



# FRENCH REVOLUTION

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# BACKGROUND

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- ❖ France – richest and most powerful nation in Europe
- ❖ Minority had all the wealth (nobles and clergy)
- ❖ Working men and women with few rights want a better life
- ❖ Class system – everyone belonged to one of the three “estates”

# CAUSES

- ❖ Enlightenment Ideas
  - New views about power and authority
  - American Rev is a sign of hope – ideas put into action
- ❖ Economic Failure
  - Increase in population = decrease in resources/food = starvation
  - Kings put France in debt – war, extravagant lifestyle
  - Crop failure = bread shortages
  - Supported the American Rev
- ❖ Weak Leader
  - Louis XVI is indecisive
  - People resent King's power - everyone wants more political power
- ❖ Social Structure - unfair



# MAJOR EVENTS

- ❖ Estates-General called (1<sup>st</sup> time in 175 years)
  - King needed \$\$, wants to tax other classes, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> estates refuse
  - Estates called together to pass new taxes
    - Made up of delegates representing each estate
    - One estate – one vote = 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> usually overrule 3<sup>rd</sup>
    - 3<sup>rd</sup> estate refuses plan – should have more say
      - Want “one man – one vote”
    - Estates-General deadlocked



# MAJOR EVENTS

## ❖ Tennis Court Oath

- 3<sup>rd</sup> estate renames itself “National Assembly” and decides to draw up a new constitution
- 3<sup>rd</sup> estate arrives at EG – locked out
- Gathered at nearby indoor tennis court – take oath
  - Won’t disband until a new constitution is written for France







# MAJOR EVENTS

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## ❖ A Call to Revolt

- King senses danger of new constitution
- Orders 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> estates to join National Assembly – make them come to the senses
- Called troops to concentrate around Paris
- People are afraid the new reforms would stop and that the King would dissolve the National Assembly



# MAJOR EVENTS

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- ❖ Fall of the Bastille (infamous prison and royal armory)
  - Symbolizes injustices of monarchy
  - Mob surrounds prison on July 14, 1789 to steal weapons to defend themselves
  - Overtake the prison and kill the guards
  - Celebration begins but not for long



# MAJOR EVENTS

## ❖ Great Fear

- Rumors that nobles had hired criminals to kill peasants and take property
- Fear turns to violence
- Peasants break into houses – rob and destroy



# MAJOR EVENTS

## ❖ March to Versailles

- October 1789 – Parisian women riot over rising prices of bread
- Broke into Palace of Versailles
- Demand Louis and Marie Antoinette return to Paris

