STUDY GUIDE
The French Revolution

Themes:
- The financial crisis that impelled the French monarchy to call the Estates General
- The transformation of the Estates General into the National Assembly, the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, and the reconstruction of the political and ecclesiastical institutions of France
- The second revolution, the end of the monarchy, and the turn to more radical reforms
- The war between France and the rest of Europe
- The Reign of Terror, the Thermidorian Reaction, and the establishment of the Directory

Questions to Consider about the Revolution:
1. It has been said that France was a rich nation with an impoverished government. What does this mean? How did the financial weaknesses of the French monarchy lay the foundations of the revolution of 1789?
2. Discuss the role of Louis in the French Revolution. What were some of Louis XVI’s most serious mistakes? Had Louis been a more able ruler, could the French Revolution have been avoided? Or did the revolution ultimately have little to do with the competence of the monarch?
3. How was the Estates General transformed into the National Assembly? How does the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen reflect the social and political values of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment? What were the chief ways in which France and its government were reorganized in the early years of the revolution? Why has the Civil Constitution of the Clergy been called the greatest blunder of the National Assembly?
4. Why were some political factions dissatisfied with the constitutional settlement of 1791? What was the revolution of 1792 and why did it occur? Who were the sans-culottes and how did they become a factor in the politics of the period? How influential were they during the Terror in particular? Why did the sans-culottes and the Jacobins cooperate at first? Why did that cooperation end?
5. Why did France go to war with Austria in 1792? What were the benefits and drawbacks for France of fighting an external war while in the midst of a domestic political revolution? What were the causes of the Terror? How did the rest of Europe react to the French Revolution and the Terror?
6. The motto of the French Revolution was “equality, liberty, and fraternity.” How did the revolution both support and violate this motto? Did French women benefit from the revolution? Did French peasants benefit from it?

Important Terms, People, etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Radicals</th>
<th>Moderates</th>
<th>Conservatives</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Sat on the left side of the hall; were called left-wing and said to be on the left</td>
<td>• Sat in the center of the hall and were called centrists</td>
<td>• Sat on the right side of the hall; were called right-wing and said to be on the right</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Opposed the king and the idea of a monarchy</td>
<td>• Wanted some changes in government, but not as many as the radicals</td>
<td>• Upheld the idea of a limited monarchy</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Wanted sweeping changes in government and proposed that common people have full power in republic</td>
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The Legislative Assembly

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>John Locke</th>
<th>Tennis Court oath</th>
<th>Battle of Valmy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baron de Montesquieu</td>
<td>Fall of the Bastille</td>
<td>Old Regime</td>
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<td>Jean Jacques Rousseau</td>
<td>National Constituent Assembly</td>
<td>Reign of Terror</td>
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<td>Voltaire</td>
<td>“Great Fear”</td>
<td>Maximilien Robespierre</td>
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<td>The Enlightenment</td>
<td>Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen</td>
<td>Gerorges Danton</td>
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<td>American Revolution</td>
<td>Constitution of 1791</td>
<td>Camilles Desmoullins</td>
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<td>Estates General</td>
<td>Olympe de Gouges - “levé en masse”</td>
<td>“Republic of Virtue”</td>
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<td>three estates</td>
<td>Declaration of the Rights of Women</td>
<td>Convention de de-Christianize</td>
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<tr>
<td>Louis XVI</td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>France – Feast of Supreme Being</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marie Antoinette</td>
<td>émigrés</td>
<td>Thermidore</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jacques Necker</td>
<td>flight to Varennes – Louis and family</td>
<td>Committee of Public Safety</td>
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<td>Assembly of Notables</td>
<td>Legislative Assembly</td>
<td>Thermidorian Reaction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Estates General</td>
<td>Jacobins</td>
<td>Constitution of the Year III</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Assembly</td>
<td>Girondists</td>
<td>(1795)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abbé Siéyès</td>
<td>sans-culottes</td>
<td>Directory</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Cahiers de Doléances</em> (lists of grievances)</td>
<td>Paris Commune</td>
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Main Themes:
1. The French Revolution passed through distinct stages, each of which can be found in every major revolution (**See Crane Brinton’s sheet on Stages of a revolution**).
2. Old regimes overthrown by revolution are not only corrupt and bankrupt, but incapable of defending themselves.
3. Revolutions occur in societies in which poverty is a factor, but not always extreme poverty.
4. A revolution will continue until the needs of all segments of society are met.
5. The French Revolution was a collision between a decadent aristocracy and a rising middle class.

I. Causes of the Revolution: Underlying
A. Failure of Enlightenment despots in France to satisfy all social classes.
B. Dissatisfaction with the Ancien Regime.
C. High taxation of the poor to support the luxurious lifestyle at Versailles and of the upper clergy.
D. Social class unrest --> vast social inequality (Three Estates); no real social mobility.
E. The government isolates itself from the problems of the poor. (Poor Rulers ignoring advice to revise tax system)
F. War debts --> eventual financial collapse.
G. Ideas of the Enlightenment.

I. Causes of the Revolution events: Immediate
A. Calling of the Estates General.
B. Fall of the Bastille.
C. The Great Fear

II. Phases of the Revolution:
A. absolutism --> Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette.
B. limited constitutional monarchy --> Legislative Assembly (middle class is in charge).
   -- Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen.
   -- Civil Constitution of the Clergy.
   -- Constitution of 1791.
C. First French Republic --> National Convention
   -- king and queen executed.
   -- France engaged in foreign wars against the First Coalition.
D. radical phase --> "Reign of Terror" under Robespierre
   -- Committee of Public Safety.
   -- Jacobins.
   -- Sans-culotte (revolt of the lower classes in the cities).
E. Thermidorean Reaction --> Directory
   -- weak, with little support outside of the military.
   -- government in the hands of the property owners who did nothing to relieve the problems of the lower classes (conservative reaction to the radicalism of the Terror).
F. The Consulate --> "enlightened" despotism of Napoleon Bonaparte

III. Results of the French Revolution:
A. Democratic ideals established --> Liberte, Egalite, Fraternite!
B. Intensified French nationalism.
C. The French Revolution influenced peoples throughout the world.
D. A society and a political structure based on rank and birth had given way to one based on civil equality.
E. Representation was established as a principle of practical politics.
F. Eliminated feudal obligations of peasants, destroyed guilds, and other obstacles to the growth of French industry and agriculture.

Questions to consider about Napoleon:
1. What made Napoleon such a successful military commander?
2. How does Napoleon come to power in France? What positions does he hold?
3. What were the Napoleonic reforms and why are they significant?
4. Briefly trace the battles of the Third Coalition and why they are significant?
5. What was the Continental System and why is it important?
6. Why does Napoleon invade Russia and what are the consequences of that invasion?
7. How is Napoleon finally removed from power?