

# The French Revolution

## Fastrack Revision

- ▶ The French Revolution was a period of far reaching political upheaval in France during the period of 1789 to 1799. The revolution overthrew the monarchy, established a republic and experienced violent periods of political turmoil.
- ▶ The causes leading to French Revolution are many. The important ones are as follows:
  - ▶ The basic structure of the French society during the late 18th century was one of the important cause of French Revolution. The peasants formed 90% of the population but about 60% of the land was owned by nobles, the Church and other richer members of the third estate. All members of the third estate had to pay taxes to the state which included a direct tax and a number of other indirect taxes.
  - ▶ In 1774, Louis XVI of the Bourbon family of kings ascended the throne of France. On his accession, he found an empty treasury because long years of war had drained the financial resources of France and the cost of maintaining an extravagant court at the palace of Versailles was immense.
  - ▶ The population of France rose from about 23 million in 1715 to 28 million in 1789. With incomes dwindling, this ensued a struggle for survival for the French population.
- ▶ Voting in Estates General was conducted on the basis that each estate has one vote. But on this day the third estate demanded one vote for each member which was put forward as a democratic principle by Rousseau in his book, The Social Contract.
- ▶ As the king rejected this proposal, the members of the third estate walked out of the assembly, in protest.
- ▶ The representatives of the third estate assembled in an indoor tennis court, in the grounds of Versailles on 20th June, 1789. They declared themselves a National Assembly. They decided to draft a Constitution for France that would limit the powers of the monarch. They were led by *Mirabeau* and *Abbé Sieyès*.
- ▶ On 14th July, 1789, after spending hours in long queues at the bakery, crowds of angry women stormed into the shops. Agitated crowd also stormed and destroyed Bastille, a fort prison.
- ▶ Meanwhile, rumours spread in the countryside that the feudal lords of the manor would send bands of brigands to destroy the ripe crops. The peasants were caught in fear, thus they attacked the residences of the landlords (châteaux). They looted hoarded grains and burnt down documents having records of manorial dues. Unable to control the situation, Louis XVI finally gave recognition to the National Assembly, accepting that from now on, his powers would be checked by a Constitution.
- ▶ On 14th August, 1789, the Assembly passed a decree abolishing the feudal system of obligations and taxes and lands owned by the Church were confiscated.
- ▶ The draft of the Constitution was completed by the National Assembly in 1791.
- ▶ The Constitution began with a 'Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizens'. The right to life, freedom of speech, freedom of opinion and equality before law were established as 'natural and inalienable' rights and France was declared a constitutional monarchy.

### Knowledge BOOSTER

*In the 18th century, the French society was divided into three estates. The first estate comprised of clergy, the second estate of nobility and the third estate comprised of businessmen, merchants, lawyers, peasants, etc.*

- ▶ The 18th century saw the emergence of social groups known as the middle class. Their idea of envisaging a society were based on freedom and equal laws and opportunities for all.
- ▶ A chain of events led to the outbreak of French Revolution, as discussed.
- ▶ On 5th May, 1789, Louis XVI called an assembly of the Estates General to pass proposals for new taxes. The first and second estates sent 300 representatives each, who were seated in rows facing each other, while 600 prosperous and educated members of the third estate had to stand at the back.

### Knowledge BOOSTER

*Louis XVI had helped 13 American colonies to gain their independence from Britain. These wars increased the existing debt of 2 billion livres by a billion livres.*

### Knowledge BOOSTER

*'The Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen' proclaimed freedom of speech and expression to be a natural right.*

- ▶ The situation in France continued to be tense in the following years and the following events led to the establishment of republic:
  - ▶ National Assembly voted in April 1792 to declare war against Prussia and Austria. These revolutionary wars brought losses and economic difficulties to the people.

## Knowledge BOOSTER

Louis XVI was sentenced to death by a court on the charge of treason. On 21st January, 1793, he was executed publicly at the Place de La Concorde.

- ▶ For people the revolt was not over. They wanted to get political rights for the poor classes also.
- ▶ The political clubs became important rallying points to discuss government policies and plan the future course of action. The most successful of these clubs was that of the Jacobins. Their leader was Maximilien Robespierre.
- ▶ On 10th August, 1792, Jacobins stormed the palace of Tuilleries, massacred the king's guards and held the king himself as hostage for several hours.
- ▶ Elections were held. The newly elected Assembly was called the Convention. On 21st September, 1792, it abolished the monarchy and declared France a republic i.e., a form of government which is elected by the people. The Jacobins came to power.
- ▶ 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 the enemies of the republic, viz., ex-nobles, clergy, members of other political parties, members of his own party who didn't agree with him, were arrested, imprisoned and then tried by a revolutionary tribunal. If the court found them guilty, they were guillotined.

## Knowledge BOOSTER

The guillotine was a device, named after its inventor Dr Joseph Ignace Guillotin, which consisted of two poles and a blade, with which a person was beheaded.

- ▶ Finally, Robespierre was convicted by a court in July 1794 and he was also guillotined.
- ▶ The fall of Jacobin government led the wealthier middle classes to seize power and they introduced a new Constitution which denied the right to vote to the non-propertied sections of society and 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, leading to political instability.
- ▶ The political instability of the Directory paved the way for the rise of a military dictator, Napoleon Bonaparte.
- ▶ In 1804, Napoleon Bonaparte crowned himself the Emperor of France. He conquered the neighbouring European countries.
- ▶ Napoleon, a moderniser, introduced laws such as protection of private property and a uniform system of weights and measures backed by the decimal system. These were referred to as 'Napoleonic Code'.
- ▶ The French Revolution had the following far-reaching effects on the society at large:
  - ▶ Women were active participants in the events that brought about so many important changes in the French society.

