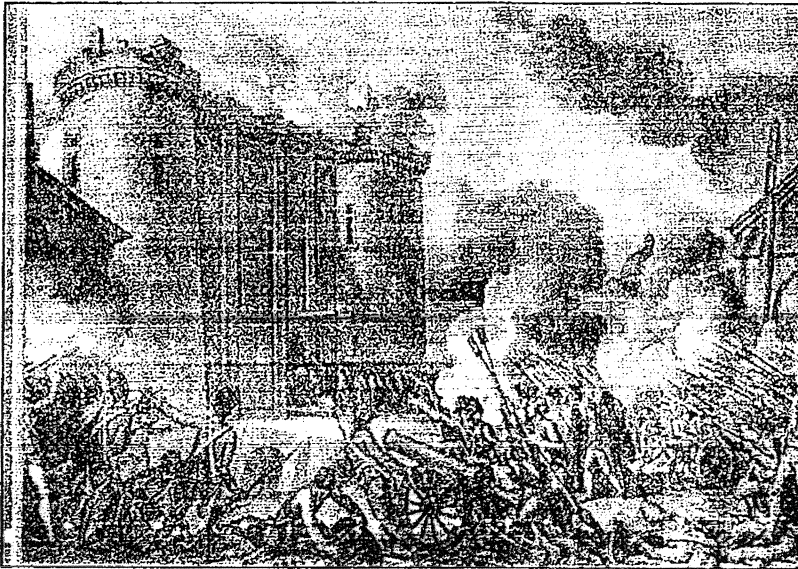


The French Revolution



"On the morning of 14th July 1789, people of Paris stormed the Bastille. Much later, when historians looked back upon this time, they saw it as the beginning of a chain of events that ultimately led to the execution of the king in France."

1.1 The French Revolution

On the morning of 14 July 1789, the city of Paris was in a state of alarm. The king had commanded 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 peoples' militia. They broke into a number of government buildings in search of arms.

Finally, a group of several hundred people marched towards the eastern part of the city and stormed the fortress-prison, the Bastille, where they hoped to find hoarded ammunition. In the armed fight that followed, the commander of the Bastille was killed and the prisoners released – though there were only seven of them. Yet the Bastille was hated by all, because it stood for the despotic power of the king. The fortress was demolished and its stone fragments were sold in the markets to all those who wished to keep a souvenir of its destruction.

The days that followed saw more rioting both in Paris and the countryside. Most people were protesting against the high price of bread. Much later, when historians looked back upon this time, they saw it as the beginning of a chain of events that ultimately led to the execution of the king in France, though most people at the time did not anticipate this outcome. How and why did this happen?

1.2 French society during the late eighteenth century

In 1774, Louis XVI of the Bourbon family ascended the throne of France. He found an empty treasury. Long years of war (under Louis XVI, France helped the thirteen American colonies to gain their independence from the common enemy, Britain) had drained the financial resources of France. Added to this was the cost of maintaining an extravagant court at the immense palace of Versailles. The war added more than a billion *livres* to



Fig.1 Statue of Liberty

	THE SPOT LIGHT	
<p>The Statue of Liberty (Liberty Enlightening the World) is a sculpture on Liberty Island in the middle of New York Harbor, in Manhattan, New York City. The statue, designed by Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi, was a gift to the United States from the people of France.</p>		

**THE
SPOT
LIGHT**

When Louis XVI succeeded to the throne in 1774, he was 19 years old. He had an enormous responsibility, as the government was deeply in debt, and resentment to 'despotic' monarchy was on the rise. Louis also felt woefully unqualified for the job.

Last meeting = 16th



Fig.3 - Louis XVI

**THE
SPOT
LIGHT**

In 1789, the French aristocracy and leading churchmen led privileged lives and had great power. However, the middle classes wanted more power for themselves. Taxes were high, the country was bankrupt, and the poor were starving. King Louis XVI failed to bring in reforms in time to stop a revolution.

a debt that had already risen to more than 2 billion *livres*. To meet its regular expenses, the state was forced to increase taxes, and only members of the third estate paid taxes.

1.3 French society during the old regime (before 1789)

French society in the eighteenth century was divided into three estates. Peasants made up about 90 per cent of the population, only a small number of them owned the land they cultivated. About 60 per cent of the land was owned by nobles, the Church and other richer members of the third estate. The members of the first two estates, that is, the **clergy** and the nobility, enjoyed certain privileges by birth for e.g. exemption from paying taxes to the state, enjoyed feudal privileges.

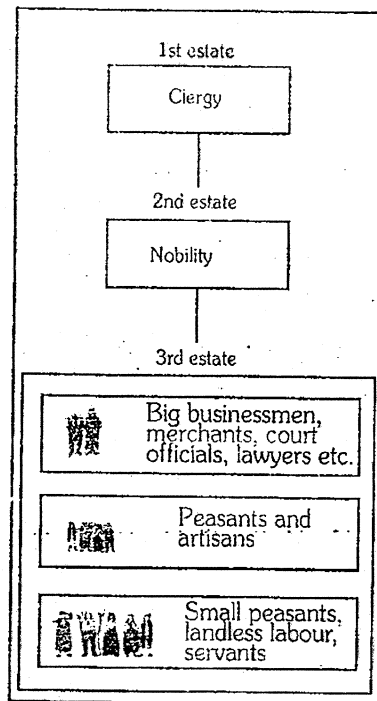


Fig.6 A Society of Estates.

(a) Form of taxes

The Church extracted its share of taxes called **tithes** from the peasants. All members of the third estate had to pay taxes to the state. These included a direct tax, called **taille**, and a number of indirect taxes.



Fig.4 The Spider and the Fly

(b) **The struggle to survive**

Rising population led to a rapid increase in the demand for foodgrains. Production of grains could not keep pace with the demand. Workers 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 a **subsistence crisis**, something that occurred frequently in France during the old regime.

