Key Events

As you read this chapter, look for the key events of the French Revolution and French Empire.

• The fall of the Bastille marked the beginning of the French Revolution.
• The Committee of Public Safety began the Reign of Terror.
• Napoleon Bonaparte created the French Empire.
• Allied forces defeated Napoleon at Waterloo.

The Impact Today

The events that occurred during this time period still impact our lives today.

• The French Revolution became the model for revolution in the modern world.
• The power of nationalism was first experienced during the French Revolution, and it is still powerful in existing nations and emerging nations today.
• The French Revolution spread the principles of liberty and equality, which are held dear by many nations and individuals today.

World History Video The Chapter 18 video, “Napoleon,” chronicles the rise and fall of Napoleon Bonaparte.
Napoleon Crossing the Great St. Bernard by Jacques-Louis David. David was the leading artist of the French Revolution.

**HISTORY Online**

Chapter Overview
Visit the Glencoe World History Web site at [this link](#) and click on Chapter 18—Chapter Overview to preview chapter information.

- **1802**: Napoleon reaches agreement with the pope
- **1804**: Napoleon is crowned Emperor
- **1805**: British defeat French and Spanish at Trafalgar
- **1808**: 1810: 1812: Napoleon invades Russia
- **1815**: Duke of Wellington and his army defeat Napoleon at Waterloo
Fall of the Bastille

On the morning of July 14, 1789, a Parisian mob of some eight thousand men and women in search of weapons streamed toward the Bastille, a royal armory filled with arms and ammunition. The Bastille was also a state prison. Although it contained only seven prisoners at the time, in the eyes of those angry Parisians it was a glaring symbol of the government's harsh policies. The armory was defended by the Marquis de Launay and a small garrison of 114 men.

The assault began at one o'clock in the afternoon when a group of attackers managed to lower two drawbridges over the moat surrounding the fortress. The mob was joined by members of the French Guard, who began to bombard the fortress with cannon balls. After four hours of fighting, 98 attackers lay dead or dying. Only one defender had been killed.

As more attackers arrived, de Launay realized that he and his troops could not hold out much longer and surrendered. Angered by the loss of its members, the victorious mob beat de Launay to death, cut off his head, and carried it aloft in triumph through the streets of Paris.

When King Louis XVI returned to his palace at Versailles after a day of hunting, he was told about the fall of the Bastille by the duc de La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt. Louis exclaimed, "Why, this is a revolt." "No, Sire," replied the duke, "It is a revolution."

Why It Matters

The French Revolution began a new age in European political life. The old political order in France was destroyed. The new order was based on individual rights, representative institutions, and loyalty to the nation rather than the monarch. The revolutionary upheaval of the era, especially in France, created new political ideals, summarized in the French slogan, "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity." These ideals transformed France, then spread to other European countries and the rest of the world.

History and You

Using print or Internet sources, familiarize yourself with the lyrics to The Marseillaise, God Save the Queen, and The Star Spangled Banner. How do they vary in subject matter, tone, theme, and style, and how are they similar? Create a chart listing your findings.
The population of France was divided into three estates:
1. The First Estate: The clergy and the nobility, who were exempt from taxes.
2. The Second Estate: The common people, who paid the majority of taxes.
3. The Third Estate: The bourgeoisie, who were the common people but did not pay taxes, and the sans-culottes, who were the urban working class.

Places to Locate
- Versailles, Paris, Austria, Prussia

Preview Questions
1. How was the population of France divided into three estates?
2. How did the fall of the Bastille save the National Assembly?

Reading Strategy
Causes and Effects: As you read this section, use a web diagram like the one below to list the factors that contributed to the French Revolution.

Background to the Revolution
The year 1789 witnessed two far-reaching events: the beginning of a new United States of America and the beginning of the French Revolution. Compared with the American Revolution, the French Revolution was more complex, more violent, and far more radical. It tried to create both a new political order and a new
social order. Indeed, it has often been seen as a major turning point in European political and social history.

The causes of the French Revolution include both long-range problems and immediate forces. The long-range causes are to be found in the condition of French society. Before the revolution, French society was based on inequality. France's population of 27 million was divided, as it had been since the Middle Ages, into three orders, or estates.

