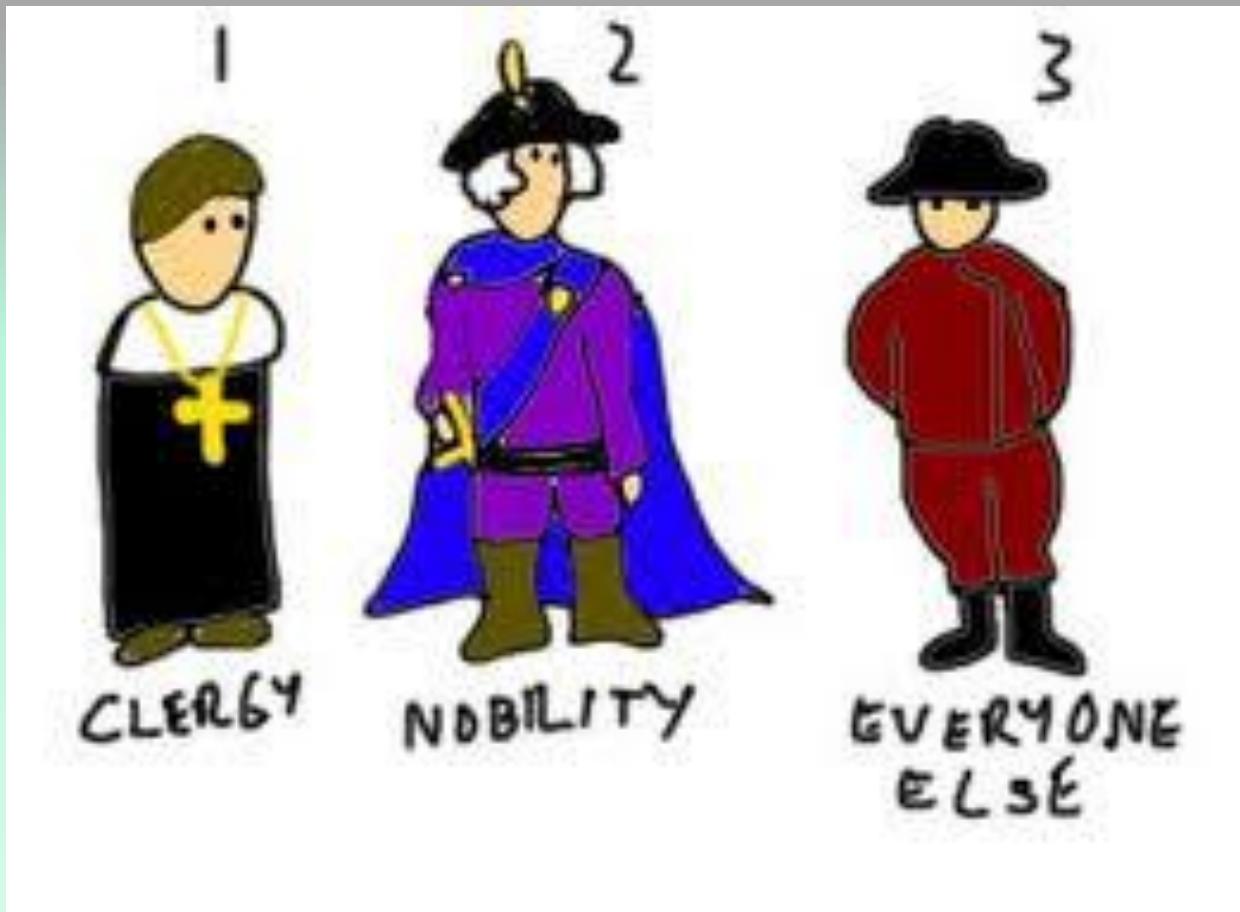




# The French Revolution

# Estates



# The Old Regime

- France consisted of three social classes called estates.
- **The First Estate.**
  - The Catholic Church (Archbishops, bishops)
  - The Church owned 10% of France
  - The French Clergy paid no direct taxes to the French Government.
  - They instead gave the government 2% as a “Free Gift”.
  - The Priests on the other hand were as poor as the peasants.