- ▶ One of the most revolutionary social reforms of Jacobin regime was the abolition of slavery in French colonies.
- ▶ The revolutionary government passed laws that translated the ideals of liberty and equality into everyday practice. One important law that came into effect soon after the storming of the Bastille in the summer of 1789 was the abolition of censorship.

## Knowledge BOOSTER

Olympe de Gouges was one of the most important politically active women in revolutionary France who protested against the Constitution and the 'Declaration of Rights of Man and Citizen' as they excluded women from the basic rights that each human being was entitled to.



## Important Dateline

Date/ Year	Important Events
1774	— Louis XVI ascended throne of France.
5th May, 1789	— The king called an assembly of the Estates General to pass proposals for new taxes.
20th June, 1789	— Third estate representatives assembled and took the Tennis Court Oath. They formed a National Assembly.
4th August, 1789	— National Assembly passed a decree to abolish the feudal system of obligations and taxes.
5th October, 1789	— Women marched to Versailles and brought back King Louis XVI with them to Paris.
1791	— National Assembly completed draft of new Constitution; Revolutionary women Olympe de Gouges writes 'Declaration of the Rights of Woman and Citizen'.
April, 1792	— National Assembly voted to declare war against Prussia and Austria.
21st September, 1792	— Monarchy abolished and France declared a republic.
1793 – 1794	— All slaves in French overseas possessions freed, but decision overturned by Napoleon ten years later.
July, 1794	— Robespierre arrested and executed.
1804	— Napoleon Bonaparte crowned himself Emperor of France.
1815	— Napoleon finally defeated at Waterloo.
1848	— Slavery finally abolished in French colonies.
1946	— Women in France won the right to vote.



# Practice Exercise

## Multiple Choice Questions

- Q 1. 18th century French society was divided into:**  
 a. castes                                      b. four Estates  
 c. three Estates                              d. two Estates
- Q 2. King in France at the time of French revolution was:**  
 a. Louis XIV                                    b. Louis XVI  
 c. Marie Antoinette                            d. Nicholas II
- Q 3. The members of which of the following estates enjoyed privileges by birth?**  
 a. Clergy                                        b. Nobility  
 c. Both a. and b.                              d. Peasants and artisans
- Q 4. When did Louis XVI call an assembly of Estates General to pass proposals for new taxes?**  
 a. 14th July, 1789                              b. 5th May, 1789  
 c. 20th June, 1789                              d. 4th August, 1789
- Q 5. Who said, "The task of representing the people has been given to the rich"?**  
 a. Mirabeau                                      b. Jean-Paul Marat  
 c. Rousseau                                      d. Georges Denton
- Q 6. When did French Revolution occur?**  
 a. 1780    b. 1789    c. 1689    d. 1796
- Q 7. The eighteenth century witnessed the emergence of which new social group in France?**  
 a. Middle class                                    b. Nobility  
 c. Working class                                    d. None of these
- Q 8. Which of the following was the main objective of the Constitution of 1791?**  
 a. To limit the powers of the king alone  
 b. Do away with feudal privileges  
 c. Give equal rights to women  
 d. Establish a constitutional monarchy
- Q 9. Which of the following was given power to make laws by the Constitution of 1791?**  
 a. Convention                                      b. National Assembly  
 c. Directory                                        d. Clergy and Nobility
- Q 10. When did Bastille was demolished?**  
 a. 14th July, 1789                              b. 5th May, 1789  
 c. 20th June, 1789                              d. 26th August, 1789
- Q 11. Name the leader(s) of the third estate in France.**  
 a. Mirabeau                                        b. Abbé Sieyès  
 c. Both a. and b.                                d. None of these
- Q 12. When did French women march to Versailles and brought the King Louis XVI back with them to Paris?**  
 a. 5th October, 1789                              b. 10th October, 1789  
 c. 10th November, 1791                            d. 10th June, 1790
- Q 13. Who advocated government based on Social Contract?**  
 a. Darwin                                        b. Spencer  
 c. Rousseau                                      d. Montesquieu
- Q 14. Which estate in France demanded that each member of an estate would have one vote?**  
 a. First estate  
 b. Second estate  
 c. Third estate  
 d. Both first and second estates
- Q 15. France on 21st September, 1792 was declared as:**  
 a. Socialist State                                b. Democracy  
 c. Communist State                              d. Republic
- Q 16. The National Assembly of France voted in April ..... to declare war against Prussia and Austria.**  
 a. 1789    b. 1792    c. 1780    d. 1790
- Q 17. Who wrote the national anthem of France Marsellaise?**  
 a. John Locke                                      b. Jacques Rousseau  
 c. Voltaire                                        d. Roget de L'Isle
- Q 18. Tax to be paid directly to the state in French society is known as:**  
 a. Tithe    b. Taille  
 c. Livre    d. None of these
- Q 19. Till 1794, Livre was the unit of currency in:**  
 a. USA    b. Germany  
 c. France                                        d. All of these
- Q 20. The book 'The Spirit of the Laws' was written by:**  
 a. John Locke                                      b. Montesquieu  
 c. Rousseau                                        d. None of these
- Q 21. An extreme situation in which the basic means of livelihood are endangered is known as:**  
 a. Subsistence crisis                              b. Struggle to survive  
 c. Economic crisis                                d. None of these

## Knowledge BOOSTER



Rapid expansion of the French society led to the subsistence crisis where the basic means of livelihood are endangered.

- Q 22. The philosopher, who sought to refute the doctrine of the divine and absolute right of the monarch is:**  
 a. Rousseau                                        b. John Locke  
 c. Spinoza                                        d. Montesquieu
- Q 23. When was slavery abolished in French colonies?**  
 a. 1848    b. 1849    c. 1850    d. 1851
- Q 24. Who wrote the 'Declaration of the Rights to Woman and Citizen'?**  
 a. Olympe de Gouges                              b. Mirabeau  
 c. Abbé Sieyès                                      d. None of these

Who defeated in the battle of Waterloo?