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The Three Estates The First Estate consisted of the clergy and numbered about 130,000 people. These people owned approximately 10 percent of the land. They were exempt from the taille (TAH-yl), France's chief tax. The clergy were radically divided. The higher clergy, members of aristocratic families, shared the interests of the nobility. The parish priests were often poor and from the class of commoners.

The Second Estate, the nobility, included about 350,000 people. Nobles owned about 25 to 30 percent of the land. They played an important, and even a crucial, role in French society in the eighteenth century. They held many of the leading positions in the government, the military, the law courts, and the higher church offices. Moreover, they possessed many privileges, including tax exemptions. Like the clergy, they were exempt from the taille.

The nobles sought to expand their power at the expense of the monarchy. Many nobles said they were defending liberty by resisting the arbitrary actions of the monarchy. They also sought to keep their control over positions in the military, the Church, and the government.

The Third Estate, or the commoners of society, made up the overwhelming majority of the French population. Unlike the First and Second Estates, the Third Estate was divided by vast differences in occupation, level of education, and wealth.

The peasants, who constituted 75 to 80 percent of the total population, were by far the largest segment of the Third Estate. As a group, they owned about 35 to 40 percent of the land. However, landholdings varied from area to area, and over half of the peasants had little or no land on which to survive.

Serfdom no longer existed on any large scale in France, but French peasants still had obligations to their local landlords that they deeply resented. These relics of feudalism, or aristocratic privileges, were obligations that survived from an earlier age. They included the payment of fees for the use of village facilities such as the flour mill, community oven, and winepress, as well as contributions to the clergy.

Another part of the Third Estate consisted of skilled craftspeople, shopkeepers, and other wage earners in the cities. In the eighteenth century, a rise in consumer prices that was greater than the increase in wages left these urban groups with a decline in buying power. The struggle for survival led many of these people to play an important role in the revolution, especially in Paris.

The bourgeoisie (BURZH-WAH-ZEE), or middle class, was another part of the Third Estate. This group included about 8 percent of the population, or 2.3 million people. They owned about 20 to 25 percent of the land. This group included merchants, bankers, and industrialists, as well as professional people—lawyers, holders of public offices, doctors, and writers.

The Three Estates in Pre-Revolutionary France

![The Three Estates in Pre-Revolutionary France](image)

Population

Land ownership

Taxation

First Estate: Clergy

Second Estate: Nobility

Third Estate: Commoners

**Graph Skills**

The Third Estate included peasants, craftspeople, and the bourgeoisie. In the Third Estate, peasants owned about 40 percent of the land in France, and the bourgeoisie owned about 25 percent.

1. **Drawing Inferences** From looking at these circle graphs, what inferences can you draw about why a revolution occurred in France?
Members of the middle class were unhappy with the privileges held by nobles. At the same time, they shared a great deal with the nobility. Indeed, by obtaining public offices, wealthy middle-class individuals could enter the ranks of the nobility. In the eighteenth century, thousands of new noble families were created.

In addition, both aristocrats and members of the bourgeoisie were drawn to the new political ideas of the Enlightenment. Both groups were increasingly upset with a monarchical system resting on privileges and on an old and rigid social order. The opposition of these elites to the old order ultimately led them to drastic action against the monarchy.

**Financial Crisis** Social conditions, then, formed a long-range background to the French Revolution. The immediate cause of the revolution was the near collapse of government finances.

The French economy, although it had been expanding for 50 years, suffered periodic crises. Bad harvests in 1787 and 1788 and a slowdown in manufacturing led to food shortages, rising prices for food, and unemployment. The number of poor, estimated by some at almost one-third of the population, reached crisis proportions on the eve of the revolution.

An English traveler noted the misery of the poor in the countryside: "All the country girls and women are without shoes or stockings; and the plowmen at their work have neither shoes nor stockings to their feet. This is a poverty that strikes at the root of national prosperity."

In spite of these economic problems, the French government continued to spend enormous sums on costly wars and court luxuries. The queen, Marie Antoinette, was especially known for her extravagance. The government had also spent large amounts to help the American colonists against Britain.

On the verge of a complete financial collapse, the government of Louis XVI was finally forced to call a meeting of the Estates-General to raise new taxes. This was the French parliament, and it had not met since 1614.

**Reading Check** Identifying What groups were part of the Third Estate?

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**From Estates-General to National Assembly**

The Estates-General was composed of representatives from the three orders of French society. The First and Second Estates had about three hundred delegates each. The Third Estate had almost six hundred delegates, most of whom were lawyers from French towns. To fix France's financial problems, most members of the Third Estate wanted to set up a constitutional government that would abolish the tax exemptions of the clergy and nobility.

