

Y8 History

The French Revolution



Summary

The French Revolution was a period in French History where the people, due to an unfair society and taxation system, bankruptcy of the monarchy and economic hardship, overthrew Louis XVI and took control of the government. It was a change in political control of the country. It lasted 10 years from 1789 to 1799 when Napoleon Bonaparte overthrew the revolutionary government. Key events of the Revolution include the Storming of the Bastille, the March of the Women, The Flight to Varennes, the September massacres, the Execution of Louis XVI and the Reign of Terror.

Key Figures

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Louis XVI | He was a dull and unintelligent ruler but a kind father to his children. King from 1774 until his execution in 1793. |
| Marie-Antoinette | Louis' Austrian wife. A gambler, socialite and heavy spender. Hated by the French people and famous for advising them to "eat cake". |
| Maximilien Robespierre | The Jacobin leader of the Committee of Public Safety during the terror. Killed by the guillotine in 1794. |
| Georges Danton | A leading member of the Committee of Public Safety with Robespierre. Executed by guillotine in 1794. |
| Lord Horatio Nelson | British admiral who commanded the fleet at the Battle of Trafalgar (1805) against Napoleon's fleet. He died from a musket shot during the battle after famously saying that "England expects every man will do his duty." |
| Napoleon Bonaparte | He rose up through the French army during the revolutionary wars. Became 1 st Consul of France in 1799, Emperor in 1804 and conquered much of Europe by 1811. |



Key Vocabulary

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| The Three Estates | The structure of French society. 1 st , 2 nd and 3 rd were classes in society. Only the 3rd Estate paid taxes. |
| Estates General | A meeting held in May 1789 to try to approve a new tax. |
| The Tennis Court Oath | The third estate members refused to leave Paris until they got a constitution. |
| The National Assembly | The revolutionary government set up by the Third Estate. They declared themselves the true rulers of France. |
| Bastille | A hated prison in Paris. Stormed by the people on 14 th July 1789. The governor of the prison was killed, the few prisoners inside were released and ammunition was seized. |
| The Flight to Varennes | Louis and Marie Antoinette tried to escape to Austria. They were stopped at Varennes. |
| Guillotine | A quicker more humane instrument used to kill people. Used in the Place de la Revolution during the Reign of Terror. |
| Reign of Terror | A period of mass killing 1793 to 1794. Led by the Committee of Public Safety. |

Challenge— List the positive and negative aspects of the French Revolution. Overall, was it a good thing?

Look at the timeline. When do you think the execution of King Louis XVI became inevitable? Explain why.

Other Resources

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zw8k7ty/resources/1>

Y8 Schoology page



SCAN ME

