

Ch. 19 – Background to the French Revolution



FQ: What were the long-range and immediate causes of the French Revolution?

What does this illustration represent in 18th century France?



Key Vocabulary – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=856kcVieUgU>



- **Revolutions:** a fundamental change in the political and social organization of a state.

Four Characteristics of Revolution

Dissident elites

Mass frustration

Shared motivation

State crises

Review Question

What was the social structure of France before the revolution?

Social Structure of the Old Regime



- “Grounded in inequality of rights or the idea of privilege.”
- Estates-General = the Three Estates
- First Estate, Second Estate & Third Estate

First Estate



- Clergy
- Approx. population of 130,000
- Exempt from taille (chief tax)
- Income was half of the royal crown
- Divided in two groups; Aristocrats & Parish priests

Second Estate



- Nobility
- Approx. population of 350,000
- Owned 25-30% of land
- Two groups: Nobles of the Robe and Nobles of the Sword

Third Estate



- Commoners of society
- Peasants made up 75-80% of overall French population
- Skilled artisans, shopkeepers
- 8% -Bourgeoisie (middle class)

Key Term



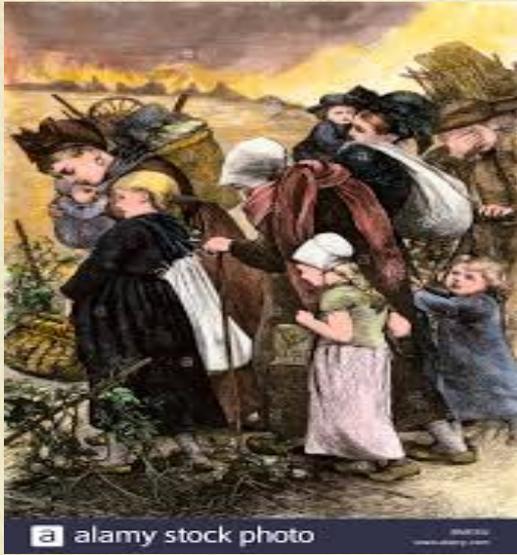
- Old order: the political and social system of France in the eighteenth century before the Revolution.

Review Question

List as many causes of the French Revolution as possible:

List as many consequences of the French Revolution as possible:

Causes of the French Revolution



- Long-range cause: Growing frustration with the monarchy's inability to handle new social realities and problems.
- Immediate cause: near collapse of gov't finances.
- Other factors included:
 - bad harvests of 1787-1788
 - unemployment in cities
 - rising food prices
 - manufacturing depression

Additional causes

- 1778-1787 saw severe depression and loss of overseas markets as well as overproduction.
- Grain and wine prices dropped by 40-50%.
- Consumed by interest on national debt
- No central bank, relied on private loans unlike the Bank of England.
- On the brink of financial collapse, the gov't called a meeting of the Estates-General (last time was 1614)



Long-Term Causes	Immediate Causes
<p data-bbox="160 322 707 408">Corrupt, inconsistent, and insensitive leadership</p> <p data-bbox="160 444 697 579">Prosperous members of Third Estate resent privileges of First and Second estates</p> <p data-bbox="160 615 610 651">Spread of Enlightenment ideas</p>	<p data-bbox="967 315 1306 351">Huge government debt</p> <p data-bbox="967 386 1537 422">Poor harvests and rising price of bread</p> <p data-bbox="967 458 1653 494">Failure of Louis XVI to accept financial reforms</p> <p data-bbox="967 529 1441 565">Formation of National Assembly</p> <p data-bbox="967 601 1257 636">Storming of Bastille</p>
Immediate Effects	Long-Term Effects
<p data-bbox="160 872 871 965">Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen adopted</p> <p data-bbox="160 993 774 1029">France adopts its first written constitution</p> <p data-bbox="160 1058 455 1093">Monarchy abolished</p> <p data-bbox="160 1129 880 1208">Revolutionary France fights coalition of European powers</p> <p data-bbox="160 1236 378 1272">Reign of Terror</p>	<p data-bbox="967 872 1296 908">Napoleon gains power</p> <p data-bbox="967 943 1392 979">Napoleonic Code established</p> <p data-bbox="967 1008 1383 1043">French public schools set up</p> <p data-bbox="967 1072 1518 1108">French conquests spread nationalism</p> <p data-bbox="967 1143 1653 1179">Revolutions occur in Europe and Latin America</p>