- a. Rousseau                      b. Napoleon  
c. Robespierre                  d. Louis XVI

When did Napoleon Bonaparte crown himself as Emperor of France?

- a. In 1798                          b. In 1800  
c. In 1804                          d. In 1802

Q 27. Which of the following were the national colours of France during the French Revolution?

- a. Blue-green-yellow          b. Red-green-blue  
c. Blue-white-red              d. Yellow-red-white

Q 28. Study the picture and answer the question that follows:



What does the above picture convey?

- a. Personification of law      b. Law is same for all  
c. Royal power                  d. Freedom

Q 29. Find the correct sequence:

- A. Third estate forms National Assembly  
B. France becomes a republic  
C. Louis XVI becomes the King of France  
D. A Constitution is formed to limit the powers of the king
- a. C→B→D→A                  b. C→A→D→B  
c. B→C→D→A                  d. B→D→A→C

Q 30. Who was the author of the book 'Two Treatises of Government'?

- a. Jean Jacques Rousseau      b. John Locke  
c. Montesquieu                  d. Napoleon Bonaparte

Q 31. Identify the correct pair:

- a. 1948 → Women in France won the right to vote.  
b. 1848 → Napoleon finally defeated at Waterloo.  
c. 1791 → National Assembly completed draft of new Constitution.  
d. 1789 → Louis XVI ascended throne of France.

Q 32. Match the following:

Column I	Column II
1. Marie Antoinette	A. 'Two Treatises of Government'.
2. Locke	B. 'What is the Third Estate?'
3. Rousseau	C. Wife of Louis XVI.

4. Abbe Sleyes

D. Proposed a form of government on the basis of social contract between people and their representatives.

- |      |   |   |   |      |   |   |   |
|------|---|---|---|------|---|---|---|
| 1    | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1    | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| a. C | A | D | B | b. C | B | D | A |
| c. C | B | A | D | d. A | C | D | B |



**TIP**

Find the correct match of the columns and then choose the correct code.

Q 33. Read the statements carefully and choose the correct option:

Statement (I): The period from 1795 to 1798 is referred as the Reign of Terror.  
Statement (II): Robespierre followed a policy of severe control and punishment.

- a. Statement (I) is correct and (II) is incorrect.  
b. Statement (I) is incorrect and (II) is correct.  
c. Both statements are incorrect.  
d. Both statements are correct.

Q 34. Read the statements carefully and choose the correct option:

Statement (I): The revolutionary wars brought losses and economic difficulties to the people.  
Statement (II): While the men were away fighting at the front, women were left to cope with the tasks of earning a living and looking after their families.

- a. Statement (I) is correct and (II) is incorrect.  
b. Statement (I) is incorrect and (II) is correct.  
c. Both statements are incorrect.  
d. Both statements are correct.



**Assertion & Reason Type Questions**

Directions (Q.Nos. 35-44): In the following questions given below, there are two statements marked as Assertion (A) and Reason (R). Read the statements and choose the correct option:

- a. Both Assertion (A) and Reason (R) are true and Reason (R) is the correct explanation of Assertion (A).  
b. Both Assertion (A) and Reason (R) are true, but Reason (R) is not the correct explanation of Assertion (A).  
c. Assertion (A) is true, but Reason (R) is false.  
d. Assertion (A) is false, but Reason (R) is true.

Q 35. Assertion (A): The third estate comprised all the people of France except the clergy (first estate) and the nobility second estate.

Reason (R): The third estate paid all the taxes in French society.

Q 36. Assertion (A): Under the new Constitution, the laws were to be made by the National Assembly.

Reason (R): The main objective of National Assembly was to limit the powers of the monarch.

Assertion (A): The goal of all political associations is the preservation of the natural rights of woman and man.

Reason (R): The Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen mentions about both men and women.

Q 38. Assertion (A): Robespierre's government issued laws placing a maximum ceiling on wages and prices. Meat and bread were rationed.

Reason (R): Peasants were forced to transport their grain to the cities and sell it at prices fixed by the government.

Q 39. Assertion (A): It was finally in 1946 that women in France won the Right to Vote.

Reason (R): The example of the political activities of French women during the revolutionary years was kept alive as an inspiring memory.

Q 40. Assertion (A): A broken chain stands for the act of becoming free.

Reason (R): Chains were used to fetter slaves.



### TIP

A broken chain stands for the act of becoming free. The symbol of broken chain represents freedom. It signifies freedom from slavery. In terms of the French Revolution, the broken chain signified freedom for the peasants and the third estate i.e., normal people as opposed to the aristocracy. Chains were used to fetter slaves and broken chain symbolises the freedom from slavery.

Q 41. Assertion (A): The news spread that Louis XVI planned to impose further taxes.

Reason (R): To meet the expenses of the state generated anger and protest against the system of privileges.

Q 42. Assertion (A): During the eighteenth century, France witnessed the emergence of a middle class.

Reason (R): The emergence of the middle class happened on account of royal patronage.

Q 43. Assertion (A): In many ways, the French Revolution was a very significant event in the history of the world.

Reason (R): The French Revolution not only inspired French citizens to take action but it inspired many philosophers and leaders across the globe.



### TIP

The French Revolution is called 'The Dawn of Modern Era.' It ended a medieval society dominated by kings, priests and nobles signalling the beginning of a New-Era. The Modern Era. It not only inspired French citizens but also inspired nationalist leaders like Tipu Sultan and Ram Mohan Roy and philosophers like Karl Marx.

Q 44. Assertion (A): In 1805, Napoleon Bonaparte crowned himself Emperor of France.

Reason (R): Initially, many saw him as a liberator who would bring freedom for the people.

