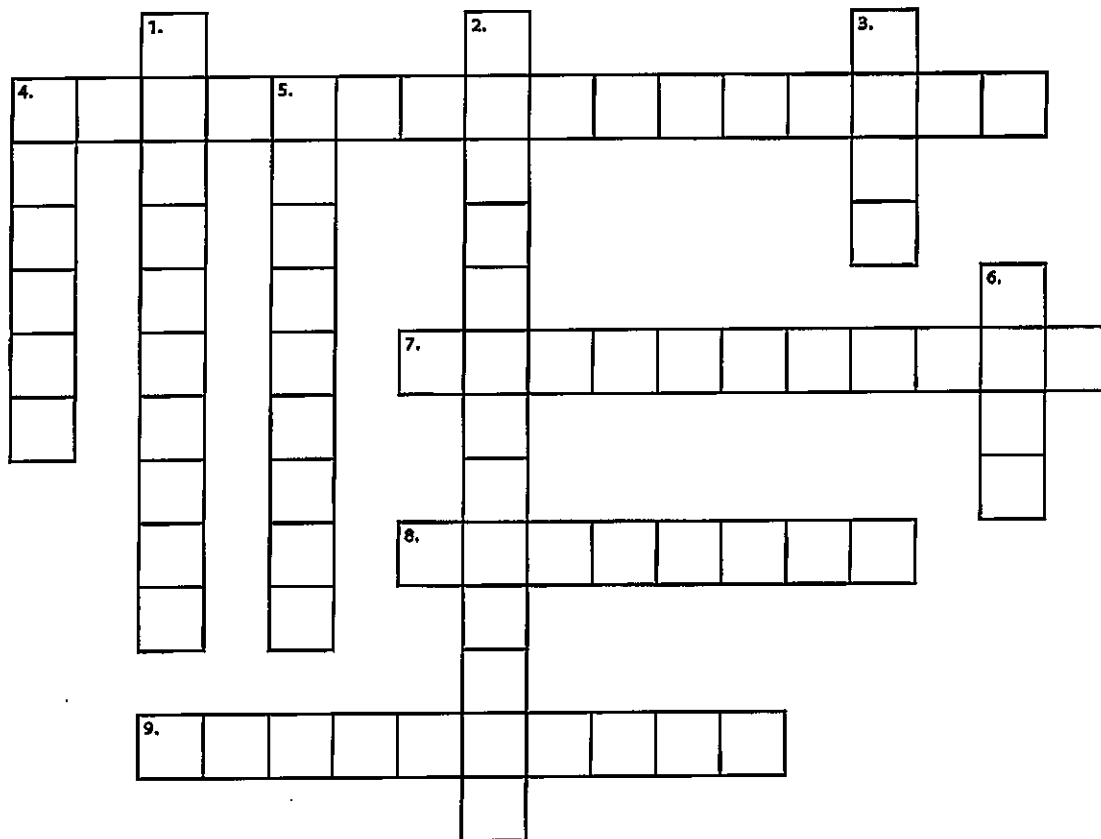
- A. government
- B. Committee of Public Safety
- C. National Convention
- D. international coalition



Execution of a King

Crossword Puzzle

Write the best answer in each blank, and complete the crossword puzzle.



ACROSS

4. A group of European countries got together to stop the _____.
7. Some leaders thought _____ went too far.
8. During the Reign of Terror, about 16,000 people were _____.
9. A/an _____ was used to kill Louis XVI.

DOWN

1. The French _____ started in 1792.
2. The _____ ended when a more moderate set of leaders took over.
3. People in some areas of France stayed loyal to the _____.
4. _____'s army was the largest in European history.
5. The _____ of Public Safety arrested anyone it thought might be against the revolution.
6. The Committee raised a/an _____ of over one million soldiers.





Execution of a King

Time Line – The French Revolution

Use the time line to answer the following questions. Write the answers in complete sentences.

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| 1789 | ... • The French Revolution begins.
• Delegates of the Estates-General take the Tennis Court Oath.
• People storm the Bastille, a prison in Paris. |
| 1792 | ... • The National Convention establishes the French Republic. |
| 1793 | ... • King Louis XVI is executed.
• The Reign of Terror starts. |
| 1794 | ... • Maximilien Robespierre, the leader of the Committee of Public Safety, is arrested and executed.
• The Reign of Terror ends. |
| 1795 | ... • A new constitution sets up a five-man Directory and a two-house legislature in France. |
| 1799 | ... • Napoleon Bonaparte, a great military leader, overthrows the Directory and takes control of France. The Age of Napoleon begins. |

1. List two things that happened in 1789.

2. What did the constitution of 1795 do?

3. In what year did Napoleon Bonaparte take control of France?



Execution of a King

Extension Activities

Choose one of the following activities to complete. Write the answer in complete sentences.

1. The French Revolution is a very complicated topic. Choose one event from the French Revolution, and do some research on the Internet or at the library. List five facts about that event.
2. When did France stop using the guillotine for executions? Look in your textbook, on the Internet, or at the library to find out.
3. Who was Marie Antoinette? Look in your textbook, on the Internet, or at the library to find out three facts about Marie Antoinette.





Quiz: Execution of a King

True/False

Decide if each statement is true or false, and write "true" or "false" in the blank.

- _____ 1. King Louis XVI was convicted of treason and was beheaded.
- _____ 2. The National Convention wanted France to be led by a king.
- _____ 3. France's army was the largest in European history.
- _____ 4. The Reign of Terror happened during the American Revolution.
- _____ 5. About 3,000 people were killed during the Reign of Terror.

Multiple Choice

Circle the best answer, and write the letter in the box.

6. _____ was the leader of the Committee of Public Safety.

A. Maximilien Robespierre
B. Napoleon Bonaparte
C. King Louis XVI
D. Marie Antoinette

7. The _____'s job was to defend France from foreign threats and from threats at home.

A. National Convention
B. Legislative Assembly
C. Committee of Public Safety
D. Reign of Terror Committee

Short Answer

Answer the following question in complete sentences.

8. What was the guillotine?
