## French Revolution Basics -ER 20pt classwork Name:

The following forms a timeline for the French Revolution. Answer the questions on the right-hand side.

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| The Revolution is very complicated. In general, one can divide the Revolution into 4 phases:* Phase 1: **the *Bourgeois* Revolution**: the middle class rises up, overthrows the *nobility*, and tries to create a constitutional democratic monarchy that values trade and business. Creates substantial but moderate reforms.
* Phase 2: **the *Radical* Revolution**: the former allies of the *Bourgeoisie*, mostly urban poor who are much more *radical* in their ideas, hijack the revolution and attempt to bring about extreme reforms.
* Phase 3: **Moderate Reaction**: the bourgeoisie recapture power and roll back the most extreme reforms. Government does not work, is corrupt, and not well liked.
* Phase 4: **Napoleon**: France’s most successful general ends the revolution and builds an autocratic empire that is based partly on the ideas of the original revolutionaries. France fights and conquers most of Europe before being defeated.
 | **Define each in your own words:*** **Bourgeois Revolution**
* **Radical Revolution**
* **Moderate Reaction**
* **Napoleon**
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| **Important words:*** ***Bourgeoisie*:** another term for middle class. People who have decent jobs and who are fairly wealthy but are not nobility.
* ***Nobles/Nobility*:** people who have been born with wealth and privilege.
* ***Radical*:** extreme. Radical beliefs are extreme beliefs. Radicals are people with extreme beliefs.
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| **The Ancien Regime (1500-1792)**: The “Ancien Regime” was a term used to refer to the French political system from before the French Revolution. There were nobles with fabulous wealth and power and peasants with almost no rights. Since 1600, the monarchs of France had been *centralizing* power—slowly breaking the power of nobles and bringing all political control into the hands of the king.  | **What was the Ancien Regime like?** |
| **Important words:*** ***Centralizing power*:** bringing power into one place or into the hands of one person
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| **The Three Estates**: since the middle ages, France was divided into three “estates” which were basically social classes. At the top were priests who were immune to all taxes. Then there were Nobles, who were also immune to most taxes (not all). Nobles and Priests combined for about 3% of the French population.The other 97% belonged to the Third Estate. This was split between middle class (bourgeoisie), urban poor, and peasants. These people had little wealth and yet had to pay for almost all of the taxes the government collected. They also had to pay taxes to the priests and nobles. | **Label:*** **First Estate:**
* **Second Estate:**
* **Third Estate:**

**Describe the Third Estate****List all the groups to whom the 3rd Estate paid taxes** |
| **Economic Crisis**: the Ancien regime was a bad government. The King could only really tax the Third Estate, who didn’t have all that much money.The government also had a major *debt* issue. France supported America in the American Revolution. However, the war cost so much money that France struggled to pay back the loans it had taken out to fight the war. Adding to the problems, farming was an issue. France’s population had been growing recently. Its inefficient farming system struggled to produce enough food. The result was starving peasants who hated the nobles who further taxed them | **What was wrong with the tax system of the Ancien Regime?****What created the French Debt Crisis?****What other problems faced France?****Important words:*** ***Debt*:** money you owe.
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| **Phase 1: the Bourgeois Revolution** |
| **The Estates General (1789)**The King needed support to force the Nobles to pay taxes and to reform the deteriorating government. In a desperate effort to find this support, the King and his advisors turned to an ancient *institution* called the “Estates General.” The Estates General was a meeting of all the 3 estates in a huge council. In it, each estate had equal representation, 300 delegates. The 300 delegates from the first estate represented 150,000 priests. The 300 delegates from the second represented 350,000 nobles. And the 300 delegates from the third represented 3 million bourgeoisie and 22 million peasants or working poor.The *inequality* of this was obvious and hated by the Third Estate. The Third Estate wanted reform even more than the nobles and this was their chance to get it. They argued that it was grossly unfair that they should have no more vote than the other estates, who they greatly outnumbered. The King, needing support from the Third Estate, agreed and double their representation to 600 delegates. This pleased the Third Estate and they launched into preparations with excitement.However, the King began to realize that he wanted the proposed changes the Third Estate desired even less than the proposed changes the nobles wanted. So on the day the Estates General met, it was announced that the estates would vote as a whole estate, basically meaning the first estate had 1 vote, the second had 1, and the third had 1—regardless of how many delegates were in each. | **What was the Estates General?****Why did the King call it?****Why wasn’t it a fair system?****How did the King get the Third Estate to support the Estates General?****What did the King do to screw over the Third Estate?****Important words:*** ***Institution*:** an organization, group, or function of a government/society.
