

WORLD HISTORY READERS

Level 3-6

The French Revolution

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Seed
Learning

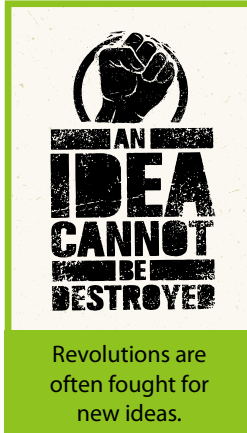
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What Is a Revolution?



Have you ever heard the word *revolution*? A revolution happens when the people are angry with their government.

The people want to change the way their country is run. They usually want a different political system.

Ordinary people rising up in a revolution



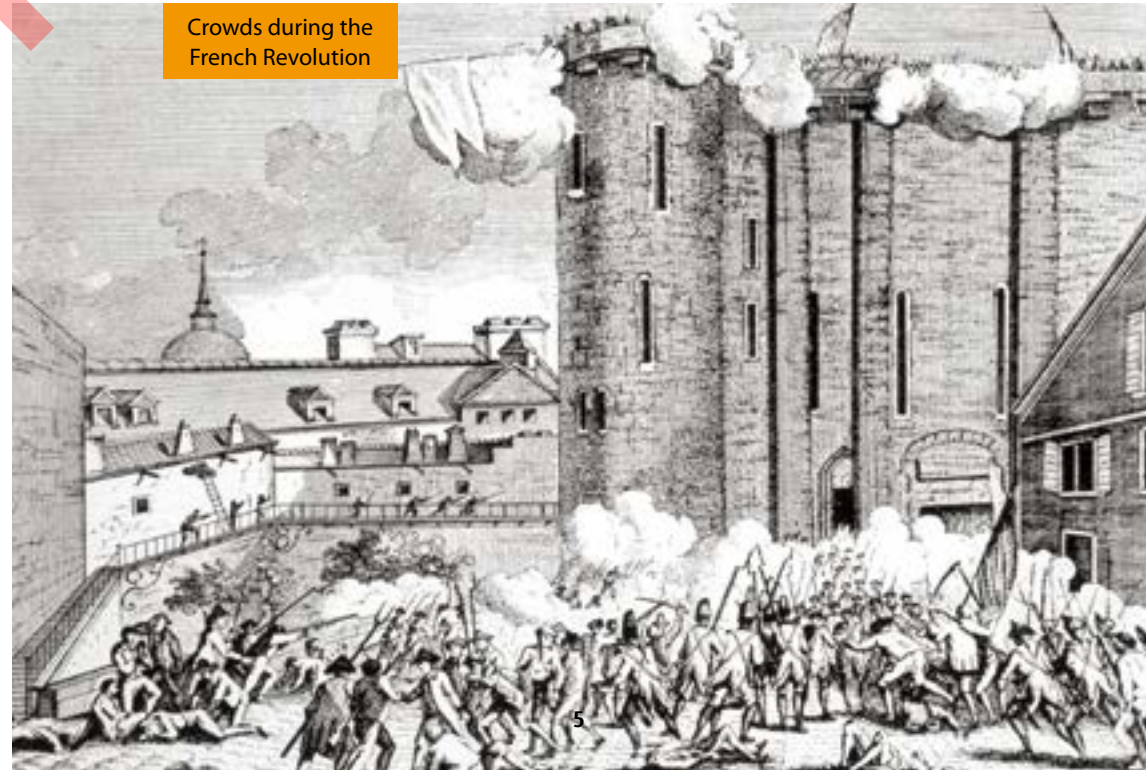
The French Revolution

The French Revolution (1789-1799) was probably the most important revolution of all time. It is an amazing story with lots of dramatic moments. It was also quite extreme.



A poster about a revolution

Crowds during the French Revolution



The King and Queen

In the 18th century, France was a monarchy. This meant that the king or queen made all the important decisions for everyone. The ordinary people had no power.

In the 1780s, the French king and queen were Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette. They were very rich and lived in a huge palace in a town called Versailles.



Hungry People

At that time, France was in a lot of trouble. It owed a lot of money to other countries. The price of bread was going up and up. Many of the ordinary people were very hungry.

King Louis XVI did not know what to do. He called a meeting with many important people to advise him about the problem. The meeting was at Versailles.



Hungry farmers before the revolution



Queen Marie Antoinette

The Palace of Versailles

The Hall of Mirrors where Louis XVI wanted to meet the people





Maximilien de Robespierre (1758-1794)



A stamp showing Maximilien de Robespierre

At this meeting, some people said that the king shouldn't make all the important decisions. They wanted ordinary people to make them, instead.



Speeches during the revolution

One of the most important of the people who attended was a lawyer named Maximilien de Robespierre. Robespierre was very popular with the ordinary people.

Soon the meeting was out of the king's control. He tried to stop the meeting and locked everyone out of the hall, but it was too late!

The New Parliament

Robespierre and the other people who were at the meeting met on a tennis court. There they set up something called a parliament. A parliament is a group of people who make important decisions together as leaders of a country.

Most countries today have parliaments. However, at the time this was a very new idea. In fact, there were lots of new ideas spreading around.



A meeting of the French Parliament

Comprehension Questions

1. Who was Louis XVI?
 - (a) The queen of France
 - (b) The king of France
 - (c) A lawyer
 - (d) An ordinary person
2. A revolution is a time when people want to change...
 - (a) their jobs.
 - (b) where they live.
 - (c) their government.
 - (d) the food they eat.
3. A monarchy is a government...
 - (a) with unhappy people.
 - (b) the people don't like.
 - (c) with lots of poor people.
 - (d) with a king or queen.
4. Why was France in trouble before the revolution?
 - (a) France owed a lot of money to other countries.
 - (b) Other countries didn't like King Louis XVI.
 - (c) People were tired.
 - (d) All of the above
5. What happens in a democracy?
 - (a) People are ruled by a king.
 - (b) People march on the streets.
 - (c) People vote for their leaders.
 - (d) People fight their government.
6. What happened when the women marched to Versailles?
 - (a) They walked a long way.
 - (b) They shouted at the queen.
 - (c) The monarchy was finished.
 - (d) All of the above
7. The guillotine killed...
 - (a) people slowly.
 - (b) many people at once.
 - (c) soldiers.
 - (d) people quickly.
8. Why did the French Revolution end?
 - (a) People got tired of the fighting.
 - (b) Democracy doesn't work.
 - (c) The king returned.
 - (d) People wanted the monarchy.
9. The French Revolution...
 - (a) gave us our calendar.
 - (b) spread the ideas of democracy and equality.
 - (c) lasted for 100 years.
 - (d) taught us that all leaders are the same.
10. The French Revolution...
 - (a) has never been forgotten.
 - (b) is known by people all over the world.
 - (c) is one of the world's most important events.
 - (d) All of the above

Glossary

- **democracy** a political system in which ordinary people choose their government by voting
- **equality** the act of treating all people the same way
- **error** a mistake
- **execute** to kill someone as a legal punishment
- **fraternity** the act of showing friendship or support
- **guillotine** a device used for cutting off people's heads
- **human rights** the basic rights that every person should have, such as justice and freedom to say what you think
- **lawyer** a person whose job is to explain the law to people and give advice
- **liberty** the freedom to live, work, and travel as you want
- **march** to walk together in a large group to show agreement or disagreement
- **monarchy** a country ruled by a king or queen
- **ordinary** normal or usual
- **parliament** a group of people elected to lead a country
- **revolution** a change in the way a country is run, often using violence
- **riot** to angrily complain in the street in large groups
- **vote** to elect someone by secretly choosing them on a piece of paper or by putting your hand up