(c) **A growing middle class envisages an end to privileges**

The eighteenth century witnessed the emergence of social groups, termed the middle class. In addition to merchants and manufacturers, the third estate included professionals such as 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. These ideas envisaging a society based on freedom and equal laws and opportunities for all, were put forward by philosophers such as John Locke and Jean Jacques Rousseau. In his *Two Treatises of Government*, Locke sought to refute the doctrine of the divine and absolute right of the monarch. Rousseau carried the idea forward, proposing a form of government based on a social contract between people and their representatives. In *The Spirit of the Laws*, Montesquieu proposed a division of power within the government between the legislative, the executive and the judiciary. This model of government was put into force in the USA, after the thirteen colonies declared their independence from Britain. The American constitution and its guarantee of individual rights was an important example for political thinkers in France.

The ideas of these philosophers were discussed intensively in salons and coffee-houses and spread among people through books and newspapers.

1.4 The outbreak of the revolution

In France of the Old Regime the monarch did not have the power to impose taxes according to his will alone. Rather he had to call a meeting of the Estates General which would then pass his proposals for new taxes, the monarch alone could decide when to call a meeting of this body. The last time it was done was in 1614.

(a) **Meeting of the estates general**

On 5 May 1789, Louis XVI called together an assembly of the Estates General to pass proposals for new taxes. The first and second estates sent 300 representatives each, while the third estate sent 600 members. The third estate was represented by its more prosperous and educated members. Peasants, artisans and women were denied entry to the assembly.

Voting in the Estates General in the past had been conducted according to the principle that each estate had one vote. This time members of the third estate demanded that voting be conducted by the assembly as a whole, where each member would have one vote. This was one of the democratic



Jean-Jacques Rousseau remains an important figure in the history of philosophy, both because of his contributions to political philosophy and moral psychology and because of his influence on later thinkers.



Fig.5 Jean Jacques Rosseau



Rousseau was active as a composer and a music theorist, as the pioneer of modern autobiography, as a novelist, and as a botanist.



The Third Estate had been granted "double representation" that is, twice as many delegates as each of the other estates but at the opening session on May 5, 1789 they were informed that all voting would be "by estates" not "by head", so their double representation was to be meaningless in terms of power.



The Oath signified the first time that French citizens formally stood in opposition to Louis XVI, and the National Assembly's refusal to back down forced the king to make concessions.

principles put forward by philosophers like Rousseau in his book *The Social Contract*. When the king rejected this proposal, members of the third estate walked out of the assembly in protest.

(b) Formation of national assembly & the tennis court oath

The representatives of the third estate viewed themselves as spokesmen for the whole French nation. On 20 June they assembled in the hall of an indoor tennis court in the grounds of Versailles. They declared themselves a National Assembly and swore not to disperse till they had drafted a constitution for France that would limit the powers of the monarch. They were led by Mirabeau and Abbé Sieyès.

CHECK YOUR LEARNING 1.1

1. Match the column

	Column I		Column II
(A)	Livre	(i)	Tax to be paid directly to the state.
(B)	Clergy	(ii)	A tax levied by the church.
(C)	Tithe	(iii)	Group of persons invested in special functions in the church.
(D)	Taille	(iv)	Unit of currency in France discontinued in 1794.

Some important dates

- 1774 Louis XVI becomes king of France, faces empty treasury and growing discontent within society of the Old Regime.
- 1789 Convocation of Estates General, Third Estate forms National Assembly, the Bastille is stormed, peasant revolts in the countryside.
- 1791 A constitution is framed to limit the powers of the king and to guarantee basic rights to all human beings.
- 1792-93 France becomes a republic, the king is beheaded. Overthrow of the Jacobin republic, a Directory rules France.
- 1804 Napoleon becomes emperor of France, annexes large parts of Europe.
- 1815 Napoleon defeated at Waterloo.

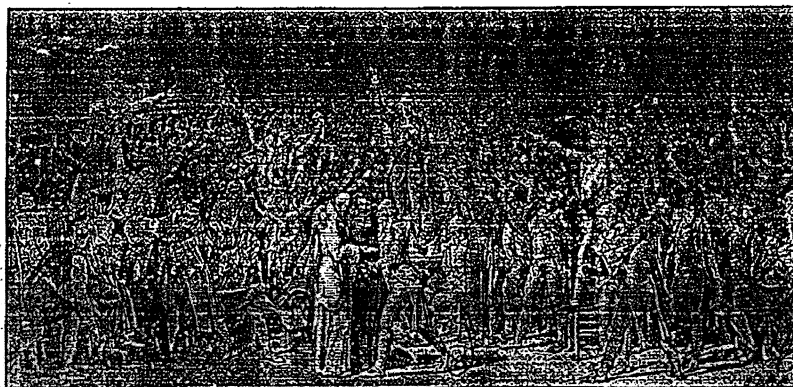


Fig. 7. The Tennis Court Oath.

(c) **Storming of the bastille**

While the National Assembly was busy at Versailles drafting a constitution, the rest of France seethed with turmoil. A severe winter had meant a bad harvest; the price of bread rose, often bakers exploited the situation and hoarded supplies. After spending hours in long queues at the bakery, crowds of angry women stormed into the shops. At the same time, the king ordered troops to move into Paris. On 14th July, the agitated crowd stormed and destroyed the Bastille.

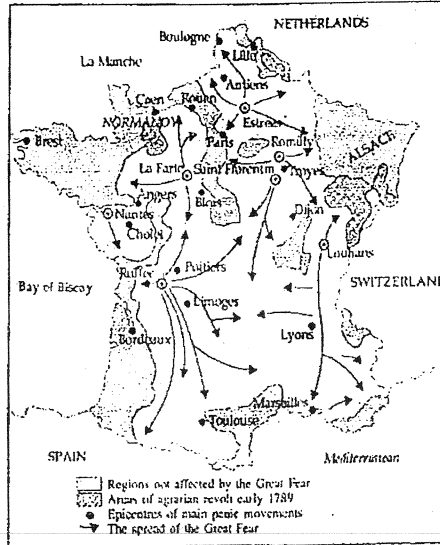


Fig.8 The spread of the Great Fear.
The map shows how bands of peasants spread from one point to another.