# The Old Regime continued..

- **The Second Estate.**
  - Less than 2% of the total population.
  - However, they owned 20% of the land.
  - They held high offices in the Army, government, and the courts.
  - They had the privilege of paying no taxes.
  - The refusal to pay taxes was a major reason for the revolution.

# The Old Regime cont.

- 98% of France's population made up the Third Estate.
- There were three sub-groups in the Third Estate.
  - The city-dwelling middle class called the bourgeoisie.
  - The city-dwelling lower class.
  - Farmers/Peasants
- The **bourgeoisie** was made up of doctors, lawyers, bankers, merchants and shopkeepers
  - Very well educated
  - However, politically they were no different from the peasants.

# The Third Estate

- Lower Class city-dwellers
  - This class was made up of day laborers, butchers, brewers, weavers, cooks and servants.  
*(Sans-Culottes)*
  - Very poor, uneducated, simple folks who just wanted to live their lives and have a little food on the table.
  - Many of the poor ate three pounds of bread a day and nothing else.
  - In 1788, the price of bread doubled due to poor harvests.

# The Third Estate

- Last group in the third estate was the peasants.
  - Made up 4/5 of France's 26 million people.
  - Paid almost 50% in taxes and feudal dues.
  - Had to serve a *Corvée*, which was a “work tax” in which peasants will serve a certain number of days working for the local government/noble.

# Reasons for the Revolution (1)

## Louis XVI

- Became king in 1774 to the most extravagant royal household in the world!
- He had the people's well-being in mind, however he was not a good leader and lacking in initiative.
- Married to Marie Antoinette, who was very unpopular with the French people.



# Reason for the Revolution (2)

- Enlightenment Ideals
  - Rousseau: The General Will of the People should guide the government.
  - Voltaire: In his novel *Candide*, he points out the foolishness of noble birth.
  - Baron de. Montesquieu: Separation of the powers of the government.

# Reasons for the Revolution (3)

- The National Debt of France.
  - The national debt of France would be equivalent to 8 billion dollars today.
  - ½ of payments to the national debt went to pay interest.
  - The debt came from helping the American Revolution in 1776.
  - France was fast approaching bankruptcy.

# The Estate's General

- Louis XVI hoped to avoid bankruptcy by taxing the nobles.
- The nobles refused to pay taxes unless Louis XVI called a meeting of the Estates General.
- This meeting had not been used since 1614. (That's 175 years without a meeting of the representatives of France!)

# The Estate's General

- All three estates met at Versailles in May of 1789.
- The first and second estates dominated the Estates General in the Middle Ages and expected to do so again in 1789 because the estates in the past each received one vote and the three estates meet in separately.

# The Estate's General

- The first two estates still expected to dominate the Estates General in 1789.
- In this case the two estates could always outvote the third estate even though the 610 members of the third estate outnumber the first and second estate combined (591).
- Third Estate wished to vote by individual.

# The Estate's General

- King Louis XVI sided with the clergy and the nobles and ordered the estates to follow the old rules.
- Seeing that no change would actually take place as long as the king, 1<sup>st</sup>, and 2<sup>nd</sup> estate were in control, the representatives of the third estates were becoming more and more determined to take power.

# The National Assembly

- The Third Estate was hoping for reform the government and to make needed changes.
- Louis tried to make the Third Estate go away by locking the doors of their meeting hall. They went to a nearby tennis court and took an oath not to disband until they had a constitution. (**Tennis Court Oath**)
- The Third Estate now called themselves the National Assembly and invited the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> Estates to join them.

# The Bastille

- Louis the XVI now had to decide to support the National Assembly or to try to disband it.
- After a brief hesitation, Louis XVI ordered federal troops to march toward Paris.
- Mobs in the street responded to this by storming the Bastille (a gunpowder fortress/prison) in order to obtain weapons to protect the National Assembly from the king's army.