The meeting of the Estates-General opened at Versailles on May 5, 1789. It was troubled from the start with a problem about voting. Traditionally, each estate had one vote. That meant that the First and Second Estates together could outvote the Third Estate two to one.

The Third Estate demanded that each deputy have one vote. With the help of a few nobles and clerics, that would give the Third Estate a majority. The king, however, declared he was in favor of the current system, in which each estate had one vote.

The Third Estate reacted quickly. On June 17, 1789, it called itself a National Assembly and decided to draft a constitution. Three days later, on June 20, the deputies of the Third Estate arrived at their meeting place, only to find the doors locked.

The deputies then moved to a nearby indoor tennis court and swore that they would continue to meet...
until they had produced a French constitution. The oath they swore is known as the Tennis Court Oath.

Louis XVI prepared to use force against the Third Estate. The common people, however, saved the Third Estate from the king’s forces. On July 14, a mob of Parisians stormed the Bastille (ba • STEEL), an armory and prison in Paris, and dismantled it, brick by brick. Paris was abandoned to the rebels.

Louis XVI was soon informed that he could no longer trust the royal troops. Royal authority had collapsed. Louis XVI could enforce his will no more. The fall of the Bastille had saved the National Assembly.

At the same time, popular revolutions broke out throughout France, both in the cities and in the countryside. A growing hatred of the entire landholding system, with its fees and obligations, led to the popular uprisings.

Peasant rebellions took place throughout France and became part of the Great Fear, a vast panic that spread quickly through France in the summer of 1789. Citizens, fearing invasion by foreign troops that would support the French monarchy, formed militias.

### Reading Check
Examining Why did the Third Estate object to each estate’s having one vote in the Estates-General?

#### The Destruction of the Old Regime

The peasant revolts and fear of foreign troops had a strong effect on the National Assembly, which was meeting in Versailles. One of the assembly’s first acts was to destroy the relics of feudalism, or aristocratic privileges. On the night of August 4, 1789, the National Assembly voted to abolish the rights of landlords, as well as the financial privileges of nobles and clergy.

#### Declaration of the Rights of Man
On August 26, the National Assembly adopted the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen. Inspired by the American Declaration of Independence and Constitution, and the English Bill of Rights, this charter of basic liberties began with a ringing affirmation of “the natural and imprescriptible rights of man” to “liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression.”

Reflecting Enlightenment thought, the declaration went on to proclaim freedom and equal rights for all men, access to public office based on talent, and an end to exemptions from taxation. All citizens were to have the right to take part in the making of laws. Freedom of speech and the press were affirmed.
The declaration also raised an important issue. Did its ideal of equal rights for all men also include women? Many deputies insisted that it did, provided that, as one said, “women do not hope to exercise political rights and functions.”

Olympe de Gouges, a woman who wrote plays and pamphlets, refused to accept this exclusion of women from political rights. Echoing the words of the official declaration, she penned a Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen. In it, she insisted that women should have all the same rights as men.

She wrote:

Believing that ignorance, omission, or scorn for the rights of woman are the only causes of public misfortunes and of the corruption of governments, the women have resolved to set forth in a solemn declaration the natural, inalienable, and sacred rights of woman in order that this declaration, constantly exposed before all the members of the society, will ceaselessly remind them of their rights and duties.

The National Assembly ignored her demands. (See page 995 to read excerpts from Olympe de Gouges’s Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen in the Primary Sources Library.)

The King Concedes In the meantime, Louis XVI had remained at Versailles. He refused to accept the National Assembly’s decrees on the abolition of feudalism and the Declaration of Rights. On October 5, however, thousands of Parisian women—described by one eyewitness as “detachments of women coming up from every direction, armed with broomsticks, lances, pitchforks, swords, pistols and muskets”—marched to Versailles. A delegation of the women met with Louis XVI and described how their children were starving from a lack of bread. They forced the king to accept the new decrees.

The crowd now insisted that the royal family return to Paris to show the king’s support of the National Assembly. On October 6, the family journeyed to Paris. As a goodwill gesture, Louis XVI brought along wagonloads of flour from the palace.