In the countryside rumours spread from village to village that the lords of the **manor** had hired bands of brigands to destroy the ripe crops. Caught in a frenzy of fear, peasants in several districts seized hoes and pitchforks and attacked **chateaux**. A large number of nobles fled from their homes, many of them migrating to neighbouring countries.

Louis XVI finally accorded recognition to the National Assembly. On the night of 4 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.

1.5 France becomes a constitutional monarchy

The National Assembly completed the draft of the constitution in 1791, main object was to limit the powers of the monarch. Powers were now separated and assigned to different institutions – the legislature, executive and judiciary. This made France a constitutional monarchy.

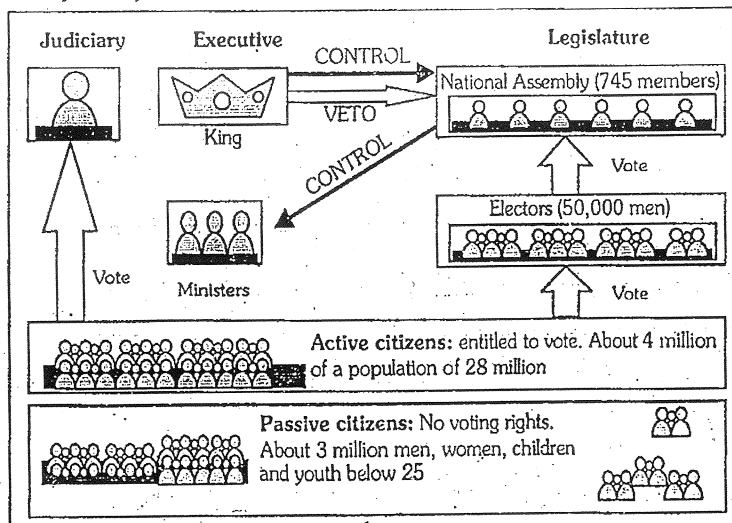


Fig.10 The Political system under the Constitution of 1791

THE SPOT LIGHT

The storming of the Bastille prison would be the first victory of the revolutionaries. Today, this victory is celebrated in France each year on the national holiday known as Bastille Day.



Fig.9 Jean Paul Marat

THE SPOT LIGHT

Revolutionary journalist Jean Paul Marat was the author of the news paper 'L'Ami du peuple' which meant 'The friend of the people'.

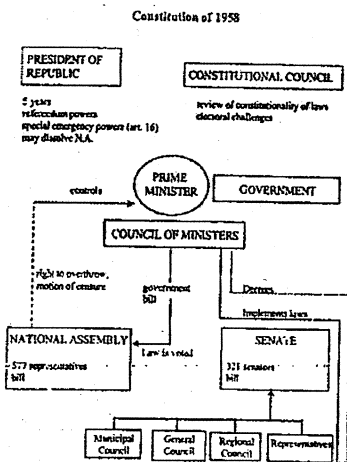
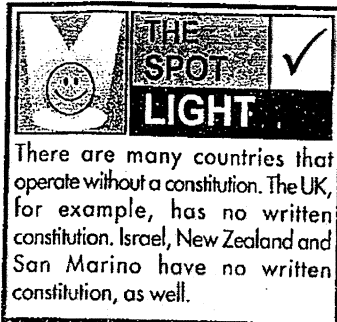
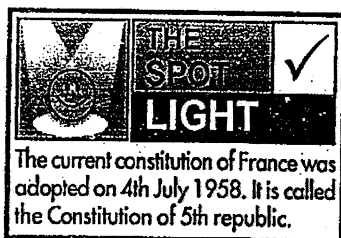


Fig.12 French constitution in 1958



The Constitution of 1791 vested the power to make laws in the National Assembly, which was indirectly elected. Only men above 25 years of age who paid taxes equal to at least 3 days of a labourer's wage were given the status of active citizens, that is, they were entitled to vote. The remaining men and all women were classed as passive citizens. To qualify as an elector and then as a member of the Assembly, a man had to belong to the highest bracket of taxpayers.



Fig.11 The declaration of the rights of man and citizen, painted by the artist Le Barbier in 1790

The Constitution began with a Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen. Rights such as the right to life, freedom of speech, freedom of opinion, equality before law, were established as 'natural and inalienable' rights.

CHECK YOUR ANSWERS 1.1

1. A - (iv) ; B - (iii) ; C (ii) ; D - (i)

1.6 The declaration of rights of man and citizen

1. Men are born and remain free and equal in rights.
2. The aim of every political association is the preservation of the natural and inalienable rights of man; these are liberty, property, security and resistance to oppression.
3. The source of all sovereignty resides in the nation; no group or individual may exercise authority that does not come from the people.
4. Liberty consists of the power to do whatever is not injurious to others.
5. The law has the right to forbid only actions that are injurious to society.
6. Law is the expression of the general will. All citizens have the right to participate in its formation, personally or through their representatives. All citizens are equal before it.
7. No man may be accused, arrested or detained, except in cases determined by the law.

8. Every citizen may speak, write and print freely; he must take responsibility for the abuse of such liberty in cases determined by the law.
9. For the maintenance of the public force and for the expenses of administration a common tax is indispensable; it must be assessed equally on all citizens in proportion to their means.
10. Since property is a sacred and inviolable right, no one may be deprived of it, unless a legally established public necessity requires it. In that case a just compensation must be given in advance.

1.7 Reading political symbols

The majority of men and women in the eighteenth century could not read or write. So images and symbols were frequently used instead of printed words to communicate important ideas.


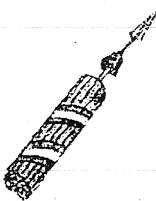


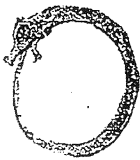



The broken chain: Chains were used to fetter slaves. A broken chain stands for the act of becoming free. 	The bundle of rods or fasces: One rod can be easily broken, but not an entire bundle. Strength lies in unity. 
The eye within a triangle radiating light: The all-seeing eye stands for knowledge. The rays of the sun will drive away the clouds of ignorance. 	Sceptre: Symbol of royal power. 
Snake biting its tail to form a ring: Symbol of Eternity. A ring has neither beginning nor end. 	Red Phrygian cap: Cap worn by a slave upon becoming free. 
The Law Tablet: The law is the same for all, and all are equal before it. 	The winged woman: Personification of the law. 

