

## Long Answer Questions

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### **Q.1. What were the main causes of the French Revolution?**

**Ans.** Causes of the French Revolution:

**(i) Despotism of Louis XVI:** He became the ruler of France in 1774. He had drained the financial resources of France in wars. For the cost of his regular extravagant expenses, he increased taxes which were paid by the third estate.

**(ii) Division of French society:** The French society was divided into three estates; first, second and third estates, respectively. Among them, First and Second Estates had 10 per cent of the total population and were the clergy and nobles. They enjoyed all privileges. Rest of the 90 per cent was of the third estate, which paid all kinds of direct or indirect taxes. This kind of discrimination led to the revolution by the third estate.

**(iii) Rising prices:** The population of France had increased. This resulted into more demand of food grains. So the price of bread rose rapidly, which the poor could not afford to buy. So the gap between the rich and poor widened.

**(iv) Inspiration of the philosophers:** Philosophers like John Locke, Jean Jacques Rousseau and Montesquieu propagated the ideas of having a society where people would enjoy freedom, equal laws and equal opportunities. Their ideas inspired the people of France to realise their dreams.

**(v) Role of middle class:** The 18th century witnessed the emergence of social groups termed as middle class, who earned their wealth through an expanding trade of the manufactured goods, being exported. There were other professionals also like lawyers, administrative officials who were all educated. They believed that no group in society should be privileged by birth.

### **Q.2. Describe the circumstances leading to the outbreak of revolutionary protest in France.**

**OR**

### **Which incident had led to the outbreak of the revolution in France?**

**Ans.** The incidents leading to the outbreak of the revolution were:-

**(i) Meeting of the Estates General:** On 5 May 1789, Louis XVI called for a meeting to propose new taxes. Representatives of all the three estates reached there, but members of the third estate had to stand at the back, as they were not offered any seat. Peasants, artisans and women were denied entry to the assembly.

**(ii) Demand for Universal Adult Franchise:** Members of the third estate demanded the power for each member to vote. When the King rejected the demand, members of the third estate walked out of the assembly to protest.

**(iii) Meeting of the newly formed National Assembly:** Since the percentage of the third estate was more, they considered themselves as spokesmen for the whole French nation. They assembled in an indoor tennis court of Versailles and declared themselves as the 'National Assembly'. They believed in removing the feudal privileges of the nobles and clergy.

**(iv) Revolt by peasants:** The countryside rumours spread from village to village that their ripe crops would be destroyed by hired bands of lords of manors. Peasants in several districts seized hoes and attacked the residences of their manors. They looted, hoarded grain and burnt down documents containing records of manorial dues.

**(v) Fall of Bastille prison:** During this political turmoil, the French had experienced severe winters leading to bad harvest. It increased the price of bread, which was hoarded in the market. Angry women attacked the shops. At the same time, the King ordered troops to move into Paris. On 14 July 1789, the agitated crowd stormed and destroyed the Bastille prison.

**Q.3. Who formed the Jacobin Club? What measures had he taken to remove discrimination in the French society and form a French Republic?**

**Ans.** The Jacobin Club was formed by Maximilian Robespierre. The measures taken or adopted were:

**(i) Formation of political clubs:** Large sections of the society were convinced that the revolution had to be carried further, as the Constitution of 1791 gave political rights only to the richer sections of the society. Political clubs became an important rallying point for people who wished to discuss government policies and plan their own forms of action.

**(ii) Members of the Jacobin Club:** Its members were from less prosperous sections of society. They included small shopkeepers, artisans like shoemakers, pastry cooks, watch-makers and daily wage earners. A large number of members of the Jacobin Club decided to wear long striped trousers, to look apart. They also wore red caps to symbolise freedom.

**(iii) All citizens got the right to vote:** On the morning of 10 August, 1792, Jacobins stormed the Palace of Tuileries, massacred the King's guards and held the King hostage for several hours. Later, they voted to imprison the royal family. Then the assembly declared that elections would be held to form a government. All men above 21 years of age regardless of wealth got the right to vote.

**(iv) Declaration of France as a Republic:** The newly elected assembly was called 'Convention'. On 21 September, 1792, it abolished the monarchy and declared France as a Republic. Now people elected their government. There was no hereditary monarchy.

