

French Revolution Primary Source Document Packet

Please note: All of these documents will be incorporated into an end of unit DBQ for which you will be required to write a persuasive essay. It is YOUR responsibility to read and become familiar with all of these documents.

As you read, take notes summarizing main ideas, define unknown and unfamiliar vocabulary, and take notes which connect the unit focus to the document.

DOCUMENT # 1: *What is the Third Estate?* Abbe de Sieyes (1789)

Overview: This document was a pamphlet published in 1789 by a middle class man who supported the cause of the French Revolution. The pamphlet posed one of the central questions of the Revolution and in it, Sieyes argued that only the underprivileged majority of the nation had the right to reform the French constitution. He believed that the government belonged to the people and not to the king.

The plan of this pamphlet is very simple. We have three questions to ask:

- 1st. What is the third estate? Everything.
- 2nd. What has it been heretofore in the political order? Nothing.
- 3rd. What does it demand? To become something therein.

It is the strong and robust man whose one arm remains enchained, if the privileged order were abolished, the nation would not be something less but something more. Thus, what is the third estate? Everything; but an everything shackled and oppressed. What would it be without the privileged order? Everything; but an everything free and flourishing. Nothing can progress without it; everything would proceed infinitely better without the others. It is not sufficient to have demonstrated that the privileged classes, far from being useful to the nation, can only enfeeble and injure it; it is necessary, moreover, to prove that the nobility does not belong to the social organization at all; that, indeed, it may be a burden upon the nation, but that it would not know how to constitute a part thereof.

The third estate, then, comprises everything appertaining to the nation; and whatever is not the third estate may not be regarded as being of the nation. What is the third estate? Everything!

DOCUMENT # 2: *The Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen* (1789)

Overview: This document was adopted by the National Assembly after just overthrowing the ancient regime. This statement focuses on the central themes of the revolution of: Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. This document was created by reviewing other documents such as the American Declaration of Independence and the English Bill of Rights.

The representatives of the French people, organized as a National Assembly, believing that the ignorance, neglect, or contempt of the rights of man are the sole cause of public calamities and corruption of governments, have determined to set forth in a solemn declaration the natural, inalienable, and sacred rights of man....

1. Men are born and remain free and equal in rights. Social distinctions may be founded only upon the general good.
2. The aim of all political association is the preservation of the natural and imprescriptible rights of man. These rights are liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression.
3. The principle of all sovereignty resides essentially in the nation. No body nor individual may exercise any authority which does not proceed directly from the nation.
4. Liberty consists in the freedom to do everything which injures no one else; hence the exercise of natural rights of each man has no limits except those which assure to the other members of society the enjoyment of the same rights. These limits can only be determined by law.
5. Law can only prohibit such actions as are hurtful to society. Nothing may be prevented which is

not forbidden by law, and no one may be forced to do anything not provided for by the law.

6. Law is the expression of the general will. Every citizen has the right to participate personally or through his representative, in its formation...All citizens, being equal in the eyes of the law, are equally eligible to all dignities and to all public positions and occupations, according to their abilities, and without distinction except that of their virtues and talents.

10. No one shall be disquieted on account of his opinions, including his religious views, provided their manifestation does not disturb the public order established by law.

11. The free communication of ideas and opinions is one of the most precious of the rights of man. Every citizen may, accordingly, speak, write, and print with freedom, but shall be responsible for such abuses of this freedom as shall be defined by law.

DOCUMENT # 3: *The Declaration of the Rights of Women* (1791) Olympe de Gouges

Overview: Olympe de Gouges, the daughter of a butcher, felt that the 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen did not go far enough to protect the rights of all people. She wrote her 1791 document addressing herself to the Queen rather than King Louis XVI demanding political and social rights for women.

Mothers, daughters, sisters, and representatives of the nation demand to be constituted into a national assembly. Believing that ignorance, omission, or scorn for the rights woman are the only causes of public misfortunes and of the corruption of governments, the women have resolved to set forth in a solemn declaration the natural, inalienable, and sacred rights of woman in order that this declaration, constantly exposed before all the members of society, will ceaselessly remind them of their rights and duties.

1. Woman is born free and lives equal to man in her rights. Social distinctions can be based only on the common utility.

2. The purpose of any political association is the conservation of the natural and imprescriptable rights of woman and man; these rights are liberty, property, security, and especially resistance to oppression.

3. The principle of all sovereignty rests essentially with the nation, which is nothing but the union of woman and man; no body and no individual can exercise any authority which does not come expressly from it [the nation].

6. The law must be the expression of the general will; all female and male citizens must contribute either personally or through their representatives to its formation; it must be the same for all: male and female citizens, being equal in the eyes of the law, must be equally admitted to all honors, positions, and public employments according to their capacity and without other distinctions besides those of their virtues and talents.

Women, wake up; the tocsin of reason is being heard throughout the whole universe; discover your rights. The powerful empire of nature is no longer surrounded by prejudice, fanaticism, superstition, and lies. The flame of truth has dispersed all the clouds of folly and usurpation...