# The March of the Women

- The falling of the Bastille forced Louis XVI to abandon the idea of using force to control the National Assembly.
- Months later, thousands of poor women marched to Versailles and forced the Royal Family to Paris by demanding food.
- This was the turning point...
  - the King and government are moved to Paris, where mobs are forming and political agitators are everywhere.

# Reform

- The storming of the Bastille saved the National Assembly and doomed the Old Regime.
- Late in the summer of 1789, the National Assembly voted to end feudalism, mandatory tithes and special privileges of the nobles and the clergy.
- It also passed the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen.*

# Flight to Varennes

- Before the new constitution was passed by the National Assembly, Louis and his family tried to flee France to join up with other nobles that opposed the revolution.
- The escape failed, and this did not help Louis' popularity.
- Louis, now viewed with suspicion by the people and the government, agrees to the constitution.

# Reform

- In the next two years, the National Assembly passed more than 2,000 new laws.
- In 1791, France had it's first constitution based on a separation of powers.
- An elected assembly became the legislative branch. A system of courts acted as a judicial branch, and the King was the executive branch.
- The people finally had a say in their government.

# The Second French Revolution (1792)

- Prussia and Austria support the restoration of the king.
- Prussian and Austrian armies attack France and the revolution is in peril of the absolute monarchy being restored by foreign powers.
- Radical reformers wanted to remove the King and establish a new republic based on Virtue.
- Meanwhile, angry mobs attacked the new government and the royal family becomes prisoners of the new government.

# Reform and Terror

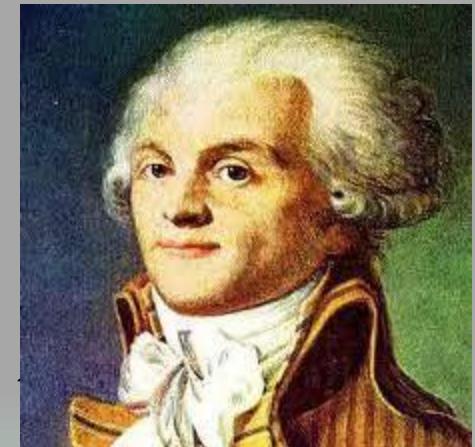
- The National Convention is created and abolished the Constitution of 1791 and France became a republic (Constitution of 1793).
- The National Convention places the radicals (Liberals/ Left) in control of the Government. They want to break completely with the old ways and social classes, allow universal suffrage, and even create a new calendar and bring the church under the control of the government.

# The National Convention

- King Louis XVI is put on trial and sentenced to be executed.
  - He is guillotined, the new, “enlightened” and humane form of execution.
- The Convention reorganizes the government of France, creates a new calendar (based on the dates of the Revolution), and takes radical steps to fight the war and ensures the safety of the new government from “internal enemies.”



# Robespierre



- In 1789 Robespierre was a delegate to Estates-General, the representative assembly.
- The **Jacobin Club** was an extremist group that advocated exile or death for the nobility and royalty.
- Slowly they are put into positions of power and the Revolution enters its bloody phase.

# Robespierre

- Robespierre was a young lawyer and member of the Bourgeoisie.
- He was a great admirer of the teaching of Rousseau, that the people are the voice of the government.
- He led the Committee of Public Safety whose task it was to keep the revolution safe and determine who the enemies were – and execute them.

# The Terror

- Robespierre unleashed a reign of terror to destroy his enemies in France.
- As many as 40,000 people were executed in the Reign of Terror.
- It was said the blood ran ankle deep in the heart of Paris.



# The Terror Ends

- As the threat of foreign invasion declined, many of the moderates argued that the Terror had gone too far.
- Robespierre enemies executed him and 12 of his followers and ended the terror.
- The Bourgeois then formed the Directory, which creates a moderate government and tries to restore order in France.

# Rise of Napoleon

## Military genius

French officer, promoted to general during the Revolution.

France was at war with Prussia,  
Russia, Austria, and England during this period.

Napoleon invades Egypt in an attempt to distract England and their supply lines



# Rise of Napoleon

- Returns to France and seizes power in a coup d'état in 1799.
- Created consulate and assumed dictatorial powers.

By 1801 he was able to become Emperor.

