

the french revolution begins answer key

the french revolution begins answer key serves as an essential guide for understanding the complex origins and initial events of one of history's most significant political upheavals. The French Revolution, which began in 1789, was a period marked by radical social and political change, overthrowing the monarchy and establishing a republic. This answer key provides detailed explanations of key events, causes, and figures involved in the revolution's outset. It is designed to assist learners and educators in navigating the multifaceted causes such as social inequality, financial crises, and Enlightenment ideas that fueled revolutionary sentiments. Additionally, the key highlights major occurrences like the Estates-General, the Tennis Court Oath, and the storming of the Bastille, which symbolize the revolution's beginning. This comprehensive resource also clarifies the roles of the Estates, the significance of the National Assembly, and the impact of revolutionary rhetoric. The following sections will explore these topics in depth to provide a thorough understanding of how the French Revolution began.

- Causes of the French Revolution
- The Estates-General and the National Assembly
- The Tennis Court Oath
- The Storming of the Bastille
- Early Reforms and Consequences

Causes of the French Revolution

The French Revolution begins answer key first emphasizes the multiple causes that led to the outbreak of the revolution in 1789. Understanding these root causes is crucial to comprehending why the French populace rose up against the monarchy and the existing social order. The revolution was the result of a combination of political, social, economic, and intellectual factors that created widespread dissatisfaction among the French people.

Social Inequality and the Three Estates

At the core of the social causes was the rigid division of French society into three estates: the First Estate (clergy), the Second Estate (nobility), and the Third Estate (commoners). The Third Estate, comprising approximately

98% of the population, was burdened with heavy taxes and had little political power, while the First and Second Estates enjoyed privileges and exemptions. This imbalance fostered resentment and a desire for greater representation and rights among the commoners.

Economic Hardships and Financial Crisis

Economic difficulties significantly contributed to the revolutionary climate. France was burdened by debt from involvement in costly wars, including the American Revolution, and an inefficient tax system that failed to generate sufficient revenue. Poor harvests in the late 1780s led to food shortages and rising bread prices, intensifying public unrest. The monarchy's inability to reform the tax system or manage finances effectively deepened the crisis.

Influence of Enlightenment Ideas

The Enlightenment played a pivotal role in shaping revolutionary thought. Philosophers such as John Locke, Montesquieu, and Rousseau questioned traditional authority and advocated for liberty, equality, and popular sovereignty. These ideas inspired members of the Third Estate and some reform-minded nobles and clergy to challenge the absolute monarchy and demand political and social reforms.

The Estates-General and the National Assembly

The calling of the Estates-General in May 1789 marked a critical turning point in the French Revolution begins answer key. This assembly was convened by King Louis XVI to address the kingdom's financial crisis but instead became a platform for escalating political tensions and demands for change.

Structure and Purpose of the Estates-General

The Estates-General was an ancient representative body consisting of delegates from all three estates. Each estate had one vote, which often led to the First and Second Estates outvoting the Third Estate despite the latter's larger population. This voting system was a significant source of frustration for the commoners who sought greater influence.

Formation of the National Assembly

In response to the deadlock and refusal of the First and Second Estates to grant fairer voting procedures, members of the Third Estate took the bold step of declaring themselves the National Assembly in June 1789. This move asserted that they represented the people of France and had the authority to

enact laws and reforms. This declaration challenged the traditional structure of power and was a foundational moment in the revolution.

The Tennis Court Oath

The Tennis Court Oath is a defining event detailed in the French Revolution begins answer key that symbolizes the resolve of the revolutionaries to challenge royal authority and demand constitutional reform. It occurred shortly after the National Assembly's formation.

Background and Events Leading to the Oath

After being locked out of their usual meeting hall, the members of the newly formed National Assembly gathered in a nearby indoor tennis court. There, on June 20, 1789, they pledged not to disband until they had drafted a new constitution for France. This oath represented a collective commitment to political change and the establishment of a representative government.

Significance of the Tennis Court Oath

The Tennis Court Oath was a radical assertion of popular sovereignty and directly challenged the king's authority. It unified the Third Estate and sympathetic clergy and nobles around a common cause. This event marked the beginning of a constitutional revolution and set the stage for further confrontations with the monarchy.

The Storming of the Bastille

The storming of the Bastille on July 14, 1789, is one of the most iconic events in the French Revolution begins answer key. It symbolized the violent uprising of the people against tyranny and the beginning of widespread revolutionary activity throughout France.

Context and Causes of the Attack

The Bastille was a royal fortress and prison in Paris, representing the king's absolute power and oppression. Rumors of a military crackdown and shortages of weapons to defend the National Assembly heightened tensions. The people of Paris sought to seize arms and ammunition stored in the Bastille and to demonstrate their resistance to royal authority.

Consequences of the Bastille's Fall

The successful storming of the Bastille had profound political and symbolic implications. It encouraged revolutionary fervor across France, led to the collapse of royal authority in Paris, and forced King Louis XVI to recognize the National Assembly. The event remains a powerful symbol of liberty and the fight against oppression in French history.

Early Reforms and Consequences

Following these initial revolutionary events, the French Revolution begins answer key outlines subsequent reforms and their impacts on French society and governance. These early changes laid the groundwork for the dramatic transformation of France's political landscape.

Abolition of Feudal Privileges

One of the National Assembly's first actions was the August 1789 abolition of feudal privileges and the feudal system. This reform ended centuries-old customs that advantaged the nobility and clergy and aimed to establish equality before the law for all citizens. It addressed key grievances of the Third Estate and helped to dismantle the old regime.