* ***Inequality*:** when two things are not equal or not fair to one group.
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| **Tennis Court Oath**The Third Estate felt cheated—like they had been tricked into supporting something they would have resisted. They refused to follow the rules and stated they would meet in one huge hall—all 1200 delegates —to create France’s new constitution. They worked for a few days in this manner while the King watched worriedly. Finally, the King locked the door to their assembly chamber, not letting them in.The Third Estate delegates met in an indoor tennis court and decided there whether to give in or to continue their work. There they decided to continue and made their famous Tennis Court Oath—a promise to never break up until France had a constitution. More critically, they declared themselves to be the National Assembly of France and invited the other 2 estates to join them. After a couple days, most of the 1st Estate joined and a handful of sympathetic nobles. | **Why did the Third Estate feel cheated?****How did the Third Estate respond?****What was the Tennis Court Oath?** |
| **The Storming of the Bastille**When word came to the people of France that the delegates of the Third Estate had taken power into their own hands, the people celebrated. But the King watched in growing concern. Rumors began to circulate that he planned to end the Assembly—by force if necessary.The people of Paris feared that war was coming and wanted to arm themselves and show the King that he had no power to fight the will of the people. Their target was the Bastille—a medieval castle/prison in the heart of Paris where the King’s political prisoners were held, tortured, and sometimes killed (though not in many years). The castle was stormed, some of the King’s soldiers killed, and a few people freed. No weapons were found but it sent a message to the King—he was no longer in control. Many date this attack as the beginning of the Revolution. | **What were the people of Paris concerned about before the Storming of the Bastille?****Why did they attack the Bastille? (2 reasons)****Why is this the “start” of the Revolution?** |
| **Women’s March (1789)**The real turning point, however, is the less noted Women’s March. Hungry and hearing that the King and Queen were hoarding bread, an army of women marched on the palace the King lived in. At the gates they demanded bread. There was none to be found.But they had a second demand. They took the King from his palace and brought him to Paris, to a castle in the city called the Tuilleries. Here he would rule France but here he could also be a *hostage* if need be. From here on, the King realized he could not directly fight the revolution and would typically surrender to its demands. | **What motivated the Women’s March?****Why did the Women’s March force the King to obey the Revolution?****Important word:*** ***Hostage*:** someone who can be killed if other people don’t follow your demands.
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| **The National Constituent Assembly (1789-1791)**After the third estate took control, they formed the National Constituent Assembly, a legislature for France. The king went along with it because he was a hostage.The Assembly was *moderate*. Most of the delegates of the Third Estate had been bourgeoisie, who had money and mostly just wanted rights, fair laws, and a more modern economic system—all things that the King also wanted. And it was extremely successful for a while. The most memorable acts of the Revolution came from this period. The last remnant of **Feudalism was abolished** in the first few months. A universal code of rights known as the **Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen** was created. And finally, the **First French Constitution** was written and signed in 1791, some two years after the beginning of the Revolution.The King eventually signed the *constitution* and the revolutionary government became a working government—a constitutional monarchy. | **What was the National Constituent Assembly?****What did the moderate, bourgeois government want?****List 3 great accomplishments of this government.****What kind of government did the constitution create?****Important Words:*** ***Moderate*:** not too extreme. At the middle ground between conservative and liberal.