## Answers

- |         |         |         |         |         |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 1. (c)  | 2. (b)  | 3. (d)  | 4. (b)  | 5. (b)  |
| 6. (b)  | 7. (a)  | 8. (d)  | 9. (b)  | 10. (a) |
| 11. (c) | 12. (a) | 13. (c) | 14. (c) | 15. (d) |
| 16. (b) | 17. (d) | 18. (b) | 19. (c) | 20. (b) |
| 21. (a) | 22. (b) | 23. (a) | 24. (a) | 25. (b) |
| 26. (c) | 27. (c) | 28. (a) | 29. (b) | 30. (b) |
| 31. (c) | 32. (a) | 33. (b) | 34. (d) | 35. (b) |
| 36. (b) | 37. (c) | 38. (b) | 39. (b) | 40. (a) |
| 41. (a) | 42. (c) | 43. (d) | 44. (d) |         |



## Source Based Questions

### Source 1

Read the source given below and answer the questions that follow by choosing the most appropriate option:

In 1774, Louis XVI of the Bourbon family of kings ascended the throne of France. He was 20 years old and married to the Austrian princess Marie Antoinette. Upon his accession the new king 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. Under Louis XVI, France helped the thirteen American colonies to gain their independence from the common enemy, Britain. The war added more than a billion *livres* to a debt that had already risen to more than 2 billion *livres*. Lenders who gave the state credit, now began to charge 10 per cent interest on loans. So, the French government was obliged to spend an increasing percentage of its budget on interest payments alone. To meet its regular expenses, such as the cost of maintaining an army, the court, running government offices or universities, the state was forced to increase taxes. Yet even this measure would not have sufficed. French society in the eighteenth century was divided into three estates, and only members of the third estate paid taxes.

The society of estates was part of the feudal system that dated back to the middle ages. The term Old Regime is usually used to describe the society and institutions of France before 1789.

Q 1. Identify the correct option regarding the French treasury when Louis XVI became King of France in 1744.

- The financial resources of France had drained
- The French treasury was empty
- Taxes were increased to improve the cost of maintenance
- Interest on loans were increased to raise the credit

Name the group of persons invested with special functions in the church.

- a. Peasants
- b. Nobles
- c. Clergy
- d. Feudals

Q 3. Which family was ruling in France when the French Revolution took place?

- a. Bourbon family
- b. Sultan family
- c. Middle class family
- d. Jacobins

Q 4. How many American colonies gained independence from Britain under Louis XVI?

- a. 12
- b. 13
- c. 14
- d. 15

Q 5. Why was the French government obliged to spend an increasing percentage of its budget on interest payments alone?

- a. To meet the regular expenses
- b. To reduce the debt burden
- c. Lenders were charging 10 per cent interest on loans
- d. To fulfill the requirements of huge amount of money for maintenance

Q 6. Identify the cause(s) for the empty treasury of France under Louis XVI.

- a. The king's court at the immense palace of Versailles required huge amount of money for its maintenance.
- b. Taxes were levied only on the third estate and the first and second estates who were rich were exempted from paying taxes.
- c. The war with Britain added more than a billion livres to a debt that had already risen to more than 2 billion livres.
- d. All of the above.

### Answers

1. (b) 2. (c) 3. (a) 4. (b) 5. (c) 6. (d)

### Source 2

Read the source given below and answer the questions that follow by choosing the most appropriate option:

Although Louis XVI had signed the Constitution, he entered into secret negotiations with the King of Prussia. Rulers of 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 to declare 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. Among the patriotic songs they sang was the *Marseillaise*, composed by the poet Rogé de L'Isle. It was sung

for the first time by volunteers from Marseilles as they marched into Paris and so got its name. The *Marseillaise* is now the national anthem of France. The revolutionary wars brought losses and economic difficulties to the people. While the men were away fighting at the front, women were left to cope with the tasks of earning a living and looking after their families. 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. Women too, who had been active throughout this period, formed their own clubs.

Q 1. How did the volunteers from various provinces see war against Prussia and Austria?

- a. As a war to endanger the basic means of livelihood.
- b. As a war of the people against kings and aristocracies all over Europe.
- c. As a direct consequence of measures taken by the government.
- d. As a matter of political tension in the whole of Europe.

Q 2. What is the national anthem of France?

- a. Chateaux
- b. Marseillaise
- c. Sans-culottes
- d. Taille

Q 3. Identify the incorrect statement regarding Jacobins.

- a. The Jacobins or the society of the friends of the Constitution was the most famous and influential club prior to the French Revolution.
- b. It became an important rallying point for people who wished to discuss government policies and plan their own forms of action.
- c. The members belonged mainly to the prosperous section of society.
- d. Shopkeepers, artisans like shoe-makers, pastry cooks, servants, daily wage workers were included in it.

Q 4. How did the Jacobin club get its name?

- a. From the society of the friends of the Constitution.
- b. From the former convent of St. Jacob in Paris.
- c. From the active women who formed their own clubs.
- d. From the fashionable sections of society especially nobles who wore knee length breeches.

Q 5. Name the poet who composed the patriotic song, *Marseillaise*.

- a. Louis XVI
- b. Mirabeau
- c. Abbé Sleyès
- d. Rogé de L'Isle



Who seized power after the fall of the Jacobin government?

- a. The third estate
- b. The clergy and the nobility
- c. The wealthier middle classes
- d. The first and second estates

### Answers

1. (b) 2. (b) 3. (c) 4. (b) 5. (d) 6. (c)

### Source 3

Read the source given below and answer the questions that follow:

On 5th May, 1789, Louis XVI called together an assembly of the 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. However, their grievances and demands were listed in some 40,000 letters which the representatives had brought with them.

Voting in the Estates General in the past had been conducted according to the principle that each estate had one vote. This time too Louis XVI was determined to continue the same practice. But 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 one of the democratic 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.

