

2 Riots, Rage and Rebellion: The French Revolution

After years of repression under King Louis XVI the French demanded their freedom. In 1789 a revolution broke out and the people took over the government and declared a republic. The revolution did not bring peace and equal rights at once. It took a period of great violence and injustice before a stable system was invented. But the result was not what the revolutionaries had fought for. On the next pages you will find out what caused this revolution, what happened and what the consequences were.



'Storming of the Bastille', painting by Jean-Pierre-Louis Laurent Houel, 1789 (Bibliothèque nationale de France).

castle: Burg | smoke: Rauch | soldier: Soldat | chaos: Chaos | to battle: kämpfen | barrel: Fass | cannon: Kanonen

1 Discuss in groups what an ideal state or society should be like. The toolbox will help you to express your ideas. Collect your ideas on a poster.

2 Search the internet for material for a collage about revolutions throughout different periods of time for your history folder. Look at the following aspects: causes of the revolution, people supporting the revolution, ways of expressing opposition, consequences and so on.

3 Study the text above and the paintings on the right carefully. Pay attention to the years of the event shown. Take notes. Then work with a partner and re-tell what you think happened.

TOOLBOX: political systems and society

just/unjust
gerecht/ungerecht

equal rights
Gleichberechtigung

law
Gesetz

violence
Gewalt

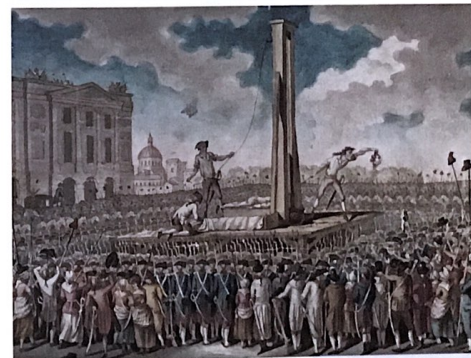
police
Polizei

freedom
Freiheit

to govern s.th.
etwas regieren

wealth
Wohlstand

to solve problems
Probleme lösen



Execution of Louis XVI on January 21st 1793 at the Place de la Republique (today: Place de la Concorde) in Paris, Artist unknown.

guillotine: Guillotine | present: präsentieren | soldier: Soldat | crowd: Menschenmenge | palace: Palast | plaza: Platz | executioner: Henker

What caused the French Revolution?

KEY TERMS

riot

Aufuhr

representative

Repräsentant/Abgeordneter

to reject s.th.

etw. ablehnen

to announce s.th.

etw. ankündigen

Estates-General

Generalstände (die Versammlung von Mitgliedern aller drei Stände)

vote

Stimme (bei Abstimmungen)

to vote

wählen

to oppose

sich widersetzen

to borrow s.th.

etw. leihen

1 Put the following paragraphs A-F in the correct order. The time references and the connectives will help you.

Paragraph A

From 1787 on, the crisis got worse. There were **riots** in many towns and the King still needed more money.

Paragraph B

For the first time in 175 years the **Estates-General** met in the Palace of Versailles in May 1789. There were 1,201 **representatives**: 300 for the First Estate, 291 for the Second Estate, and 610 for the Third Estate.

Paragraph C

The idea of new taxes was **rejected** by the Second and Third Estates in 1787.

Paragraph D

Because of many riots the King **announced** in August 1788 that he was going to call in the **Estates-General**, the French parliament.

Paragraph E

However, there was a problem: each estate had only one **vote**, which meant that any idea put forward by the Third Estate could be rejected if the clergy and the nobility **opposed** it.

Paragraph F

By 1786, Louis XVI had no money and he was not able to **borrow** any more. His minister had a simple idea: everybody, even the nobles and the clergy, should pay a new tax.

2 Imagine you are a representative of the Third Estate in the Estates-General. Discuss in groups how France could be governed fairly in the future. Use words and phrases from the toolbox. Write a dialogue between the groups.

TOOLBOX: Governing a country

monarchy, aristocracy, democracy

Monarchie, Aristokratie, Demokratie

separation of powers

Gewaltenteilung

legislative, executive, judicial branch

Legislative, Exekutive, Judikative

to rule, to have power

herrschen

to appoint s.b. (e.g. a minister)

jemanden berufen (z. B. einen Minister)

to call for elections

Wahlen ausrufen

to pass/enact/oppose a law

ein Gesetz verabschieden/erlassen/ablehnen

to vote for s.b.

für jemanden stimmen

to pay taxes

Steuern zahlen

to write/ratify a constitution

eine Verfassung schreiben/ratifizieren

3 Start drawing a time bar, using all the information given on this page and the introductory page. You will add information from every page of this chapter. Start like this:



1786:
Louis ...

...