A National Holiday

The French Revolution gave rise to the concept of the modern nation-state. With the development of the modern state came the celebration of one day a year as a national holiday—usually called Independence Day. The national holiday is a day that has special significance in the history of the nation-state.

In France, the fall of the Bastille on July 14, 1789, has been celebrated ever since as the beginning of the French nation-state. Independence Day in the United States is celebrated on July 4. On July 4, 1776, the Second Continental Congress approved the Declaration of Independence.

In Norway, people celebrate Constitution Day as a national holiday on May 17. On that day in 1814, Norway received a constitution, although it did not gain its independence from Sweden until 1905.

Most Latin American countries became independent of Spain or Portugal in the early nineteenth century. Mexico, for example, celebrates its Independence Day on September 16 with a colorful festival. On September 16, 1810, a crowd of local people attacked Spanish authorities in a small village north of Mexico City. They were crushed, but their action eventually led to Mexico’s independence from Spanish control in 1821.

Most nations in Africa and Asia gained their independence from Western colonial powers after World War II. India celebrates Independence Day on August 15. On that day in 1947, India won its independence from the British Empire.

Comparing Cultures

Every nation celebrates its Independence Day with different kinds of festivities. For example, in the United States, many people have barbecues and watch fireworks displays. Choose two other nations and research how each nation and its people celebrate their Independence Day. Create an illustrated poster or chart showing your results.
area of peasant revolt (early 1789)

Once the revolution was underway, the king remained at Versailles. On October 5, 1789, thousands of women marched to Versailles and persuaded Louis to return to Paris with his family. Louis later tried to escape from France in 1791 but was captured at Varennes and returned to Paris. What happened to the royal family after their capture?

Church Reforms
Because the Catholic Church was seen as an important pillar of the old order, it too was subject to change. Because of the need for money, the National Assembly seized and sold the lands of the Church.

The Church was also secularized. A new Civil Constitution of the Clergy was put into effect. Both bishops and priests were to be elected by the people and paid by the state. The French government now controlled the Church. Many Catholics became enemies of the revolution.

A New Constitution and New Fears
The National Assembly completed a new constitution, the Constitution of 1791, which set up a limited monarchy. According to the constitution, there would still be a king, but a Legislative Assembly would make the laws.

The Assembly was to consist of 755 representatives. The way they were to be chosen ensured that only the more affluent members of society would be elected. Though all male citizens had the same rights, only men over 25 who paid a specified amount in taxes could vote.
By 1791, the old order had been destroyed. However, many people—including Catholic priests, nobles, lower classes hurt by a rise in the cost of living, and radicals who wanted more drastic solutions—opposed the new order. Louis XVI also made things difficult for the new government. He attempted to flee France in June 1791. He almost succeeded but was recognized, captured, and brought back to Paris.

In this unsettled situation, with a seemingly disloyal monarch, the new Legislative Assembly held its first session in October 1791. France’s relations with the rest of Europe would soon lead to the downfall of Louis XVI.

**War with Austria** Over time, some European leaders began to fear that revolution would spread to their countries. The rulers of Austria and Prussia even threatened to use force to restore Louis XVI to full power. Insulted by this threat, the Legislative Assembly declared war on Austria in the spring of 1792.

The French fared badly in the initial fighting. A frantic search for scapegoats began. One observer noted, “Everywhere you hear the cry that the king is betraying us, the generals are betraying us, that nobody is to be trusted; ... that Paris will be taken in six weeks by the Austrians ... we are on a volcano ready to spout flames.”

**Rise of the Paris Commune** Defeats in war, coupled with economic shortages at home in the spring of 1792, led to new political demonstrations, especially against Louis XVI. In August, radical political groups in Paris, declaring themselves a commune, organized a mob attack on the royal palace and Legislative Assembly.

Members of the new Paris Commune took the king captive. They forced the Legislative Assembly to suspend the monarchy and call for a National Convention, chosen on the basis of universal male suffrage, to decide on the nation’s future form of government. (Under a system of universal male suffrage, all adult males had the right to vote.)

The French Revolution was about to enter a more radical and violent stage. Power now passed from the Assembly to the Paris Commune. Many of its members proudly called themselves the **sans-culottes**, ordinary patriots without fine clothes. (They wore long trousers instead of knee-length breeches; sans-culottes means “without breeches.”) It has become customary to equate the more radical sans-culottes with working people or the poor. However, many were small traders and better-off artisans who were the elite of their neighborhoods.

