7.1

The French Revolution Begins

9th World History
Mr. Sanderson
European Society in Transition:
Middle Ages ➔ Modern World

- Scientific Revolution
- Agricultural Revolution
- Age of Enlightenment
- Industrialization
American Revolution influenced Europe:

- The *bourgeoisie*—the growing middle class that opposed aristocratic privileges in France
- Peasants & serfs—mostly illiterate; barely influenced

Americans proved that Enlightenment ideas could work in reality:

- New social contract—consent of the governed (Locke)
- Written constitution (Locke)
- Separation of powers (Montesquieu)
- Freedom of religion, speech, assembly, etc. (Voltaire)
- Rights to life, liberty, & property (Locke)
France, 1780s

- Largest population in Europe (27 million)
- Massive gov’t debt:
  - Seven Years’ War
  - American Revolutionary War
- Extreme social & economic inequality:
  - Peasants paid all the taxes and church tithes
  - Wealthy landowners & clergy were exempt from taxes
The Old Regime

- French society was based on a rigid social structure that began in the Middle Ages, called the *Ancién Regime*—the “Old Regime” or “Old Order”

- The French monarchy struggled to maintain its absolute power in a changing world

- The Old Regime resisted any reforms that might challenge its power
The Old Regime in France was supported by 3 powerful institutions:

1. The absolute monarchy
2. The Catholic Church
3. The nobility
The French Monarchy (1774-1793)

King Louis XVI

Queen Marie Antoinette
Marie Antoinette

- Austrian princess who married Louis, heir to the French throne—secured the new French-Austrian alliance

- Marie was very unpopular among the French people:
  - An outsider
  - Nickname: “The Austrian Whore”
  - Nickname: “Madame Deficit”
  - Necklace Scandal
  - Gambling problem
Economic Discontent

- **Famine**: bad harvests = rising bread prices = starving peasants
- Peasants spent up to half of their income on bread
- "Little Ice Age"—period of lower temperatures
- Working people in Paris faced a 140% rise in rent
- **Corvée**—peasants forced to provide annual labor to the state (roads, infrastructure, etc.)
The French Debt

- Royal treasury was constantly empty
  - Half of the 1788 budget paid interest on gov’t debt
- The state needed more money to pay its debts
  - Louis’s idea—Tax the nobles!
  - King Louis asked nobles to pay their taxes. The nobles refused.
Le Déficit
The French Debt (cont’d)

- King Louis XVI convened the Estates-General
- France’s parliament, which hadn’t met in 175 years = Louis was a weak ruler
- Louis only wanted the Estates-General to solve France’s financial crisis by finding new sources of gov’t revenue.
  - The Estates-General did much more than that...
  - A “Pandora’s Box” was opened...
  - The “genie was let out of the bottle...”
Palace of Versailles
Estates-General (May 1789)
France’s Three Estates

1\(^{st}\) Estate:
- Clergy = 0.5–1\% of population

2\(^{nd}\) Estate:
- Nobles = 1.5–2\% of pop.

3\(^{rd}\) Estate:
- “Everyone else” = 97–98\% of pop.
- Peasants, merchants, craftsmen, free laborers, lawyers, etc.
First Estate

- Clergy
  - 1% of the people owned 10% of the land

Second Estate

- Nobles
  - 2% of the people owned 25% of the land

Third Estate

- Middle class, peasants, city workers
  - 97% of the people owned 65% of the land
# Three Estates of France

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Estate</th>
<th>Second Estate</th>
<th>Third Estate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| The first estate, the **clergy**, consisted of rich and poor.  
  - There were very wealthy abbots, members of the aristocracy who lived in luxury off of wealthy church lands.  
  - There were poor parish priests, who lived much like the peasants. | The second estate, the **nobility**, inherited their titles and got their wealth from the land.  
  - Some members of the nobility had little money, but had all the privileges of noble rank.  
  - However, most enjoyed both privileges and wealth. | The third estate, the **common people**, was by far the largest group in France.  
  - Everyone who was not a member of the first or second estates was a member of the third. It included:  
    - Wealthy merchants, whose wealth rivaled that of the nobility  
    - Doctors and lawyers  
    - Shopkeepers  
    - The urban poor  
    - The peasants who worked the land. |
In the Estates-General, each Estate got one vote.

The 1st & 2nd Estates always voted together, so...

...the 3rd Estate always lost by 2-to-1.