**(v) End of Monarchy:** Louis XVI was sentenced to death by a court on the charges of betraying his own country. On 21 January, 1793, he was executed publicly at the Place de la Concorde. The queen, Marie Antoinette also met with the same fate.

#### **Q.4. Who was Napoleon Bonaparte? Why was he called a 'liberator'?**

**Ans. (i)** Napoleon Bonaparte was the Emperor of France in 1804, who reintroduced monarchy in France.

**(ii)** He conquered his neighbouring countries and created kingdoms, where he placed his own family members.

**(iii)** He was called a moderniser of Europe. He introduced many laws such as the protection of private property and a uniform system of weights and measures provided by the decimal system.

**(iv)** Initially, many people believed that Napoleon was a liberator who would bring freedom for the people.

**(v)** But soon his army was viewed as an invading force. So, he was finally defeated in 1815, in the famous 'Battle of Waterloo'.

**(vi)** Many of his measures that carried the revolutionary ideas of liberty and modern laws to other parts of Europe had an impact on people long after Napoleon had left.

#### **Q.5. How did the fall of Bastille prison become the immediate cause of French Revolution?**

**Ans.** On the morning of 14th July, 1789, the city of Paris was in a state of alarm. The king ordered his troops to move into the city. Rumours spread that he would soon order the army to open fire upon the citizens. Some 7,000 men and women gathered in front of the town hall and decided to form a people's militia. A group of several hundred people marched towards the eastern part of the city and stormed the fortress-prison, the Bastille. In the

armed fight, the commander of Bastille was killed and prisoners released. Since the Bastille stood for the despotic power of the king, it led people towards the success of French Revolution.

**Q.6. How can you say that Louis XVI was a despotic ruler?**

**Ans.** Louis XVI of Bourbon dynasty, ascended the throne in 1774. He was married to Austrian princess Marie Antoinette. When he became ruler, he found an empty treasury. Long years of war had drained the financial resources of France. Added to this was the cost of maintaining an extravagant court at the immense palace of Versailles. Louis XVI also helped American armies in their war of independence, which led to further rise to more than 2 billion livres debt. To meet its regular expenses, the state was forced to increase taxes. Nobles, clergy were exempted from paying taxes, it was the third estate which bore the brunt.

**Q.7. What does subsistence crisis mean? What led to subsistence crisis in France?**

**Ans.** Subsistence Crisis is an extreme situation where the basic means of livelihood are endangered.

The demand for foodgrains was increased as population had increased in France from 23 million to 28 million. Production of grains could not keep pace with the demand. So the price of bread, which was the staple diet of the majority, rose rapidly. Most workers were employed as labourers in workshops whose owner fixed their wages. But wages did not keep pace with the rise in prices. So the gap between the poor and the rich widened. Things became worse whenever drought or hail reduced the harvest. This led to subsistence crisis, something that occurred frequently in France during the Old Regime.

**Q.8. What was the role of middle classes in ending the privileges?**

**Ans.** In the past, peasants and workers had participated in the revolts against increasing taxes and food scarcity. But they could not change the social and economic order. This was left to those groups within the Third Estate who had become prosperous and had access to education and new ideas. The 18th century witnessed the emergence of social groups termed as middle class who earned their wealth through an expanding overseas trade and from manufacturing goods and exporting them. In addition to merchants and manufacturers, the Third estate included professions such as that of lawyers or administrative officials. All of these were educated and believed that no group in society should be privileged by birth. Rather, a person's social position must depend on his merit.

**Q.9. Who represented the National Assembly on 5th May 1789?**

**Ans.** On 5th May, 1789, Louis XVI called together an assembly of Estates General to pass proposals for new taxes. A resplendent hall in Versailles was prepared to host the delegates. The first and second estates sent 300 representatives each, who were seated in rows facing each other on two sides, while the 600 members of the third estate had to stand at the back. The third estate was represented by its more prosperous and educated members. Peasants, artisans and women were denied entry to the assembly.