**Q 1. Which section of French society was forced to give up their powers after the French Revolution?**

**Ans.** The first and second estates were forced to give up their powers after the French Revolution.

**Q 2. What did the members of the third estate demanded about voting?**

**Ans.** The members of the third estate demanded that voting must be conducted as a whole where each member would have one vote.

**Q 3. Mention the divisions in French society before the French Revolution.**

**Ans.** The French society was divided into three estates:  
(i) **First Estate:** It comprised of the clergy which was a group of persons invested with special functions in the church.

(ii) **Second Estate:** This estate comprised of nobility which were the aristocrats and landlords.

(iii) **Third Estate:** This comprised the big businessman, merchants, peasants, artisans, city workers and middle class people.

### Source 4

Read the source given below and answer the questions that follow:

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 – ex-nobles and clergy, members of other political parties, even members of his own party who did not agree with his methods – were arrested, imprisoned and then tried by a revolutionary tribunal. If the court found them 'guilty' they were guillotined. The guillotine is a device consisting of two poles and a blade with which a person is beheaded. It was named after Dr Guillotin who invented it.

Robespierre's government issued laws placing a maximum ceiling on wages and prices. Meat and bread were rationed. Peasants were forced to transport their grain to the cities and 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.

**Q 1. What do you understand by the term 'Reign of Terror'?**

**Ans.** The period from September 1793 to July 1794 is referred to as the 'Reign of Terror'. During this period, Robespierre who ruled France at that time, followed a policy of severe control and punishment and terrorised people with his harsh measures.

**Q 2. What type of device is guillotine?**

**Ans.** The guillotine is a device consisting of two poles and a blade with which a person is beheaded.

**Q 3. Write any two changes seen in the regime of Robespierre's government.**

**Ans.** Two changes seen in the regime of Robespierre's government are:

(i) Peasants were forced to transport their grain to the cities and sell it at fixed prices by the government.

(ii) Churches were also shut down and their buildings were converted into barracks or offices.



## Very Short Answer Type Questions ↘

**Who ascended the throne of France in 1774?**

Louis XVI of the Bourbon family of kings ascended the throne of France in 1774.

**Q 2. When was the Estates General last convened?**

**Ans.** The Estates General was last convened in 1614.

**Q 3. Who constituted the Estates General?**

**Ans.** The representatives of all three estates constituted the Estates General.

**Q 4. In the 18th century French society, which estates enjoyed privileges by birth?**

**Ans.** The members of the First estate (clergy) and second estate (nobility) enjoyed privileges by birth.

**Q 5. Who were given the status of active citizens?**

**Ans.** Men above 25 years, who paid taxes equal to at least 3 days of a labourer's wages were given the status of active citizens.


**Q 6. Name the classes which formed the privileged estates.**

**Ans.** The clergy and the nobility constituted the privileged estates.

**Q 7. Who belonged to the third estate?**

**Ans.** The third estate comprised all the people of France except the clergy (first estate) and the nobility (second estate).

## Knowledge BOOSTER

 Clergy were a group of persons invested with special functions in the church.

**Q 8. Which estate of French society paid all taxes?**

**Ans.** The Third Estate paid all the taxes in French society.

**Q 9. Name the three 'estates' into which the French society was divided before the revolution.**

**Ans.** The three estates into which the French society was divided were:

The First Estate — Clergy.

The Second Estate — Nobility.

The Third Estate — Common People.

**Q 10. Who wrote the book, 'The Spirit of the Laws?'**

**Ans.** Montesquieu wrote the book 'The Spirit of the Laws'.

**Q 11. What was proposed by Montesquieu in his book 'The Spirit of the Laws?'**

**Ans.** Montesquieu proposed the division of power between the Legislative, the Executive and the Judiciary in his book 'The Spirit of the Laws'.

**Q 12. The 18th century witnessed the emergence of which social group in France?**

**Ans.** The 18th century witnessed the emergence of the middle class in France.

**Q 13. What were the legacies of the French Revolution?**

**Ans.** Ideas of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity were the legacies of the French Revolution.

**Q 14. What was the main political reason of the French Revolution?**

**Ans.** The luxurious living of the despotic ruler and absence of any uniform system were the main political reason of the French Revolution.

**Q 15. What inspired the political thinkers in France?**

**Ans.** The American Constitution and its guarantee of individual rights inspired the political thinkers in France.

**Q 16. Look at the following image and explain why the artist has portrayed the nobleman as the spider and the peasant as the fly.**



**Ans.** The spider feeds on the fly, whereas the fly does hard labour for finding its food. It means in 18th century, France, the nobles lived off the labour of the peasants.

**Q 17. Look at the following image carefully and write the name of character who shown in the image.**



**Ans.** Nanine Vallain, Liberty.

This painting is a female allegory of liberty that is the female form that symbolises the idea of freedom.

**Q 18. 'The eighteenth 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.' Substantiate your answer with any two reasons.**



The role of middle class in French are:

- (i) The rational ideas of the French intellectuals based on principles of freedom, equal laws and opportunities for all, inspired the middle class. They envisaged a society based on merit, not birth.
- (ii) The middle class provided the peasants and workers the vital leadership to help bring about change in the social and economic order.



### Short Answer Type Questions ↘

**Q 1. List the factors which contributed to the financial crisis faced by France during the reign of Louis XVI.**

**Ans.** The factors contributing to the financial crisis were:

- (i) French involvement with the American wars of independence drained the financial resources.
- (ii) The burden of interest payments on state loans increased the debt.
- (iii) Luxurious living of Louis XVI and the maintenance of an extravagant court made matters worse.
- (iv) The faulty system of taxation itself was a cause of the economic crisis. The privileged classes who were capable, were exempted from taxes while the unprivileged classes with scarce resources were burdened with heavy taxes.

**Q 2. What was the Estates General? Which demand of the third estate did Louis XVI reject?**

**Ans.** The Estates General was a political body to which the three estates sent their representatives. The Estates General had the power to pass proposals for levying new taxes.