Which Estate was this unfair to?
The Political and Social System in France

1st Estate

2nd Estate

Taxes

3rd Estate
Le Peuple Sous l'Ancien Régime
A FAUT ESPERER QU'EUJEU LA FINIRA BEN TOI

A. P. 1769
The 3rd Estate goes rogue…

- Representatives of the 3rd Estate declared themselves the true representatives of all the French people & formed a “National Assembly”

- Three days later, they returned to find their meeting chambers locked by the king’s guards

- Members of the Nat’l Assembly relocated to a nearby indoor tennis court

- NA members swore to continue meeting until they had written a new constitution for France—the “Tennis Court Oath”
Violence Erupts & Revolution Begins

- Rumors spread that Louis was sending soldiers to arrest the Nat’l Assembly.
- Commoners in Paris—hopeful of the NA’s reform efforts—formed angry mobs in the streets.
- July 14, 1789: "Storming of the Bastille"—Parisian mobs attacked the royal prison & armory, the Bastille—a symbol of the king’s tyranny.
- At the time, the Bastille held 7 prisoners, but no ammunition or weapons—except for guards’ weapons.
- **Effect:** royal authority collapsed in cities & the countryside.
The “Great Fear” (Summer 1789)

- Peasants feared nobles would retaliate against them, & that foreign troops would invade France to stop the revolution.
- Peasants attacked lords’ & nobles’ homes; burned their legal documents & records.
- Nobles began voluntarily renouncing their titles of nobility.
- Aug. 4, 1789—Nat’l Assembly officially abolished feudalism in France (no more “serfs” & “lords” in France—everyone was a “citizen”).
- All Frenchmen (in theory) became equal & subject to following the same laws & paying the same taxes.
The Great Fear
7.2 Reform & Terror

9th World History
Mr. Sanderson
Causes of the French Revolution

- **Government debt**: collapse of state finances
- **Weak leadership**: Louis XVI wouldn’t force nobles to pay taxes
- **Bourgeoisie**: new middle class frustrated at being denied aristocratic privileges (tax exemptions)
- **Enlightenment**: applying reason to solve society’s problems; led many people to criticize the Old Regime as *irrational* & needing replacement
- **Famine**: food shortages, rising bread prices, starving peasants
Political Factions in France

• **Conservatives**
  • Opposed the revolution
  • Wanted to keep the king in power
  • Sat on the right

• **Moderates**
  • Supported a constitutional monarchy
  • Sat in the center

• **Liberals**
  • Wanted a republic
  • Sat on the left
“Provinces” ➔ “Departments”

Royal provinces were reorganized into 83 “departments”
Declaration of the Rights of Man & the Citizen

- Adopted on August 26, 1789
- Lists basic rights of all citizens: Liberty, equality, property rights, rule of law, etc.
- First line: “Men are born and remain free and equal in rights.”
- Consider:
  - What did the Declaration mean for women?
  - What did it mean for free blacks & slaves?
  - Did religious toleration of Protestants & Jews also mean political rights?

Olympe de Gouge wrote the “Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen,” which argued for women’s equality—ignored by the Nat’l Assembly
Revolutionary Motto:

“Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité”

(“Liberty, Equality, Brotherhood”)
Women’s March on Versailles

- October 1789

- Bread shortages in Paris; children starving

- Rumors spread that the queen was hoarding grain at Versailles

- Thousands of women marched 12 miles from Paris to Versailles

- Marie Antoinette was *not* hoarding grain
  - “Let them eat cake” (myth)

- Mob forced king & queen to return to Paris
Women’s March on Versailles
The Revolution & the Church

- The Church supported the Old Order
- Nat’l Assembly confiscated Church lands = $$$

Civil Constitution of the Clergy

- Priests were *legally required* to swear an oath of allegiance to the new revolutionary government
- Many refused, claiming their only allegiance was to God. Those who refused were arrested—known as *refractory clergy*
- Revolutionary gov’t placed all Catholic churches in France under state control
Constitution of 1791

- Goal—maintain order without giving power to the poor
- Established a limited constitutional monarchy—limited the king’s power, but granted him a veto over new laws
- Power was to be shared with the new Legislative Assembly (replaced the Nat’l Assembly)
- Called for an independent judiciary (court system)
- Voting was based on the amount of taxes one paid:
  - 1/3 of adult males still could not vote
  - No women could vote
  - Domestic servants couldn’t vote
Legislative Assembly

- The Legislative Assembly had all-new members thanks to a self-imposed ban on serving in both the Nat’l Assembly & the Legislative Assembly.
- Had 745 members *(indirectly elected)*
- 4.3 million “active citizens” (all men) voted for about 50,000 electors. Then, the electors chose the 745 members of the Legislative Assembly.
- This electoral system ensured the bourgeoisie could preserve their power over the larger class of poorer French peasants.
- “Passive citizens” were the rest of Frenchmen who were guaranteed rights & liberties, but weren’t allowed to vote.
“Flight to Varennes”