Fig.14 Various political symbols during French revolution

1.8 France abolishes monarchy and becomes a republic

To regain power, Louis XVI entered into secret negotiations with the King of Prussia. The National Assembly voted in April 1792 to declare war against Prussia and Austria. Thousands of volunteers joined the army. They saw this as a war of the people against kings and aristocracies all over Europe. Among the patriotic songs they sang was the *Marseillaise*, composed by the poet Roget de L'Isle. The *Marseillaise* is now the national anthem of France.

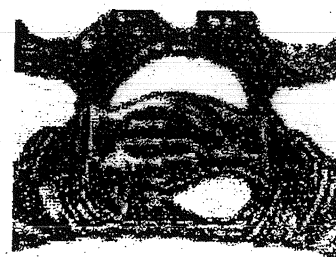
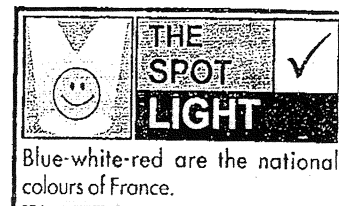
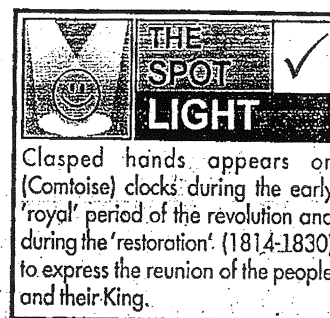


Fig.13 Clasped hands



CHECK YOUR LEARNING 1.2



The Society of the Friends of the Constitution commonly known as the Jacobin Club was the most famous and influential political club in the development of the French Revolution



Fig.16 Symbol of Jacobin club



The Jacobin movement encouraged sentiments of patriotism and liberty amongst the populace. The Jacobins as a political force were seen as "less selfish, more patriotic, and more sympathetic to the Paris Populace".



1. What does the painting shown above symbolise ?

In the summer of 1792, on the morning of August 10 Jacobins stormed the Palace of the Tuilleries, massacred the king's guards and held the king himself as hostage for several hours. Later the Assembly voted to imprison the royal family. Elections were held. From now on all men of 21 years and above, regardless of wealth, got the right to vote. The newly elected assembly was called the Convention. On 21 September 1792 it abolished the monarchy and declared France a republic.

1.9 Formation of Jacobin club

Large sections of the population were convinced that the revolution had to be carried further, as the Constitution of 1791 gave political rights only to the richer sections of society. Political clubs became an important rallying point for people who wished to discuss government policies and plan their own forms of action. The most successful of these clubs was that of the Jacobins, which got its name from the former **convent** of St Jacob in Paris.

The members of the Jacobin club belonged mainly to the less prosperous sections of society. Their leader was Maximilian Robespierre. A large group among the Jacobins decided to start wearing long striped trousers similar to those worn by dock workers. This was to set themselves apart from the fashionable sections of society, especially nobles, who wore knee breeches. These



Fig.15 A sans-culottes couple.

Jacobins came to be known as the sans-culottes, literally meaning 'those without knee breeches'. In addition they wore red cap that symbolised liberty. It was a way of proclaiming the end of the power wielded by the wearers of knee breeches.

(a) The reign of terror

The period from 1793 to 1794 is referred to as the Reign of Terror.

Robespierre followed a policy of severe control and punishment. All those whom he saw as being 'enemies' of the republic were arrested, imprisoned and then tried by a revolutionary tribunal. If the court found them 'guilty' they were guillotined.

Robespierre's government issued laws placing a maximum ceiling on wages and prices. Meat and bread were rationed. Peasants were forced to sell it at prices fixed by the government. The use of more expensive white flour was forbidden; all citizens were required to eat the *pain d'égalité* (equality bread), a loaf made of wholewheat. Equality was also sought to be practised through forms of speech and address. Instead of the traditional Monsieur (Sir) and Madame (Madam) all French men and women were henceforth Citoyen and Citoyenne (Citizen). Churches were shut down and their buildings converted into barracks or offices.

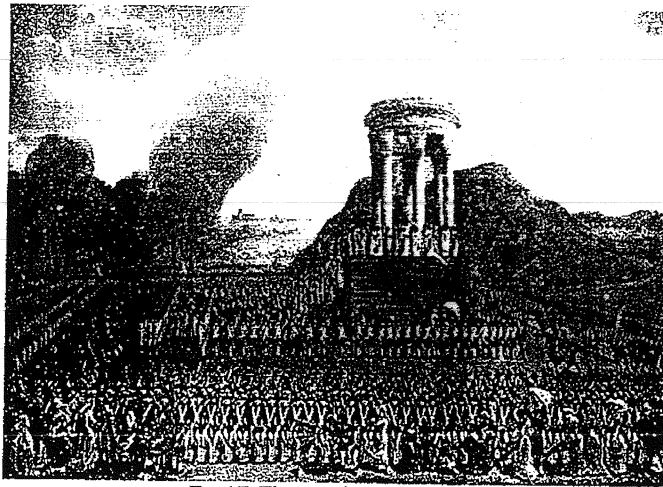


Fig.17 The revolutionary government

- Robespierre was convicted by a Court in July 1794, arrested and on the next day sent to the Guillotine.

(b) **A Directory rules France**

After the fall of the Jacobin government, a new constitution was introduced which denied the vote to non-propertied sections of society. It provided for two elected legislative councils. These then appointed a Directory, an executive made up of five members. However, the Directors often clashed with the legislative councils, who then sought to dismiss them. The political instability of the Directory paved the way for the rise of a military dictator, Napoleon Bonaparte.