**Reading Check** Evaluating: What was the significance of the Constitution of 1791?

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**TAKS Practice**

**SECTION ASSESSMENT**

**Checking for Understanding**

1. **Define**
   - estate, relics of feudalism, bourgeoisie, sans-culottes.
2. **Identify**
   - Louis XVI, Tennis Court Oath, Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen, Olympe de Gouges.
3. **Locate**
   - Versailles, Paris, Austria, Prussia.
4. **Explain**
   - why the Catholic Church was targeted for reform.
5. **List**
   - the reasons for the near collapse of government finances in France.

**Critical Thinking**

6. **Summarize**
   - What were the main affirmations of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen?
7. **Organizing Information**
   - Equality was one of the slogans of the French Revolution. In a web diagram, identify five occasions when different groups expressed concern for equality during the revolution.

**Analyzing Visuals**

8. **Examine**
   - the painting of the Tennis Court Oath shown on page 550. How does David’s painting reflect the ideals of the French Revolution?

9. **Persuasive Writing**
   - Olympe de Gouges wrote, “Ignorance, omission, or scorn for the rights of woman are the only causes of public misfortune and corruption of governments.” Do you agree or disagree? Write a paragraph supporting your point of view.
Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen

ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS of the French Revolution, the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen, was adopted in August 1789 by the National Assembly.

The representatives of the French people, organized as a national assembly, considering that ignorance, neglect, and scorn of the rights of man are the sole causes of public misfortunes and of corruption of governments, have resolved to display in a solemn declaration the natural, inalienable, and sacred rights of man, so that this declaration, constantly in the presence of all members of society, will continually remind them of their rights and their duties... Consequently, the National Assembly recognizes and declares, in the presence and under the auspices of the Supreme Being, the following rights of man and citizen:

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 natural... 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....
6. The law is the expression of the general will; all citizens have the right to concur personally or through their representatives in its formation; it must be the same for all, whether it protects or punishes.
7. No man can be accused, arrested, or detained except in cases determined by the law, and according to the forms which it has prescribed....
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, and print....
16. Any society in which guarantees of rights are not assured nor the separation of powers determined has no constitution.

—Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen

Analyzing Primary Sources

1. According to this document, what are the natural, inalienable rights of man?
2. According to this document, can a person be arrested or otherwise “disturbed” because of his religious beliefs?
3. How do the rights listed in number 2 of the document compare to the rights listed in the U.S. Bill of Rights?
Section 2

Radical Revolution and Reaction

Guide to Reading

Main Ideas
- Radical groups and leaders controlled the Revolution.
- The new French Republic faced enemies at home and abroad.

Key Terms
- faction, elector, coup d'état

People to Identify
- Georges Danton, Jean-Paul Marat, Jacobins, Maximilien Robespierre

Places to Locate
- Lyon, Nantes, Austrian Netherlands

Preview Questions
1. Why did a coalition of European countries take up arms against France? 2. Why did the Reign of Terror occur?

Reading Strategy
Summarizing Information
As you read the section, list in a table like the one shown below the actions taken by the National Convention.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actions taken by the National Convention</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
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Preview of Events

<table>
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<tr>
<th>1792</th>
<th>1793</th>
<th>1794</th>
<th>1795</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Convention splits into factions</td>
<td>King Louis XVI is executed</td>
<td>Reign of Terror ends</td>
<td>New constitution is created</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Voices from the Past

Henry de Fermont reported on the major event of January 21, 1793:

"The path leading to the scaffold was extremely rough and difficult to pass; the King was obliged to lean on my arm, and from the slowness with which he proceeded, I feared for a moment that his courage might fail; but what was my astonishment, when arrived at the last step, he suddenly let go of my arm, and I saw him cross with a firm foot the breadth of the whole scaffold; and in a loud voice, I heard him pronounce distinctly these words: 'I die innocent of all the crimes laid to my charge; I pardon those who had occasioned my death; and I pray to God that the blood you are going to shed may never be visited on France.'"

—Eyewitness to History, John Carey, ed., 1987

The execution of King Louis XVI in 1793 pushed the French Revolution into a new radical stage.