- June 1791
- The royal family attempted to flee France—helped by Marie Antoinette’s lover
- Disguised as commoners, but traveled in a large carriage.
- Louis was recognized near the Luxembourg border, arrested, & forced to return to Paris.
- The French public denounced the royal family as traitors.
- The stunt undercut the king’s support among bourgeois officials in the gov’t.
“Flight to Varennes”
Review:

- What were the causes of the French Revolution?
- Why did Louis XVI convene the Estates-General?
- Which groups made up France’s Three Estates?
- What was the Storming of the Bastille?
- What was the Great Fear?
- Which document lists the basic rights of all men?
- Why did Parisian women march to Versailles Palace in Oct. 1789?
France goes to war. Why?

- France had been in a state of upheaval since 1789, but conditions had settled down somewhat by early 1792.

- French people wanted war for different reasons:
  - Reactionaries thought France would lose the war & that the Old Regime would be restored.
  - Leftists hoped war would unify the French Revolution at home & also help spread it to the rest of Europe.
France’s Revolutionary Wars

- Initially, France only fought Prussia & Austria
- The French army invaded the Austrian Netherlands, but was decimated—leaving Paris open to invasion
- Austria & Prussia refused to cooperate with each other, which kept France from being completely overrun by enemy forces
- Fears of invasion spread—especially in Paris
- A search for *scapegoats* began
- Radical groups that hadn’t been very popular were suddenly more appealing to France’s common people & the poor
Radicals & Radicalism

- Radicals = groups opposed to a constitutional monarchy—they wanted a republic
- Military losses + continuing economic problems = search for new leadership
- Radical groups became more popular
  - The Jacobins—most popular radical group
“10th August”

- Aug. 10, 1792—the National Guard of the radical Paris Commune attacked the Legislative Assembly at the Tuileries Palace; took royal family captive (Known as “10th August”)

- Radicals forced the Legislative Assembly to suspend the monarchy & call a National Convention to write a new constitution
National Convention

- Revolution was taken over by the sans-culottes—lower-middle class, working-class, & poor who did not wear the short breeches of the elite upper classes
- New elections were held to elect members of the Nat’l Convention; all property-owning men over 25 could vote—more democratic than previous election
- Nat’l Convention met in Sept. 1792, & began writing a new constitution
Battle of Valmy

- Sept. 20, 1792—first major French victory
- Stopped the Prussian military advance on Paris
Radical Phase of the Revolution

First few years of the French Revolution were led by the wealthier upper middle class (bourgeoisie).

The bourgeois revolutionary government—the National Assembly—failed to respond to the problems of the working class & poor.

The French Revolution entered a second, more radical phase beginning in 1792.
French Republic

- Sept. 21, 1792—National Convention abolished the monarchy & proclaimed a republic the next day

- Nat’l Convention broke into factions because members couldn’t agree on Louis’s fate

- Two Jacobin factions developed:
  - Girondins—represented the countryside; feared Parisian mobs; wanted Louis to live—insurance against anarchy & chaos
  - “The Mountain”—represented more radical Parisian interests; wanted Louis executed
The King’s Fate

- The Nat’l Convention put the former king (“Citizen Capet”) on trial for treason
- Louis was found guilty & sentenced to death by a single vote
- Jan. 21, 1793: Louis executed via guillotine—regicide
- Execution of Louis XVI created new enemies of the revolution at home & abroad
  - Absolute monarchs in other countries didn’t want the same thing to happen to them
Execution of Louis XVI
Execution of Louis XVI
The Revolution in Crisis

- France faced invasion by an informal alliance of Austria, Prussia, Spain, Portugal, Britain, and the Dutch Republic.
- French defeat would mean restoration of the Old Regime.
- Nat’l Convention had to stop anarchy & counter-revolution in France while also trying to win a war.
The Revolution in Crisis

- To solve these challenges, the Nat’l Convention gave broad powers to the Committee of Public Safety—an executive committee of 12 officials.
- The CPS remained in power for 12 months & helped guide France through its crises.
The Committee of Public Safety
A “Nation in Arms”

- CPS mobilized the entire French nation—*levee en masse*
- By Sept. 1794, French army numbered 1,169,000 soldiers—largest army in European history up to that time
- France conquered the Austrian Netherlands
Consequences of France’s Revolutionary Wars

- **Rise of nationalism**: “people’s gov’t,” “people’s army,” “people’s war”
- **Beginning of total war**: war became more violent & destructive; a whole country is involved in the war effort
- **French conquests** spread revolutionary ideas to the rest of Europe
The Reign of Terror

Maximilien Robespierre—dominated the CPS

War in the Vendee—peasant rebellion against the military draft in western France—crushed by gov’t

Smaller cities opposed Paris’s power—wanted a more decentralized republic
The Reign of Terror (cont’d)

- Revolutionary courts punished “internal enemies”
- guillotine—more efficient, “humane,” & “rational” way to execute someone
- Official account—16,000 executed. (More likely—up to 50,000 executed)
- Victims included: Marie Antoinette, Olympe de Gouges
Most executions took place in the Vendee & cities in open rebellion against the authority of the National Convention & CPS.