1.10 Did women have a revolution?

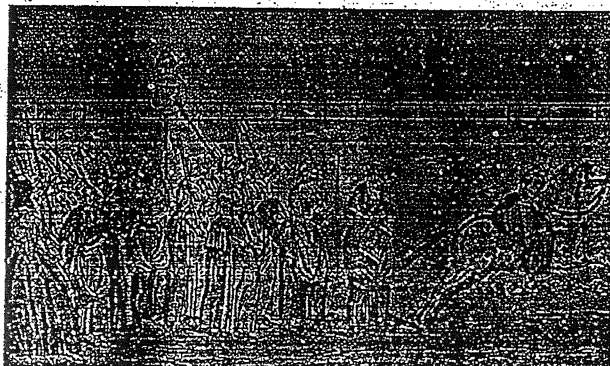


Fig.19 Parisian women on their way to Versailles.



During the Reign of Terror, Robespierre was the most prominent member of the Committee of Public Safety. He was a hard worker with strong principles, and he became known as the 'Incorruptible' because of his honesty and rigid commitment to transforming France into a Republic of Virtue.



Fig.18 Robespierre



The fact that Robespierre allowed his two close associates to be killed in April of 1794, he lost the faith of the rest of France's governing body. Eager to destroy him before he destroyed them, members of the Convention arrested Robespierre and guillotined him on 28 July 1794.



John Locke and his ideas greatly influenced the French Revolution and French thinkers, especially Jean Jacques Rousseau, author of Social Contract, which contributed much to the French Declaration of the Rights of Man.



Fig.20 John Locke



There were several women that played a key role in altering the revolution, among them Charlotte Corday who assassinated Marat; Madame Roland, the feminist writer and politician executed in 1793.

This print in figure 19 is one of the many pictorial representations of the events of 5 October 1789, when women marched to Versailles and brought the king back with them to Paris.

During the old Regime, most women of the third estate had to work for a living. They worked as seamstresses or laundresses, sold flowers, fruits and vegetables at the market, or were employed as domestic servants in the houses of prosperous people. Most women did not have access to education or job training. Only daughters of nobles or wealthier members of the third estate could study at a convent, after which their families arranged a marriage for them. Working women had also to care for their families, that is, cook, fetch water, queue up for bread and look after the children. Their wages were lower than those of men.

In order to discuss and voice their interests women started their own political clubs and newspapers. The Society of Revolutionary and Republican Women was the most famous of them. One of their main demands was that women enjoy the same political rights as men. Women were disappointed that the Constitution of 1791 reduced them to passive citizens. They demanded the right to vote, to be elected to the Assembly and to hold political office.

The revolutionary government did introduce laws that helped improve the lives of women. Creation of state schools, schooling was made compulsory for all girls, no forced marriage against their will. Marriage was made into a contract entered into freely and registered under civil law. Divorce was made legal, and could be applied for by both women and men. Women could now train for jobs, could become artists or run small businesses.

During the Reign of Terror, the new government issued laws ordering closure of women's clubs and banning their political activities. Many prominent women were arrested and a number of them executed.

Women's movements for voting rights and equal wages continued through the next two hundred years it was finally in 1946 that women in France won the right to vote.

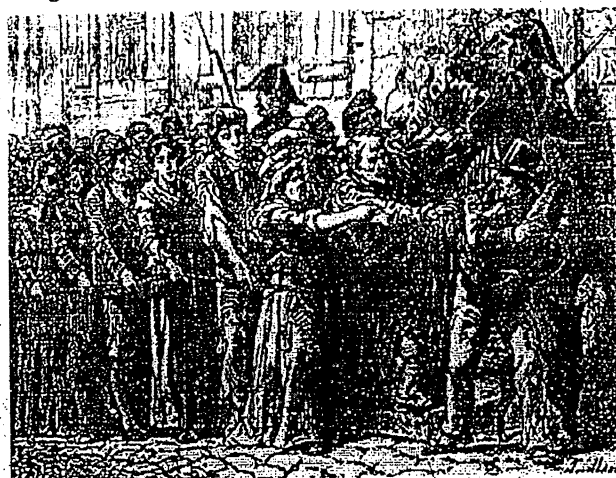


Fig.21 Women queuing up at a bakery.

1.11 The abolition of slavery

The colonies in the Caribbean – Martinique, Guadeloupe and San Domingo – were important suppliers of commodities such as tobacco, indigo, sugar and coffee. Shortage of labour was met by a triangular slave trade between

Europe, Africa and the Americas. The slave trade began in the seventeenth century. French merchants sailed from the ports of Bordeaux or Nantes to the African coast, where they bought slaves from local chieftains. Branded and shackled, the slaves were packed tightly into ships for the three-month long voyage across the Atlantic to the Caribbean. There they were sold to plantation owners. The exploitation of slave labour made it possible to meet the growing demand in European markets for sugar, coffee, and indigo. Port cities like Bordeaux and Nantes owed their economic prosperity to the flourishing slave trade.

Throughout the eighteenth century there was little criticism of slavery in France. The National Assembly 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. Ten years later, Napoleon reintroduced slavery. Slavery was finally abolished in French colonies in 1848.

CHECK YOUR ANSWERS 1.2

1. The painting is a female allegory of liberty - that is, the female form symbolises the idea of freedom.

1.12 The revolution and everyday life

The years following 1789 in France saw many such changes in the lives of men, women and children.

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. Plays, songs and festive processions attracted large numbers of people. This was one way they could grasp and identify with ideas such as liberty or justice that political philosophers wrote about at length in texts which only a handful of educated people could read.



Fig.23 The patriotic fat-reducing press.

**THE
SPOT
LIGHT**

This print of 1794 describes the emancipation of slaves. The tricolour banner on top carries the slogan: 'The rights of man'. The inscription below reads: 'The freedom of the unfree'. A French woman prepares to 'civilise' the African and American Indian slaves by giving them European clothes to wear.



Fig.22 The emancipation of slaves

**THE
SPOT
LIGHT**

The level of slave-exports grew from about 36,000 a year during the early 18th century to almost 80,000 a year during the 1780s. Approximately 11,863,000 Africans were shipped across the Atlantic, with a death rate during the Middle Passage reducing this number by 10-20 percent.



	THE SPOT LIGHT	✓
<p>Napoleon Bonaparte - During his school studies, Napoleon was teased by other students for his accent and applied himself to reading. An examiner observed that Napoleon "has always been distinguished for his application in Mathematics. He is fairly well acquainted with history and geography... This boy would make an excellent sailor."</p>		



Fig.25 Napoleon crossing the Alps, painting by David.