The Move to Radicalism

The Paris Commune had forced the Legislative Assembly to call a National Convention. Before the Convention met, the Paris Commune dominated the political scene. Led by the newly appointed minister of justice, Georges Danton, the sans-culottes sought revenge on those who had aided the king and resisted the popular will. Thousands of people were arrested and then massacred.
leaders of the people emerged, including Jean-Paul Marat, who published a radical journal called Friend of the People.

The Fate of the King In September 1792, the newly elected National Convention began its sessions. Although it had been called to draft a new constitution, it also acted as the sovereign ruling body of France.

The Convention was dominated by lawyers, professionals, and property owners. Two-thirds of its deputies were under the age of 45. Almost all had had political experience as a result of the revolution. Almost all distrusted the king. It was therefore no surprise that the National Convention’s first major step on September 21 was to abolish the monarchy and establish a republic, the French Republic.

That, however, was as far as members of the convention could agree. They soon split into factions (dissenting groups) over the fate of the king. The two most important factions were the Girondins (juh-RAHN-duhns) and the Mountain. Both factions were members of the Jacobin (Jah-kuh-buhn) club, a large network of political groups throughout France. The Girondins represented the provinces, areas outside the cities. Girondins feared the radical mobs in Paris and leaned toward keeping the king alive. The Mountain represented the interests of radicals in the city of Paris.

The Mountain won at the beginning of 1793 when it convinced the National Convention to pass a decree condemning Louis XVI to death. On January 21, 1793, the king was beheaded on the guillotine. Revolutionaries had adopted this machine because it killed quickly and, they believed, humanely. The execution of the king created new enemies for the revolution, both at home and abroad. A new crisis was at hand.

Crises and Response Disputes between Girondins and the Mountain were only one aspect of France’s domestic crisis in 1792 and 1793. Within Paris, the local government—the Commune—favored radical change and put constant pressure on the National Convention to adopt ever more radical positions. Moreover, the National Convention itself did not have the power to rule all of France. Peasants in western France as well as inhabitants of France’s major provincial cities refused to accept the authority of the National Convention.

People In History

Jean-Paul Marat
1743–1793
French revolutionary

Jean-Paul Marat was a popular revolutionary leader in Paris at the beginning of the radical stage of the French Revolution. Born in Switzerland, he practiced medicine in London before returning to France in 1777. Marat was an intense man, always in a hurry. “I allot only two of the twenty-four hours to sleep. I have not had fifteen minutes play in over three years.” He often worked in the bathtub because the water soothed the pain of a severe skin disorder.

In his journal, Friend of the People, Marat expressed his ideas, which were radical for his time. He called for mob violence and the right of the poor to take by force whatever they needed from the rich. He helped make the Jacobins more radical, especially by condemning the Girondins. This also led to his death. Charlotte Corday, a Girondin, stabbed him to death in his bathtub.

Maximilien Robespierre
1758–1794
French revolutionary

Robespierre was one of the most important French revolutionary leaders. He received a law degree and later became a member of the National Convention, where he preached democracy and advocated universal suffrage (the right to vote) for all adult males. He lived simply and was known to be extremely honest. In fact, he was often known as “The Incorruptible.” A believer in Rousseau’s social contract idea, Robespierre thought that anyone opposed to being governed by the general will, as he interpreted it, should be executed.

One observer said of Robespierre, “That man will go far, he believes all that he says.” Robespierre himself said, “How can one reproach a man who has trust on his side?” His eagerness and passion in pursuing the Reign of Terror frightened many people. Eventually, he was arrested and guillotined.
A foreign crisis also loomed large. The execution of Louis XVI had outraged the royalty of most of Europe. An informal coalition of Austria, Prussia, Spain, Portugal, Britain, and the Dutch Republic took up arms against France. The French armies began to fall back.

By late spring of 1793, the coalition was poised for an invasion of France. If successful, both the revolution and the revolutionaries would be destroyed, and the old regime would be reestablished. The revolution had reached a decisive moment.

To meet these crises, the National Convention gave broad powers to a special committee of 12 known as the Committee of Public Safety. It was dominated at first by Georges Danton, then by Maximilien Robespierre.

**The Reign of Terror**

For roughly a year during 1793 and 1794, the Committee of Public Safety took control. The committee acted to defend France from foreign and domestic threats.