**Figure 1 - Executions During the Reign of Terror**
Suppressing Dissent

- Revolutionary armies crushed revolts against the Revolution
- To CPS, the Reign of Terror was necessary in order to establish a “republic of virtue” & restore the ideals embodied in the Declaration of the Rights of Man
- To CPS, the French people supported the Revolution—opposition meant being an “enemy of the state”
De-Christianization

- Goal—to remove all Christian influences on gov’t & establish a more secular society

- Part of dismantling the Old Regime:
  - “Saint” removed from street names; priests were encouraged to marry
  - Cult of Reason; Cult of the Supreme Being—deism
  - Notre-Dame Cathedral—renamed “Temple of Reason”
Cult of the Supreme Being
De-Christianization

- Republican Calendar—adopted in Oct. 1793
  - Calendar begins on Sept. 22, 1793—the day France was declared a republic
  - Each month was renamed based on weather
  - Christian holidays were replaced with “revolutionary festivals”

- De-Christianization offended many people in France, which was still an overwhelmingly Catholic country
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New Name</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Time Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vendemaire</td>
<td>Vintage</td>
<td>September 22 - October 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brumaire</td>
<td>Fog</td>
<td>October 22 - November 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frimaire</td>
<td>Frost</td>
<td>November 21 - December 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nivose</td>
<td>Snow</td>
<td>December 21 - January 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pluviose</td>
<td>Rain</td>
<td>January 20 - February 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ventose</td>
<td>Wind</td>
<td>February 19 - March 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germinal</td>
<td>Budding</td>
<td>March 21 - April 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floreal</td>
<td>Flowers</td>
<td>April 20 - May 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prairial</td>
<td>Meadow</td>
<td>May 20 - June 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Messidor</td>
<td>Harvest</td>
<td>June 19 - July 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thermidor</td>
<td>Heat</td>
<td>July 19 - August 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fructidor</td>
<td>Fruit</td>
<td>August 18 - September 21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Marianne

The first seal of the Republic.
French Revolution & Slavery

- Sept. 1791—National Assembly abolished slavery in France, but not France’s colonies

- French planters in the West Indies opposed abolition of slavery—very profitable sugar production

- 1791—slave revolt began in Saint-Domingue (Haiti)

- Feb. 1794—Nat’l Convention abolished slavery in colonies
The Reign of Terror Ends

1794—CPS attempted to slow the Reign of Terror

French military victories in Europe meant the Revolution was safe from foreign intervention. So, the Reign of Terror was no longer necessary, but...

...Robespierre refused to stop the executions. He became obsessed with rooting out “corruption.”
Thermidorian Reaction

- Members of Nat'l Convention—fearing for their own safety—voted to condemn & execute Robespierre.
- July 28, 1794: **Thermidorian Reaction**—execution of Robespierre ended the radical phase of the Revolution, & started a reactionary phase.
Thermidorian Reaction (cont’d)

- With Robespierre gone, the National Convention:
  - Allowed churches to re-open
  - Restored freedom of religion
  - Adopted *laissez-faire* (free market) economic policies
  - Wrote a new constitution
Constitution of the Year III

- New constitution—Aug. 1795
  - Male taxpayers over 21 could vote for electors, who then elected the legislature—indirect elections
  - More conservative

- Bicameral legislature
  - Council of 500—proposed laws
  - Council of Elders—approved laws

- New executive power = Directory (5 directors)
1. **Moderate phase** (led by bourgeoisie)
   a) National Assembly ➔ Legislative Assembly

2. **Radical phase** (led by the sans-culottes)
   a) National Convention
      i. Committee of Public Safety

3. **Reactionary phase** (led by conservatives)
   a) Directory
Life under the Directory

- Established “sister republics”—states with puppet gov’ts controlled by France
- Hard times continued for the poor:
  - High food costs
  - Inflation
- Political repression
- Directory was very unpopular
- Depended on the army for survival—weak
Review:

- Who were the Jacobins?
- What happened to Louis XVI?
- Who led the Reign of Terror?
- How did the Nat’l Convention enlarge the French army?
- What were some of the consequences of France’s Revolutionary Wars?
- What was de-Christianization? What were some examples of de-Christianization?
- What was the Thermidorian Reaction?