	THE SPOT LIGHT	✓
<p>Tipu Sultan and Rammohan Roy are two examples of individuals who responded to the ideas coming from revolutionary France.</p>		

This anonymous print of 1790 seeks to make the idea of justice tangible.



Fig.24 Marat addressing the people. This is a painting by Louis-Leopold Boilly.

Conclusion

In 1804, Napoleon Bonaparte crowned himself Emperor of France. He set out to conquer neighbouring European countries, dispossessing dynasties and creating kingdoms where he placed members of his family.

Napoleon saw his role as 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. Initially, many saw Napoleon as a liberator who would bring freedom for the people.

But soon the Napoleonic armies came to be viewed everywhere as an invading force. He was finally defeated at Waterloo in 1815. 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.

1.13 Legacy of the French Revolution

The ideas of liberty and democratic rights were the most important legacy of the French Revolution. These spread from France to the rest of Europe during the nineteenth century, where feudal systems were abolished.

The powerful ideas of freedom and equality circulated in Europe after the French Revolution. The French Revolution opened up the possibility of creating a dramatic change in the way in which society was structured. Before the eighteenth century society was broadly divided into estates and orders and it was the aristocracy and church which controlled economic and social power. Suddenly, after the revolution, it seemed possible to change this. In many parts of the world including Europe and Asia, new ideas about individual rights and who controlled social power began to be discussed. In India, Raja Rammohan Roy and Tipu Sultan talked of the significance of the French Revolution, and many others debated the ideas of post-revolutionary Europe. The developments in the colonies, in turn, reshaped these ideas of societal change.

Colonised peoples reworked the idea of freedom from bondage into their movements to create a sovereign nation state.

IMPORTANT TERMS

1. **FEUDAL**

Connected to feudalism, which was a social system that existed during the Middle Ages in Europe. In this system, people were given land and protection by a nobleman and had to work and fight for him in return.

2. **GUILLLOTINE**

A device consisting of two poles and a blade with which a person is beheaded.

3. **DESPOTIC**

A ruler with great power, especially one who uses it in a cruel way.

4. **LIVRE**

Unit of currency in France which was discontinued in 1794.

5. **NATIONALISM**

A feeling of intense loyalty and devotion to one's country.

6. **SUBSISTENCE CRISIS**

An extreme situation where the basic means of livelihood are endangered.

7. **TAILLE**

Tax to be paid directly to the state.

8. **TITHE (TITHE)**

A tax levied by the church, comprising one tenth of the agricultural produce.

EXERCISE # 1

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Multiple choice questions

1. The word *livres* stands for
 - (1) unit of currency in France
 - (2) tax levied by the Church
 - (3) tax to be paid directly to the state
 - (4) none of these
2. The Third Estate comprised of
 - (1) Poor servants and small peasants, landless labourers
 - (2) Peasants and artisans
 - (3) Big businessmen, merchants, lawyers etc.
 - (4) All the above
3. How does a 'Subsistence Crisis' happen?
 - (1) Bad harvest leads to scarcity of grains
 - (2) Food prices rise and the poorest cannot buy bread
 - (3) Leads to weaker bodies, diseases, deaths and even food riots
 - (4) All the above
4. Which of these books was written by John Locke?
 - (1) The Spirit of the Laws
 - (2) Two Treatises of Government
 - (3) The Social Contract
 - (4) All the above
5. In the meeting of the Estates General, the members of the Third Estate demanded that
 - (1) All the three Estates should have one vote altogether
 - (2) Each member should have one vote
 - (3) Each Estate should have one vote
 - (4) None of the above
6. What did Louis XVI do, seeing the power of his revolting subjects?
 - (1) He accorded recognition to the National Assembly
 - (2) Accepted checks on his powers
 - (3) Ordered his army to crush the revolt
 - (4) Both (1) and (2)
7. According to the new constitution of 1791, the National Assembly was to be
 - (1) elected directly
 - (2) appointed by the king
 - (3) elected indirectly
 - (4) a hereditary body
8. Which of these rights were not established as 'natural and inalienable' rights by the constitution of 1791?
 - (1) Right to life
 - (2) Freedom of speech and opinion
 - (3) Equality before the law
 - (4) All the above
9. In the war against Prussia and Austria, the army sang which patriotic song?
 - (1) 'Liberty', written by an unknown woman poet
 - (2) 'Marseillaise' written by the poet Roget de L'Isle
 - (3) 'Viva France' written by a French peasant
 - (4) None of the above
10. From which Palace, king was arrested before being executed?
 - (1) Palace of Versailles
 - (2) Palace of Paris
 - (3) Palace of Tuileries
 - (4) Marseilles
11. A large number of Jacobins came to be known as the 'sans-culottes'. What does it mean?
 - (1) People without knee breeches
 - (2) People with black shirts
 - (3) People with black trousers
 - (4) People without shirts
12. Why is the period from 1793 to 1794 referred to as the 'Reign of Terror'?
 - (1) Louis XVI's successor became a tyrant
 - (2) Robespierre followed a policy of severe control and punishment
 - (3) Jacobins opted for loot and plunder
 - (4) None of the above
13. Who seized power after the fall of the Jacobin government?
 - (1) Common people
 - (2) Descendants of Louis XVI
 - (3) Wealthy middle class
 - (4) Robespierre's son
14. Women of which estate had to work for a living -
 - (1) First estate
 - (2) Second estate
 - (3) Third estate
 - (4) All of the above
15. Which government did introduce laws that helped improve the lives of women?
 - (1) Louis XVI Government
 - (2) Revolutionary Government
 - (3) Directory
 - (4) Napoleon
16. Who among the following reintroduced slavery in France after it was abolished by Jacobin regime?
 - (1) Louis XVI
 - (2) Robespierre
 - (3) Napoleon
 - (4) Marat