The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen

In August 1789, the Assembly adopted this seminal document, which articulated fundamental rights such as liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression. Inspired by Enlightenment principles, it became a cornerstone for modern human rights and democratic governance, emphasizing equality and the sovereignty of the people.

Formation of a Constitutional Monarchy

Throughout 1790 and 1791, efforts were made to create a constitutional monarchy that limited the powers of King Louis XVI and established a legislative assembly. This period was marked by political experimentation and conflict between royalists and revolutionaries, foreshadowing the more radical phases of the revolution.

1. Social inequality and economic crises intensified dissatisfaction.
2. The Estates-General's failure led to the creation of the National Assembly.

3. The Tennis Court Oath symbolized commitment to political reform.
4. The storming of the Bastille ignited mass revolutionary action.
5. Early reforms dismantled feudal structures and promoted rights.

Frequently Asked Questions

What event is commonly considered the start of the French Revolution?

The storming of the Bastille on July 14, 1789, is commonly considered the start of the French Revolution.

Why was the storming of the Bastille significant in the French Revolution?

The Bastille was a royal fortress and prison symbolizing the tyranny of the Bourbon monarchy; its storming represented the uprising against royal authority.

What were the main causes leading to the beginning of the French Revolution?

The main causes included social inequality, economic hardship, financial crisis, and the influence of Enlightenment ideas promoting liberty and equality.

Who were the key groups involved at the beginning of the French Revolution?

The key groups were the Third Estate (commoners), the clergy (First Estate), and the nobility (Second Estate), with the Third Estate leading the revolutionary movement.

What was the Estates-General, and what role did it play at the start of the French Revolution?

The Estates-General was a legislative assembly representing the three estates; its meeting in 1789 led to the formation of the National Assembly by the Third Estate, marking the start of the revolution.

What was the Tennis Court Oath and why was it important?

The Tennis Court Oath was a pledge by members of the Third Estate to not disband until France had a new constitution, showing their commitment to political reform.

How did King Louis XVI react to the early revolutionary events?

King Louis XVI initially resisted the changes but eventually was forced to recognize the National Assembly and accept reforms due to growing unrest.

What role did Enlightenment ideas play in the beginning of the French Revolution?

Enlightenment ideas inspired demands for equality, liberty, and democratic government, motivating people to challenge the absolute monarchy.

What was the significance of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen?

Adopted in August 1789, it proclaimed the rights of all men to liberty, property, and security, laying the ideological foundation for the revolution.

How did economic conditions contribute to the start of the French Revolution?

Widespread poverty, food shortages, and government debt caused hardship among commoners, fueling anger and support for revolutionary change.

Additional Resources

1. The French Revolution: A Very Short Introduction

This concise book by William Doyle provides an accessible overview of the French Revolution, its causes, key events, and consequences. It outlines the political, social, and economic factors that led to the upheaval, as well as the major phases of the revolution. Ideal for readers seeking a clear and brief introduction with expert insights.

2. The Coming of the French Revolution

Written by Georges Lefebvre, this classic work delves into the origins and early stages of the French Revolution. Lefebvre explores the social and economic tensions in France that ignited the revolutionary movement. The book is praised for its detailed analysis and use of primary sources.

3. *Twelve Who Ruled: The Year of the Terror in the French Revolution*

By R.R. Palmer, this book focuses on the Committee of Public Safety and the Reign of Terror during the French Revolution. It provides a close look at the twelve leaders who wielded power during this turbulent period. Palmer combines narrative with political analysis to explain how revolutionary ideals gave way to violence.

4. *Citizens: A Chronicle of the French Revolution*

Simon Schama's narrative history offers a vivid and dramatic account of the French Revolution from its beginnings to its aftermath. The book combines personal stories with political events, revealing the complexities and contradictions of the revolution. Schama's engaging style brings to life the people and passions involved.

5. *The Oxford History of the French Revolution*

This authoritative volume by William Doyle is a comprehensive account of the French Revolution, covering its origins, development, and legacy. The book is well-regarded for its balanced perspective and scholarly rigor. It serves as an excellent resource for students and general readers alike.

6. *Revolutionary Ideas: An Intellectual History of the French Revolution from The Rights of Man to Robespierre*

Jonathan Israel explores the ideological foundations of the French Revolution in this intellectual history. The book traces the influence of Enlightenment thinkers and revolutionary leaders on the development of revolutionary ideas. It highlights how concepts of liberty, equality, and democracy evolved during the period.

7. *The French Revolution and Human Rights: A Brief Documentary History*

This collection edited by Lynn Hunt presents key documents related to the French Revolution and the emergence of human rights. It includes declarations, speeches, and writings that shaped revolutionary ideals and legal reforms. The book is a valuable resource for understanding the revolution's impact on human rights.

8. *Fatal Purity: Robespierre and the French Revolution*

Ruth Scurr's biography of Maximilien Robespierre examines the life of one of the revolution's most controversial figures. The book provides insight into Robespierre's motivations, political career, and role during the Reign of Terror. It also explores the complexities of revolutionary leadership and ideology.

9. *The Old Regime and the French Revolution*

Alexis de Tocqueville's classic analysis investigates the social and political structures of pre-revolutionary France. Tocqueville argues that the weaknesses of the Old Regime contributed to the inevitability of the revolution. The book remains a foundational text for understanding the context in which the French Revolution began.

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