All the three estates were entitled to vote, but voting was done on the basis of the principle that each estate had one vote. But now, the third estate wanted voting to be done by the Assembly, as a whole, whereby each member should possess one vote. This demand was rejected by Louis XVI.

**Q 3. Discuss the role of the middle class in the French Revolution.**

**Ans.** The role of the middle class is described as under:

- (i) The middle class constituted the educated and the well-off section of the third estate. Despite this, they enjoyed no political rights or social status.
- (ii) The rational ideas of the French intellectuals based on principles of freedom, equal laws and opportunities for all, inspired the middle class. They envisaged a society based on merit, not birth.
- (iii) The middle class provided the peasants and workers the vital leadership to help bring about change in the social and economic order.

### Knowledge BOOSTER

*The middle class drew inspiration from philosophers such as John Locke, Jean Jacques Rousseau and Montesquieu.*

**Q 4. How did storming of Bastille became the main cause of the French Revolution?**

**Ans.** In France, due to bad harvest, the price of bread increased. To worsen the situation, the bakers started hoarding bread. In such a situation the women attacked the bakeries and the king ordered the troops into Paris. The angry crowd stormed and destroyed Bastille, a fortress prison, and this marked the start of the French Revolution.

**Q 5. What was the significance of 'The Tennis Court Oath' in the French Revolution?**

**Ans.** 'The Tennis Court Oath' was a significant event in the French Revolution.

- (i) The Oath was taken on 20th June in the hall of an indoor court, on the grounds of Versailles.
- (ii) The members of the third estate declared themselves as a National Assembly and swore not to disperse till they had drafted a Constitution for France that would limit the powers of the monarchy.
- (iii) The National Assembly drafted the new Constitution which laid the foundation for the Republic of France.

**Q 6. What drastic changes were brought about by the National Assembly in 1789?**

**Ans.** The following changes were brought about by the National Assembly in 1789:

- (i) The powers of Louis XVI were to be checked by the Constitution.
- (ii) The feudal system of obligations and taxes was abolished.
- (iii) The members of the clergy were forced to give up their privileges.
- (iv) Tithes were abolished and lands owned by the Church were confiscated.

**Q 7. Which three causes led to the subsistence crisis in France during the old Regime?**

**Ans.** The three causes that led to the subsistence crisis in France are as follows:

- (i) The population of France rose from about 23 million in 1715 to 28 million in 1789. With incomes dwindling, this ensued a struggle for survival for the French population.
- (ii) The demand for food grains increased leading to an increase in their prices.
- (iii) Price of bread, the staple food, rose at an alarming rate, but the wages did not increase at the same rate.

### What was Guillotine? How was it used?

Guillotine was a device consisting of two poles and a blade with which the accused was beheaded. It was named after Dr Joseph Ignace Guillotin, who invented it.

It was used in Robespierre's government, which followed a policy of severe control and punishment. Those who did not agree with the government were arrested, imprisoned, and then tried by a revolutionary tribunal. If the tribunal found them guilty, they were guillotined.

### COMMON ERROR

Students don't mention the use of guillotine and lose their marks.

### Q 9. Who were the Jacobins? Explain about them in points.

Ans. The following points describe about Jacobins:


- (i) The Jacobins was the most famous and influential club prior to the French Revolution. It was also called as the society of the friends of the Constitution. The Jacobin club got its name from the former convent of St. Jacob in Paris.
- (ii) Jacobins became an important rallying point for people who wished to discuss government policies and plan their own forms of action.
- (iii) The members of the Jacobin club belonged mainly to the less prosperous section of society that included shopkeepers, artisans such as shoe-makers, pastry cooks, watch-makers, printers, servants etc. Their leader was Maximilien Robespierre.

### Q 10. Name the most successful political club of France. Describe any two changes brought about by the government set up after the fall of Jacobin Government.

Ans. The most successful political club of France was the Jacobin club. Their leader, Robespierre, came to power in 1793 but because of his oppressive policies he was guillotined in 1794 and new government was established which initiated the following changes:

- (i) A new Constitution was introduced which denied the right to vote to non-propertied sections of society.
- (ii) It provided for two elected legislative councils. These then appointed a Directory, which was an executive made up of five members. This was meant to check concentration of power.

### Knowledge BOOSTER

 The Jacobins came to be known as the sans-culottes, literally meaning 'those without knee breeches'.



## Long Answer Type Questions

### Q 1. Describe the French division of society.

Ans. The French society was divided into three estates:

- (i) **First Estate:** It comprised of the church and the clergy. They enjoyed certain privileges by birth. They were exempted from paying taxes to the state. They collected revenue from peasants by levying a tax referred to as tithes.
- (ii) **Second Estate:** In the second estate, were the nobles and other rich members. They were also exempted from paying taxes. They also enjoyed feudal privileges in the form of feudal dues received from the peasants.
- (iii) **Third Estate:** The third estate comprised of big businessmen, merchants, lawyers, court officials, peasants, artisans, small shop owners, etc. They were obliged to work in the fields of their landlords as well as in their houses and also serve in the army. They were paying all direct taxes like taille and a number of indirect taxes such as taxes on articles of everyday consumption, like salt or tobacco.

### Q 2. What were the main causes of the French Revolution?

Ans. The main causes of the French Revolution were as follows:

- (i) **Division of French Society:** The French society was divided into three estates, viz., first, second and third. The first two estates comprising of clergy and nobility, enjoyed privileges and were exempted from paying taxes, while the third estate, which mainly comprised of poor peasants, was burdened with taxes.
- (ii) **Depleting Resources:** On his accession Louis XVI found an empty treasury and a burden of a debt of 3 billion livres. To ensure payment of interest and to maintain his extravagant lifestyle and the expenses of the palace, he decided to impose further taxes. This led to discontent among the third estate.
- (iii) **The Struggle to Survive:** The population of France had increased. This resulted into more demand for food grains. So, the prices of bread rose rapidly, which the poor could not afford to buy. Also, there was no increase in wages. The middle class and the poor struggled to survive.
- (iv) **A Growing Middle Class:** The 18th century witnessed the emergence of social groups such as middle class, who earned their wealth through an expanding trade. There were other professionals also like lawyers, administrative officials, etc. who were all educated. They believed that no group in the society should be privileged by birth.