17. One important law that came into effect soon after the storming of the Bastille in the summer of 1789 was
 (1) abolition of Bastille (2) abolition of Louis XVI
 (3) abolition of censorship (4) abolition of rights
18. In which of the battle was Napoleon finally defeated?
 (1) Russia (2) Waterloo
 (3) Versailles (4) Paris
19. Which Revolution gave the ideas of Liberty, Freedom and Equality to the world?
 (1) The American Revolution
 (2) The French Revolution
 (3) The Russian Revolution
 (4) None of these
20. Name the reformer/reformers who got inspired by new ideas that were spreading through Europe, during the French Revolution.
 (1) Raja Rammohan Roy (2) Tipu Sultan
 (3) Both (1) & (2) (4) Jyotiba Phule

Match the column

	Column I		Column II
(A)	1774	(i)	A constitution is framed to limit the powers of the King and to guarantee basic rights to all human beings.
(B)	1789	(ii)	Napoleon defeated at Waterloo
(C)	1791	(iii)	Convocation of Estates General, Third Estate forms National Assembly, the Bastille is stormed, peasants revolt in the countryside
(D)	1792-93	(iv)	Napoleon becomes emperor of France, annexes large parts of Europe
(E)	1804	(v)	Louis XVI becomes king of France, faces empty treasure and growing discontent within society of the Old Regime.
(F)	1815	(vi)	France becomes a republic, the king is beheaded. Overthrow of the Jacobin republic, a Directory rules France.

True or false

- Under Louis XV, France helped the thirteen American colonies to gain their independence from the common enemy, Britain.
- The population of France rose from about 23 million in 1715 to 28 million in 1789.
- In his 'Two Treatises of Government', Montesquieu sought to refute the doctrine of the divine and absolute right of the monarch.
- Voting in the Estates General in the past had been conducted according to the principle that each estate had one vote.
- The Directory vested the power to make laws in the National Assembly, which was indirectly elected.
- The National Assembly voted in April 1792 to declare war against Prussia and Austria.
- Louis XVI pursued his policies so relentlessly that even his supporters began to demand moderation.
- French merchants sailed from the ports of Bordeaux or Nantes to the African coast, where they bought slaves from local chieftains.

Fill in the blanks

- The term is usually used to describe the society and institutions of France before 1789.
- The gap between the poor and the rich widened. Things became worse whenever drought or hail reduced the harvest. This led to a crisis.
- The ideas of were discussed intensively in salons and coffee-houses and spread among people through books and newspaper.
- was born in a noble family but was convinced of the need to do away with a society of feudal privilege.
- resembled the symbol of power.
- In the summer of 1792 the planned an insurrection of a large number of Parisians who were angered by the short supplies and high prices of food.

7. During the, the new government issued laws ordering closure of women's clubs and banning their political activities.
8. In 1804, crowned himself Emperor of France. He set out to conquer neighbouring European countries, dispossessing dynasties and creating kingdoms where he placed members of his family.

ANSWER KEY

Multiple choice questions

Que.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Ans.	1	4	4	2	2	4	3	4	2	3
Que.	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Ans.	1	2	3	3	2	3	3	2	2	3

Match the column

1. A-(v), B-(iii), C-(i), D-(vi), E-(iv), F-(ii)

True or false

1. False 2. True 3. False 4. True 5. False 6. True 7. False 8. True

Fill in the blanks

1. Old Regime 2. Subsistence 3. Philosophers 4. Mirabeau
5. Sceptre 6. Jacobins 7. Reign of Terror 8. Napoleon Bonaparte

EXERCISE # 2

SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Short answer type questions

1. What was the subsistence crisis? Why did it occur in France during the Old Regime?
2. What was the system of voting in the Estates General? What change did the Third Estate want in this system?
3. Describe the incidents that led to the storming of the Bastille.
4. Describe how the new political system of constitutional monarchy worked in France.
5. What were 'natural and inalienable rights'?
6. Why did slavery begin and why was it abolished in French colonies?
7. Explain what a revolution is. In what way did the French Revolution mean different things to different people?
8. What was the importance of the Declaration of the Rights of Man?
9. Discuss the role of women in the French Revolution.
10. What are the three important ideas of the French Revolution? How were they guaranteed under the constitution of 1791?

Long answer type questions

1. Discuss the political, economic and social causes of the French Revolution.
2. 'The French philosophers of the 18th century greatly influenced the people and it led to the French Revolution.' Comment on this statement.

3. Explain the importance of the following events on the course of the French Revolution:
(a) Storming of the Bastille
(b) March on the Versailles by the women of Paris
(c) The passing of the Civil Constitution of the clergy
4. Describe the Reign of Terror and role played by Robespierre in it.
5. What is the legacy left by the French Revolution?
6. What did the following symbols convey in the Declaration of Rights?
(i) The broken chain
(ii) The bundle of rods or fasces
(iii) The eye within a triangle radiating light
(iv) Sceptre
(v) Snake biting its tail to form a ring
(vi) Red Phrygian cap
(vii) Blue-White-Red
(viii) The winged woman
(ix) The law tablet
7. Who were the Jacobins? What was their contribution to the French Revolution?
8. Describe any four causes for the fall of Jacobin government in France.
9. Discuss the participation of women in political clubs, their activities and demands.
10. "The revolutionary government took it upon themselves to pass laws that would translate the ideals of liberty and equality into everyday practice." Discuss this statement with special emphasis on the abolition of censorship.

NCERT QUESTIONS WITH ANSWERS

1. Describe the circumstances leading to the outbreak of revolutionary protest in France.

Ans. Louis XVI of the Bourbon family of kings ascended the throne of France in 1774. Upon his accession he found that his treasury was empty. Long wars with Britain, the cost of maintaining an extravagant court at the immense palace of Versailles, cost of maintaining a regular army, court, running government offices, etc., had depleted the treasury. Louis XVI was forced to increase taxes. But this measure would not have sufficed as taxes were paid only by the third estate in the society.

The French society during this time was divided as :

Peasants made up about 90% of the population. However, very few owned land. About 60% of the land was owned by nobles, the church and the richer members of the third estate. The members of the first two estates enjoyed privileges and paid no taxes. The peasants had to pay the taxes, render services, serve in the army and work in the lord's house and fields. The Third Estate had to pay taxes such as tithes to the church, *taille*, a direct tax and many other indirect taxes.