* ***Constitution:*** a document that makes the rules for what a government can do
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| **Legislative Assembly (1791-1792)**Technically the King was the head of the French government but he had very limited powers. The successor to the National Assembly—the Legislative Assembly—had the actual power. This government was middle class, ruled by the principles of individual and economic freedom and the importance of rights. It was based upon reason. But it was also moderate. Only men could vote and only those who owned land could vote—about 10% of the French Population.So how’d it do? Not very well. France’s economy struggled. Its debt was still a problem. The French currency lost a lot of value. Peasants struggled to get food even more than before.The King fled France in 1791 to join the nobles living outside of France and end the revolution. Many of the more radical people in France wanted to see him executed for *treason*.France was at war now with both Austria and Prussia. France was not doing well in these wars either. And there were political issues too. This was a moderate revolution and had produced moderate changes that mostly helped the well-off bourgeois. The poor and radical still wanted more changes. These radicals increasingly identified with the term **Jacobin**.While the government was not radical enough to appease one part of its population, it was also not conservative enough to appease its peasants. By 1791, a huge part of France was revolting against the government, who they believed had gone too far with their changes. | **What were some of the principles of the Legislative Assembly?****What problems was there with the economy?****Describe the problem with the King****What happened in France’s wars?****Why were the radicals upset with the government?****What problems did the government have with peasants?****Important words:*** ***Treason*:** betraying your country
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| **Phase 2: Radical Revolution** |
| **The National Convention (1792-1795)**In 1792, the bourgeoisie lost control of the radicals that had helped them since the beginning. On August 10, angry people in Paris attacked the castle where the King had lived since the Women’s March. They declared the monarchy to be at an end. The radicals also took control of the government by scaring away all the moderates. They created a new government known as the National Convention.  | **How did Radicals take over the Revolution?** |
| **The Reign of Terror (1793-1794)**A symbol of this new revolutionary government would be the guillotine, a device used to behead people. The King would be one of the first to meet it. Having committed treason against his own country, he was executed in 1793.But many more would be executed. This new radical government was not nice to its enemies. Those who fought against it died. Those who spoke out against it died. Those who held too closely to the old ways died. With the revolution under threat, more and more radical people take power to defend the revolution. Eventually a group called the **Committee of Public Safety** takes over. This is a small council given total power over France. They make it their mission to end all disloyalty to the revolution. Over 13 months, 16,000 people are executed by the government—mostly on suspicion of being anti-revolutionary. | **What is a guillotine?****List at least 3 people/groups who were killed by the guillotine?****What was the mission of the Committee of Public Safety?** |
| **Radical Reforms**The National Convention was very radical and it killed a lot of people but it was also quite successful.It passed a law called the *Price Maximum*, which forced people to sell things at a low price. The bourgeoisie hated this because it prevented them from making lots of money but it ended the starvation problems. It passed another law called the *Levee en Masse*, which called up all young men to fight in the army. Their new, huge army easily crushed France’s enemies.This government abolished slavery, gave women rights, and allowed every man to vote. The people who ran this government were passionate about their ideas and believed they were creating a better world. For this reason, many people look up to this government as the best part of the revolution. | **What was the Price Maximum? Who did it help/hurt?****What was the Levee en Masse?****What was the result of the Levee en Masse?****Why do some people look up to this government?** |
| **Phase 3: Bourgeois Reaction** |
| **Thermidorian Reaction (1794)**On the 9th day of Thermidor, year III (July 27th, 1794). People had had enough. So many had gone to the guillotine, even many of the heroes of the Revolution. Danton, Brissot, D’Eglantine, Vergniaud, Hebert had all been champions of the people and were now dead.The “Thermidorian Reaction” was when the people finally rose up against the Committee of Public Safety and killed them. The Jacobins were banned from government and the Bourgeoisie took over once more. | **Why were people sick of the government?****What is the Thermidorian Reaction?** |
| **The Directory (1795-1799)**The Bourgeoisie took over again and created a government called the Directory. France cancelled many of the laws the bourgeoisie had hated. The Price Maximum was ended. Slavery was reintroduced in many colonies.But the Directory was not a success. The economy crashed again. The government was corrupt. The radicals still occasionally tried to seize the government. And now many of the nobles were returning and they too made several attempts at the government. The Directory’s answer to both was the army. Again and again the army stepped in to save the government. | **What decisions were reversed by the Directory?****List problems with the Directory** |