To meet the crisis at home, the National Convention and the Committee of Public Safety set in motion an effort that came to be known as the **Reign of Terror**. Revolutionary courts were set up to prosecute internal enemies of the revolutionary republic. During the course of the Reign of Terror, close to 40,000 people were killed. Of those, 16,000 people, including Marie Antoinette and Olympe de Gouges, died under the blade of the guillotine. Peasants and persons who had opposed the sans-culottes were among the victims. Most executions were held in places that had openly rebelled against the authority of the National Convention.
Crushing Rebellion  Revolutionary armies were set up to bring rebellious cities back under the control of the National Convention. The Committee of Public Safety decided to make an example of Lyon. Some 1,880 citizens of that city were executed. When guillotining proved too slow, grapeshot (a cluster of small iron balls) was used to shoot the condemned into open graves. A German observer noted the terror of the scene:

Whole ranges of houses, always the most handsome, burnt. The churches, convents, and all the dwellings of the former patricians were in ruins. When I came to the guillotine, the blood of those who had been executed a few hours beforehand was still running in the street... I said to a group of sans-culottes that it would be decent to clear away all this human blood. Why should it be cleared? one of them said to me: It's the blood of aristocrats and rebels. The dogs should lick it up."

In western France, too, revolutionary armies were brutal in defeating rebel armies. The commander of the revolutionary army ordered that no mercy be given: "The road is strewn with corpses. Women, priests, monks, children, all have been put to death. I have spared nobody." Perhaps the most notorious act of violence occurred in Nantes, where victims were executed by being sunk in barges in the Loire River. People from all classes were killed during the Terror. Clergy and nobles made up about 15 percent of the victims, while the rest were from the bourgeois and peasant classes. The Committee of Public Safety held that all this bloodletting was only temporary. Once the war and domestic crisis were over, the true "Republic of Virtue" would follow, and the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen would be fully realized.

The Republic of Virtue  Along with the terror, the Committee of Public Safety took other steps both to control France and to create a new order, called by
Robespierre the Republic of Virtue—a democratic republic composed of good citizens. In the new French Republic, the titles “citizen” and “citizenship” had replaced “mister” and “madame.” Women wore long dresses inspired by the clothing worn in the great republic of ancient Rome.

By spring 1793, the Committee was sending “representatives on mission” as agents of the central government to all parts of France to implement laws dealing with the wartime emergency. A law aimed at primary education for all was passed but not widely implemented. Slavery was abolished in France’s colonies.

The committee also attempted to provide some economic controls by establishing price limits on goods considered necessities, ranging from food and drink to fuel and clothing. The controls failed to work very well, since the government lacked the machinery to enforce them.

In 1789, it had been a group of women who convinced Louis XVI to return to Paris from Versailles. Women remained actively involved in the revolution, even during its more radical stage. Women observed sessions of the National Convention and made their demands known to those in charge. In 1793, two women founded the Society for Revolutionary Republican Women. This Parisian group, which was mainly composed of working-class women, stood ready to defend the new French Republic. Many men, however, continued to believe that women should not participate in political or military affairs.

In its attempts to create a new order that reflected its belief in reason, the National Convention pursued a policy of dechristianization. The word “saint” was removed from street names, churches were pillaged and closed by revolutionary armies, and priests were encouraged to marry. In Paris, the cathedral of Notre Dame was designated a “temple of reason.”

The reaction against the Reign of Terror was a disaster. One good example is Marc-Antoine Jullien. At 18, he had been an assistant to Robespierre. After the execution of Robespierre, he was hunted down and put in prison for two years.

While in prison, Jullien wrote a diary expressing the hardships of a young revolutionary who had grown old before his time. He wrote: “I was born in a volcano, I lived in the midst of its eruption. I will be buried in its lava.” He expressed his pain: “My life is a dark and terrible story, but one that is touching and educational for inexperienced youth.”

When Jullien was released from prison, he wrote, “I am leaving, I never wish to see Paris again, I want cows and milk. I am twenty-one years old, may the dawn of my life no longer be clouded by dark images.”

Disillusioned by his troubles, Jullien came to long for a savior who would restore the freedom of the republic. When Napoleon came along, he believed that he had found his savior.

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**Connecting to the Past**

1. **Examine** Why did the National Convention choose to open a school dedicated to training patriots? Are there comparable schools in the United States today?

2. **Writing about History** Marc-Antoine Jullien lived during troubled times. In the world today, many young people are undergoing similar experiences. Research an area of political unrest. Write a one-page paper describing the effect of that unrest on a person your age.
November 1793, a public ceremony dedicated to the worship of reason was held in the former cathedral. Patriotic maidens in white dresses paraded before a temple of reason where the high altar had once stood.