**Social disparity was one of the main causes of the French Revolution. Analyse the statement.**

Social disparity was one of the main causes of the French Revolution. Certain sections of society enjoyed privileges while others were burdened with taxes.

This can be analysed with the help of the following points:

- (i) The members of the first two estates enjoyed certain privileges by birth, such as exemption from paying taxes and the right to collect feudal dues from the peasants.
- (ii) The third estate was burdened with a number of taxes such as tithes, taille indirect tax on salt, tobacco, etc.
- (iii) The members of the third estate were forced to provide their services to the nobility, free of cost.
- (iv) Due to increase in population, the prices of staple commodities like bread, went up. As wages did not keep pace with the prices, the gap between the rich and the poor widened, leading to social unrest.
- (v) Among the third estate, there emerged the middle class who consisted of wealthy merchants and lawyers. They were educated and influenced by the teachings of the philosophers like Rousseau and Montesquieu. They believed that a person's social position should be based on merit and not birth. It was this class that spearheaded the French Revolution.



### TIP

Provide analysis of statement in the context of social disparity and explain in pointer form.

**Q 4. Explain the condition of women in France before the revolution.**

**Ans.** The condition of women in France can be explained with the help of the following points:

- (i) Most of the women of the third estate had to work for 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.
- (ii) 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.
- (iii) Working women also had to care for their families, by cooking, fetching water, queuing up for bread and looking after the children.

- (iv) Their wages were lower than those of men.
- (v) They did not enjoy voting rights.

**Q 5. The French Revolution popularised many symbols. Each symbol depicted some basic values. Mention the symbols and related values.**

**Ans.** The symbols and related values popularised by French Revolution are:

- (i) **The Broken Chain:** Chains were used to fetter the slaves. A broken chain symbolised freedom from slavery.
- (ii) **The Bundle of Rods or Fasces:** One rod can be broken easily but an entire bundle can't be broken. The bundle of rods symbolises that strength lies in its unity.
- (iii) **The Eye within a Triangle Radiating Light:** It stands for knowledge. The rays of the sun will drive away the clouds of ignorance which ultimately depicts that the knowledge removes ignorance.
- (iv) **The Law Tablet:** The law is the same for all and all are equal before it. This symbolised equality and justice.
- (v) **Sceptre:** It was a symbol of royal power which depicted the power of autocracy.
- (vi) **The Winged Woman:** It implies personification of the law that ultimately symbolised the power of law.
- (vii) **Blue-White-Red:** These were the national colours of France and their use depicted nationalism.
- (viii) **Red Phrygian Cap:** It was worn by a slave upon becoming free and symbolises freedom from bondage or slavery.
- (ix) **Snake Biting its Tail to form a Ring:** This type of ring has neither beginning nor end and represents a symbol of eternity.



### TIP

Explain the symbols popularised during French Revolution along with their related values.

**Q 6. Describe the contribution of the French philosophers in the outbreak of the revolution of 1789.**

**Ans.** The 18th century witnessed the emergence of revolutionary thinkers such as John Locke, Jean Jacques Rousseau and Montesquieu. Their ideas motivated people and led to the outbreak of French Revolution, as described below:

- (i) The ideas of a society based on freedom, equal laws and opportunities for all were put forward by philosophers such as John Locke and Jean Jacques Rousseau.



- (ii) In his book, Two Treatises of Government, Locke sought to refute the doctrine of the divine and absolute right of the monarch.
- (iii) Rousseau carried the idea forward by proposing a form of government based on social contract between people and their representatives.
- (iv) Montesquieu, in his book, The Spirit of the Laws, proposed a division of power within the government between the legislature, the executive and the judiciary.

**Q 7. Describe the events that took place on 14th July, 1789 in France.**

**Ans.** The following events took place on 14th July, 1789:

- (i) After spending hours in long queues at the bakery, crowds of angry women stormed into the shops.
- (ii) At the same time, the king ordered troops to move into Paris. The agitated crowd stormed and destroyed the Bastille.
- (iii) Rumours spread in the countryside that the feudal lords of the manor would send bands of brigands to destroy the ripe crops. The peasants were caught in fear, thus they attacked the residences of the landlords (*chateaux*).
- (iv) They looted hoarded grains and burnt down documents having records of the manorial dues. The nobles fled to the neighbouring countries to save their lives.
- (v) Unable to control the situation, Louis XVI finally gave recognition to the National Assembly, accepting that from now on, his powers would be checked by a Constitution.

**Q 8. Which groups of French society benefited 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 wealthy class of the third estate which came to be known as the new middle class of France benefitted the most from the revolution. This group comprised of big businessmen, petty-officers, lawyers, teachers, doctors and traders. Previously, these people had to pay state taxes and they did not enjoy equal status. But after the revolution, they began to be treated equally with the upper sections of the society.

The people of the first and second estate were forced to relinquish power. With the abolition of feudal system of obligations and taxes, they came on the same level with that of the middle class. They were forced to give up their privileges. Their executive powers were also taken away from them.

The poorer sections of the society, i.e., small peasants, landless labourers, servants, and daily wage earners would have been disappointed with the outcome of the revolution. Women also would have been highly discontented.