**Q.10. How was National Assembly recognised?**

**Ans.** Louis XVI faced with the power of French people's revolting subjects, who finally accorded recognition to the National Assembly and accepted the principle that his powers would from now on be checked by a constitution. On the night of 4th August, 1789, the Assembly passed a decree abolishing the feudal system of obligations and taxes. Members of the clergy too were forced to give up their privileges. Tithes were abolished and lands owned by the Church were confiscated. As a result, the government acquired assets worth at least 2 billion livres.

**Q.11. What was Marseillaise? What led to the formation of Marseillaise?**

**Ans.** Marseillaise was a patriotic song composed by poet Roget de L' Isle.

Although Louis XVI signed the constitution, he entered into secret negotiations with the King of Prussia. Rulers of the other neighbouring countries too were worried by the developments in France and made plans to send troops to put down the events that had been taking place there since the summer of 1789. Before this could happen, the National Assembly voted in April 1792, and declared war against Prussia and Austria. Thousands of volunteers thronged from the provinces to join the army. They saw this as a war of the people against kings and aristocracies all over Europe. So Marseillaise was sung for the first time by the volunteers from Marseilles as they marched into Paris and so got its name. The Marseillaise is now the national anthem of France.

**Q.12. What led to subsistence crisis in France?**

**Ans.**

- Population of France rose from about 23 million in 1715 to 28 million in 1789.
- This led to a rapid increase in the demand for foodgrains.

- Production of grains could not keep pace with the demand. So the price of bread, which was the staple diet of the majority, rose rapidly.
- Most of the workers were employed as labourers in workshops, whose owners fixed their wages. But wages did not keep pace with the rise in the prices. So the gap between rich and poor widened.
- Things became worse whenever draught or hail reduced the harvest. This led to the subsistence crisis, something that occurred frequently in France during the old regime.

**Q.13. Why do you think that a growing middle class in France envisaged an end to the privileges?**

**Ans.**

- In the past, peasants and workers had participated in revolts against increasing taxes and food scarcity.
- But they lacked the means and programmes to carry out full-scale measures that would bring about a change in the social and economic order.
- The 18th century witnessed the emergence of social groups termed as 'Middle Class', who earned their wealth through an expanding overseas trade and from the manufacture of goods, such as woollen and silk textiles that were either exported or bought by the richer members of the society.
- In addition to the merchants and manufacturers, the third estate included professionals such as lawyers or administrative officers.
- All of these were educated and believed that no group in the society should be privileged by birth. Rather a person's social position must depend on his merit.
- These ideas envisaging a society, based on freedom and equal laws and opportunities for all, were put forward by philosophers.

**Q.14. What do you know about triangular slave trade? What legislative measures were taken to end slavery in French colonies?**

**Ans.** Reluctance of Europeans to go and work in distant and unfamiliar lands meant a shortage of labour on the plantations. So this was met by a triangular slave trade between Europe, Africa and the America.

The exploitation of slave labour made it possible to meet the growing demand in European markets for sugar, coffee and indigo.

**Legislative Measures:**

- Throughout the 18th century, there was a little criticism of slavery in France.
- The National Assembly held long debates about whether the rights of man should be extended to all French subjects, including those in the colonies. But it did not pass any laws, fearing opposition from businessmen whose incomes depended on the slave trade.
- It was finally the convention which in 1794 legislated to free all slaves in the French overseas possessions.
- This however turned out to be a short-term measure; ten years later, Napoleon reintroduced slavery.
- Plantation owners understood their freedom as including the right to enslave African Negroes in pursuit of their economic interests.
- Slavery was finally abolished in French colonies in 1848.

**Q.15. What types of freedoms were granted to the citizens of France after French Revolution?**

**Ans.**

- One important law that came into effect soon after the storming of the Bastille in the summer of 1789 was the abolition of censorship.
- In the old regime, all written material and cultural activities—books, newspapers, plays—could be published or performed only after they had been approved by the censors of the king.
- Now the declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen proclaimed freedom of speech and expression to be a natural right.
- Newspapers, pamphlets, books and printed pictures flooded the towns of France from where they travelled rapidly into the countryside. They all described and discussed the events and changes taking place in France.
- Freedom of the press also meant that opposing views of events could be expressed. Each side sought to convince the others of its position through the medium of print.
- This was one way they would grasp and identify with ideas such as liberty or justice. Political philosophers wrote these texts in length, which only a handful of educated people could read.