| **Phase 4: Napoleon** |
| **Napoleon’s Rise (1799-1804)**France’s greatest soldier was named Napoleon Bonaparte. In 1799, Napoleon and two of his allies led a revolt against the government and replaced the Directory with a military government under Napoleon’s control. | **Who was Napoleon?****How did he come to power?** |
| **Napoleon’s Government**Napoleon believed in many of the ideas of the Revolution but he also believed in order. So he began to recreate France. His most important work was the **Code Napoleon**. This was a complete rewriting of the French legal system. It focused on two things: the same laws apply to everyone and laws should be written so that they make sense to the common person. The Code Napoleon recognized many of the ideas of the revolution—right to a fair trial, no secret laws, equality before the law, natural rights, and similar things. But it was also fairly conservative. It removed the rights women had gained during the revolution, making them to servants to their fathers or husbands. It also made slavery legal again. | **What did Napoleon believe in?****What is the Code Napoleon?****What values of the revolution did the code continue?****What are some problems with it?** |
| **Wars of the Coalitions**France was too strong for any one country to defeat it, so the countries of Europe joined together in *coalitions* to try and defeat it. In all, there were seven coalitions.After the Levee en Masse in 1793, France consistently won these wars. Once Napoleon took control, these wars were even more successful. France began to conquer. By 1806, most of Western and Central Europe was under France’s control. Very little was actually conquered, but just replaced by *puppet governments*, ones controlled indirectly by Napoleon.In these places, the Code Napoleon was put into place and Napoleonic reforms applied to government and army. This is the first way that the gains of the French Revolution were spread. Fair trials, natural rights, and constitutions were forced upon many of Europe’s governments.But there was also an accidental legacy. People saw the secrets of France’s victories—the Levee en Masse, nationalism, and patriotic fervor. The legacy of Napoleon and the Revolution is as much a legacy of war, national hatred, and genocide as it is of freedom, democracy, and rights. By 1812, reforms in many countries, especially Prussia, were creating armies that could Rival Napoleon.Their chance came in 1812. Napoleon made his worst ever blunder. He invaded Russia in the fall of 1812. He destroyed Russia’s army easily but the winter soon settled in and his army was not ready. Of the 340,000 Frenchmen he brought, only 12,000 returned to France.Now the rest of Europe shook off their chains and the War of the Sixth Coalition began. It culminated in 1814 at Leipzig in Germany. An army of 350,000 coalition soldiers met an army of 200,000 French soldiers. It was the largest battle in European history to that date. Over a 5 day battle, 100,000 people died and Napoleon was defeated. Within weeks, he had surrendered to the Coalition. | **What were the Coalition Wars?****What was the turning point in the Coalition Wars?****Describe how Napoleon brought Europe under control:****What changes occurred in Europe under Napoleon’s control?****Describe the accidental legacy of Napoleon****How was Napoleon defeated in Russia?****List 3 facts about the Battle of Leipzig:** |
| **The Hundred Days (1815)**The Coalition restored the monarchy to France. They exiled Napoleon to a remote Italian island called Elba. However, many back home in France hated this restored monarchy and wanted Napoleon’s return back.Napoleon escaped Elba and returned to France. The monarchy fled and the French Army rallied to Napoleon, who they adored. For 100 days, the French empire lived again. A Seventh Coalition formed against him and quickly defeated him.He was again exiled but this time to one of the most remote places on earth, St Helena, an island in the middle of the southern Atlantic Ocean with no other landmass within 200 miles. He would die in 1821 at the age of 51. | **What happened to Napoleon?****What happened to France?****What happened during the 100 Days?****What was Napoleon’s final fate?** |
| **After the Revolution** |
| **Monarchy Restored**In 1815, France again had a monarchy. The nobles returned to a position of extreme wealth. In this sense the revolution failed. However, the grave inequalities that inspired the revolution never truly returned. Feudal privileges remained dead. Napoleon’s great law code stayed as well. And while people didn’t have all the rights they wanted, they did at least have some. In this sense, the revolution succeeded. | **In what ways was the revolution a failure?****In what ways was it a success?** |

### Wrap Up



Fill out timeline with the following periods: **Ancien Regime, Aristocratic Revolt, Bourgeois Revolution, Radical Revolution, Bourgeois Reaction, Napoleon.**

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| What was achieved or changed by each phase of the Revolution? Who was in charge? |
| **Bourgeois Revolution** | In charge: |
|  |
| **Radical Revolution** | In charge: |
|  |
| **Bourgeois Reaction** | In charge: |
|  |
| **Napoleon** | In charge: |
|  |