**Q 9. How did the revolution affect the everyday lives of the French people? Discuss.**

**Ans.** The revolution affected the everyday lives of the French people in the following manner:

- (i) Revolutionary ideas of equality and liberty transformed the clothes people wore, the language they spoke and the books they read.
- (ii) With the abolition of censorship in 1789 and the 'Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen' in 1791, freedom of speech became a natural right. This led to the growth of newspapers, books, pamphlets and printed pictures.
- (iii) Freedom of the press enabled voicing of opinions and counter opinions.
- (iv) Art flourished in the form of paintings, plays, songs and festive processions.
- (v) Visual and oral art forms enabled even the common man, who could not read and write, to relate with the ideas of liberty, equality and justice.

**Q 10. Describe how the new political system of constitutional monarchy worked in France.**

**Ans.** The draft of Constitution was completed by the National Assembly in 1791 which contained the following provisions related to the working of constitutional monarchy:

- (i) The powers were distributed among the Legislature, Executive and Judiciary.
- (ii) The citizens voted for a group of electors, who in turn chose an assembly.
- (iii) Only men above 25 years, who paid taxes equal to at least 3 days of a labourer's wages were given the status of active citizens, and thereby were given the right to vote.
- (iv) The remaining men and all women were grouped as passive citizens.
- (v) To qualify as an elector and then as a member of the Assembly, a person had to belong to the highest bracket of taxpayers.
- (vi) The Constitution began with a 'Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizens'. The right to life, freedom of speech, freedom of opinion and equality before law were established as 'natural and inalienable' rights.
- (vii) It was the duty of the state to protect each citizen's natural rights.



## Chapter Test

### Choice Questions

- Q 1. According to the new Constitution of 1791, the National Assembly was to be:
- elected indirectly
  - appointed by the king
  - a hereditary body
  - elected directly
- Q 2. On 20th June, the representatives of the third estate assembled in the indoor tennis court of Versailles for:
- drafting a Constitution for France which limited the king's power.
  - making an appeal to support the king in times of need.
  - declaring a revolt
  - hunger strike
- Q 3. What was the subsistence crisis which occurred frequently in France?
- Large scale production of food grains
  - Subsidy in food grains
  - An extreme situation endangering the basic means of livelihood
  - None of the above
- Q 4. Identify the incorrect statement about the third estate.
- Richer members of the third estate owned lands.
  - Peasants were obliged to serve in the army or build roads.
  - The third estate was made of the poor only
  - Within the third estate some were rich and some were poor.
- Q 5. Which of the following decisions was taken by the convention?
- Abolished the monarchy
  - Declared France a Republic
  - Declared France a constitutional monarchy
  - All men and women above 21 years of age got the right to vote

### Assertion and Reason Type Questions

**Directions (Q. Nos. 6-7):** In the following questions given below, there are two statements marked as Assertion (A) and Reason (R). Read the statements and choose the correct option:

- Both Assertion (A) and Reason (R) are true and Reason (R) is the correct explanation of Assertion (A).
- Both Assertion (A) and Reason (R) are true, but Reason (R) is not the correct explanation of Assertion (A).
- Assertion (A) is true, but Reason (R) is false.
- Assertion (A) is false, but Reason (R) is true.

Q 6. Assertion (A): During the eighteenth century, France witnessed the emergence of the middle class.

Reason (R): The emergence of the middle class happened on the account of royal patronage.

Q 7. Assertion (A): 'The Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen' proclaimed freedom of speech and expression to be a natural right.

Reason (R): The ideas of liberty and democratic rights were the most important legacy of the French Revolution.

### Source Based Question

Q 8. Read the source given below and answer the questions that follow by choosing the most appropriate option:

On the morning of 14th 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.

(i) Why did people hate 'Bastille'?

- Because it stood for man power
- Because it stood for money power
- Because it stood for armed power
- Because it stood for despotic power

(ii) On 14th July, 1789 the city of Paris was in a state alarm because:

- the king had ordered the army to open fire upon the citizens in reality
- rumours spread that the king would soon order the army to open fire upon the citizens
- there was a foreign attack on the citizens
- the earthquake struck Paris at that moment.



How many men and women gathered in front of the town hall?

- a. 6000
- b. 7000
- c. 8000
- d. 9000

(iv) In the armed fight, who was killed in the 'Fortress of Bastille'?

- a. The King
- b. The Minister
- c. The Commander
- d. The Prisoner

(v) When did the French Revolution begin?

- a. On 14th July, 1789, with the storming of the Bastille prison just outside Paris.
- b. On 14th July, 1789, with the demolition of fortress.
- c. On 14th July, 1791 with the hope of finding hoarded ammunition.
- d. On 14th July, 1791 with the formation of people's militia.

(vi) There are two statements marked as Assertion (A) and Reason (R). Read them and choose the correct option:

Assertion (A): The 1780's was a time of hardship for France.

Reason (R): The French Revolution sought to completely change the relationship between the rulers and those who governed and to redefine the nature of political power.

- a. Both Assertion (A) and Reason (R) are true and Reason (R) is the correct explanation of Assertion (A).
- b. Both Assertion (A) and Reason (R) are true, but Reason (R) is not the correct explanation of Assertion (A).
- c. Assertion (A) is true, but Reason (R) is false.
- d. Assertion (A) is false, but Reason (R) is true.

### Very Short Answer Type Questions

Q 9. Name the philosopher who sought to refute the doctrine of the divine and absolute right of the monarch.

Q 10. What were the legacies of the French Revolution?

### Short Answer Type Questions

Q 11. What was the condition of women in France before the revolution?

Q 12. Mention any three features of the Constitution of France drafted in 1791.

Q 13. Discuss the impact of abolition of censorship in France.

### Long Answer Type Questions

Q 14. What landmark decisions were taken by the National Assembly led by the third estate on the 4th August, 1789? What were its results?

Q 15. What were the changes witnessed by people in everyday life after the revolution of 1789 in France?