The population of France also increased from 23 million in 1715 to 28 million in 1789. Food grains were now in great demand. Price of bread shot up. The supply could not match with the need and hence the subsistence crisis.

The 18th century witnessed the emergence of social groups, termed the middle class, who earned their wealth through an expanding overseas trade and from the manufacture of goods such as woollen and silk textiles. In addition the third estate included professionals such as lawyers or administrative officials. All these people were educated and believed that no group in society should be given privileges by birth. Such ideas which spoke of freedom and equal laws and opportunities for all were put forward by philosophers such as Voltaire and Rousseau. The ideas of these philosophers were discussed intensively in salons and coffee houses and spread among people through books and newspapers and even through loud reading for people who could not read or write. The news about imposing further taxes generated anger and protest against the system of privileges.

The king had to increase the taxes for various reasons. But how could he do it? He could not impose taxes according to his will alone. He had to call a meeting of the Estates General which then would pass the proposals for new taxes. The assembly of the Estates General was called on 5th May 1789. Voting in the Estates General had been conducted according to the principle that each estate had one vote. Members of the third estate demanded that voting now be conducted by the assembly as a whole, where each member would have one vote. This was according to the democratic principles put forward by philosophers. The king rejected this proposal and the members of the third estate walked out of the Assembly.

On 20th June, the members of the third estate assembled in the hall of an indoor tennis court in the grounds of Versailles. They declared themselves as a National Assembly. They were led by Mirabeau and Abbé Sieyès.

At this time, France went through a severe winter and the price of bread increased. Women were angry and annoyed. They stormed into shops for bread. At the same time, the king ordered troops to move into Paris. On 14 July the agitated crowd stormed the Bastille. This is taken as the beginning of the French Revolution and is known as the storming of the Bastille.

2. Which groups of French society benefitted from the revolution? Which groups were forced to relinquish power? Which sections of society would have been disappointed with the outcome of the revolution?

Ans. The common men (Third Estate) benefitted from the Revolution because they gained equal socio-economic status and liberty.

The clergy and nobility were forced to relinquish power. Their privileges were taken away. The moderates who wanted Constitutional Monarchy were disappointed because ultimately Napolian came to power.

3. Describe the legacy of the French Revolution for the peoples of the world during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Ans. The French Revolution not only affected France and changed its entire social and political system; it also had a lasting effect on the people of Europe in the 19th century. It inspired the Germans, Italians, and Austrians to overthrow their oppressive regimes. It led to a decade of political changes and Europe saw many revolutions inspired by the French Revolution.

The watchwords of the French Revolution such as liberty, equality and fraternity reflected the coming of a new democratic and social order in Europe and the world. The French Revolution inspired the struggling nations of Asia and Africa who were groaning under the oppression of colonialism. Many a nation aspiring for liberty sought inspiration from its ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity.

India's struggle for independence was inspired by the ideas of the great French philosophers like Voltaire and Rousseau and fired by the ideas expressed in the Rights of Man (1789). The French Revolution put into practice the idea that sovereignty comes from the people, from below and not from above.

A Greek guerrilla chieftain who led a revolt against the Turkish landlords in 1821 wrote :

"According to my judgement, the French Revolution opened the eyes of the world. The nations knew nothing before, and the people thought the kings were Gods upon the earth and they were bound to say that whatever they did was well done. In the present change it is more difficult to rule the people."

4. The French Revolution opened the eyes of the world to a profound social revolution. It marked the beginning, for the first time in history, of active and institutionalised mass participation in the government. The revolution led to many "isms." Explain.

Ans. (a) Nationalism : Nationalism led to many new nations emerging in Europe, Asia and Africa. A nation now no longer was the king's territory or his subjects. Rather, it now comprised citizens "who inhabited a common territory, possessed a voice in their common government and were conscious of their common heritage and their common interests."

(b) Liberalism : The main feature of this was emancipation of the individual from class, corporate or governmental restraint. It was the second great doctrine (a gift of the French Revolution) to impact the world. The Declaration of the Rights of Man asserted the liberty of the individual. That no authority could rule over the individuals in an arbitrary manner, was the message given. The Declaration stressed that all men are to be treated as equal before the law and that humanity implied fraternity among different peoples. The Declaration of Rights of Man inspired and guided many newly independent nations to frame their constitutions based on similar principles. The Indian constitution has borrowed a lot from it and liberty, equality and fraternity are included in the Preamble to our Constitution.

(c) Socialism : Liberalism emphasises the individual and his or her rights; socialism, on the other hand, emphasises the community and its collective welfare. This was also a result of the work of sans culottes during the Revolution. It promoted a society designed to promote collective well-being rather than individual profit. This was the main feature of the Russian Revolution which took place later.

5. Draw up a list of democratic rights we enjoy today whose origins could be traced to the French Revolution.

Ans. The rights we enjoy today are the rights of liberty, equality and fraternity.

6. Would you agree with the view that the message of universal rights was beset with contradictions? Explain.

Ans. The message of universal rights was beset with contradictions. The universal rights lay emphasis on the inalienable rights of man which mention property as one right which no government can ensure. Property will be owned by some and not by all. Even the ownership cannot be an equal division for all.

The Declaration also says that all citizens have the right to participate in the formation of laws, personally or through their representatives. All citizens are equal before it. But for this a country must have free and fair elections which does not happen everywhere. The universal rights also say that every citizen may speak, write and print freely. For this there must be freedom of press which in many governments is restricted.

7. How would you explain the rise of Napoleon?

Ans. The fall of the Jacobin government allowed the wealthier middle classes to seize power. A new constitution was introduced which denied the vote to non-propertied sections of society. It provided for two elected legislative councils. These then appointed a Directory, an executive made up of five members. This was meant as a safeguard against the concentration of power in a one-man executive as under the Jacobins. However, the Directors often clashed with the legislative councils, who then sought to dismiss them. The political instability of the Directory paved the way for the rise of a military dictator, Napoleon Bonaparte.

Important Notes