Another example of dechristianization was the adoption of a new calendar. Years would no longer be numbered from the birth of Christ but from September 22, 1792—the first day of the French Republic. The calendar contained 12 months. Each month consisted of three 10-day weeks, with the tenth day of each week a day of rest. This eliminated Sundays and Sunday worship services, as well as church holidays.

The anti-Christian purpose of the calendar was reinforced in the naming of the months of the year. The months were given names that were supposed to invoke the seasons, the temperature, or the state of the vegetation (for example, the month of Vendémiaire, or “seed time”). As Robespierre came to realize, however, dechristianization failed to work because France was still overwhelmingly Catholic.

End of the Terror

By the summer of 1794, the French had largely defeated their foreign foes. There was less need for the Reign of Terror, but it continued nonetheless. Robespierre, who had become very powerful, was obsessed with ridding France of all its corrupt elements. Only then could the Republic of Virtue follow.

Many deputies in the National Convention feared Robespierre decided to act. They gathered enough votes to condemn him, and Robespierre was guillotined on July 28, 1794.

After the death of Robespierre, revolutionary fervor began to cool. The Jacobins lost power and more moderate middle-class leaders took control. Much to the relief of many in France, the Reign of Terror came to a halt.

In less than a year, the French revolutionary government had raised a huge army. By September 1794, it was over one million. The republic’s army was the largest ever seen in European history. It pushed the allies invading France back across the Rhine and even conquered the Austrian Netherlands.

The French revolutionary army was an important step in the creation of modern nationalism. Previously, wars had been fought between governments or ruling dynasties by relatively small armies of professional soldiers. The new French army was the creation of a people’s government. Its wars were people’s wars. When dynastic wars became people’s wars, however, warfare became more destructive.
The Eighteenth of Brumaire by Francois Douchot

This painting depicts Napoleon's coup d'état, November 10, 1799. What factors helped Napoleon (shown center) overthrow the Directory?

Proposed laws. The 750 members of the two legislative bodies were chosen by electors (individuals qualified to vote in an election). The electors had to be owners or renters of property worth a certain amount, a requirement that limited their number to 30,000.

From a list presented by the Council of 500, the Council of Elders elected five directors to act as the executive committee, or Directory. The Directory, together with the legislature, ruled. The period of the revolution under the government of the Directory (1795-1799) was an era of corruption and graft. People reacted against the sufferings and sacrifices that had been demanded in the Reign of Terror. Some of them made fortunes in property by taking advantage of the government's severe money problems.

At the same time, the government of the Directory was faced with political enemies. Royalists who desired the restoration of the monarchy, as well as radicals unhappy with the turn toward moderation, plotted against the government. The Directory was unable to find a solution to the country's continuing economic problems. In addition, it was still carrying on wars left from the Committee of Public Safety.

Increasingly, the Directory relied on the military to maintain its power. In 1799, a coup d'état (KO0 day-TAH), a sudden overthrow of the government, led by the successful and popular general Napoleon Bonaparte, toppled the Directory. Napoleon seized power.

Reading Check
Describe the government that replaced the National Convention.

SECTION 2 ASSESSMENT

Checking for Understanding
1. Define faction, elector, coup d'état.
2. Identify Georges Danton, Jean-Paul Marat, Jacobins, Committee of Public Safety, Maximilien Robespierre, Reign of Terror.
4. Explain both the similarities and the differences between the Girondins and the Mountain.
5. List the members of the informal coalition that took up arms against France. What was the result of this conflict?

Critical Thinking
6. Drawing Conclusions Did the French Republic live up to the revolution's ideals of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity? Write a paragraph in support of your opinion.
7. Contrasting Information Using a table like the one below, contrast the changes in French governmental policy during and after Robespierre's possession of power.

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Analyzing Visuals
8. Examine the painting shown on page 557. Explain whether or not you think this is a realistic depiction of Marie Antoinette before her execution, or whether the artist is promoting a particular version of her death.

Writing About History
9. Expository Writing Propaganda is the spreading of information for the purpose of helping or injuring a cause. How does the decree of universal mobilization quoted on page 560 fit the definition of propaganda? Use examples from the decree to support your argument in an essay.
Glencoeworld history

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