DOCUMENT # 4: *The Fall of the Bastille* (July 14, 1789) A Parisian Newspaper Account

First, the people tried to enter this fortress by the Rue St.-Antoine, this fortress, which no one has ever penetrated against the wishes of this frightful despotism and where the monster still resided. The treacherous governor had put out a flag of peace. So a confident advance was made; a detachment of French Guards, with perhaps five to six thousand armed bourgeois, penetrated the Bastille's outer courtyards, but as soon as some six hundred persons had passed over the first drawbridge, the bridge was raised and artillery fire mowed down several French Guards and some soldiers; the cannon fired on the town, and the people took fright; a large number of individuals were killed or wounded; but then they rallied and took shelter from the fire; ... meanwhile, they tried to

locate some cannon; they attacked from the water's edge through the gardens of the arsenal, and from there made an orderly siege; they advanced from various directions, beneath a ceaseless round of fire. It was a terrible scene.... The fighting grew steadily more intense; the citizens had become hardened to the fire, from all directions they clambered onto the roofs or broke into the rooms; as soon as an enemy appeared among the turrets on the tower, he was fixed in the sights of a hundred guns and mown down in an instant; meanwhile cannon fire was hurriedly directed against the second drawbridge, which it pierced, breaking the chains; in vain did the cannon on the tower reply, for most people were sheltered from it; the fury was at its height; people bravely faced death and every danger; women, in their eagerness, helped us to the utmost; even the children, after the discharge of fire from the fortress, ran here and there picking up the bullets and shot; [and so the Bastille fell and the governor, De Launey, was captured].... Serene and blessed liberty, for the first time, has at last been introduced into this abode of horrors, this frightful refuge of monstrous despotism and its crimes.

Meanwhile, they get ready to march; they leave amidst an enormous crowd; the applause, the outbursts of joy, the insults, the oaths hurled at the treacherous prisoners of war; everything is confused; cries of vengeance and of pleasure issue from every heart; the conquerors, glorious and covered in honor, carry their arms and the spoils of the conquered, the flags of victory, the militia mingling with the soldiers of the fatherland, the victory laurels offered them from every side, all this created a frightening and splendid spectacle. On arriving at the square, the people, anxious to avenge themselves, allowed neither De Launey nor the other officers to reach the place of trial; they seized them from the hands of their conquerors, and trampled them underfoot one after the other. De Launey was struck by a thousand blows, his head was cut off and hoisted on the end of a pike with blood streaming down all sides.... This glorious day must amaze our enemies, and finally usher in for us the triumph of justice and liberty. In the evening, there were celebrations.

DOCUMENT # 5: Robespierre and the Revolutionary Government

Overview: In its time of troubles, the National Convention, under the direction of the Committee of Public Safety, instituted a Reign of Terror to preserve the Revolution from its internal enemies. In the following selection, Maximilian Robespierre, one of the committee's leading members, tries to justify the violence to which these believers in republican liberty resorted.

The theory of revolutionary government is as new as the Revolution that created it. It is as pointless to seek its origins in the books of the political theorists, who failed to foresee this revolution, as in the laws of the tyrants, who are happy enough to abuse their exercise of authority without seeking out its legal justification. And so this phrase is for the aristocracy a mere subject of terror a term of slander, for tyrants an outrage and for many an enigma. It behooves us to explain it to all in order that we may rally good citizens, at least, in support of the principles governing the public interest. It is the function of government to guide the moral and physical energies of the nation toward the purposes for which it was established.

The object of constitutional government is to preserve the Republic; the object of revolutionary government is to establish it.

Revolution is the war waged by liberty against its enemies; a constitution is that which crowns the edifice of freedom once victory has been won and the nation is at peace.

The revolutionary government has to summon extraordinary activity to its aid precisely because it is at war. It is subjected to less binding and less uniform regulations, because the circumstances in which it finds itself are tempestuous and shifting above all because it is compelled to deploy, swiftly and incessantly, new resources to meet new and pressing dangers.

The principal concern of constitutional government is civil Liberty; that of revolutionary government, public liberty. Under a constitutional government little more is required than to protect the individual against abuses by the state, whereas revolutionary government is obliged to defend the state itself against the factions that assail it from every quarter.

To good citizens revolutionary government owes the full protection of the state; to the enemies of the people it owes only death.

DOCUMENT # 6: *Economics of the French Revolution*

Average Price of a Hectoliter (100 liters) of wheat in France	
1730	9.5 francs
1750	14.5 francs
1770	19.8 francs
1789	21.0 francs

Price of 100 kilograms of Wheat in Paris, 1770-1790	
1770	25 francs
1775	20 francs
1780	17 francs
1785	19 francs
1789	29 francs
1790	27 francs

DOCUMENT # 7: *Of the Enjoyment of Civil Rights* Napoleonic Code

7. The exercise of civil rights is independent of the quality of citizen, which is only acquired and preserved conformably to the constitutional law.
8. Every Frenchman shall enjoy civil rights.
9. Every individual born in France of a foreigner, may, during the year which shall succeed the period of his majority, claim the quality of Frenchman; provided, that if he shall reside in France he declares his intention to fix his domicil in that country, and that in case he shall reside in a foreign country, he give security to become domiciled in France and establish himself there within a year, to be computed from the date of that undertaking.
10. Every child born of a Frenchman in a foreign country is French. Every child born in a foreign country of a Frenchman who shall have lost the quality of a Frenchman, may at any time recover this quality by complying with the formalities prescribed in the ninth article.
11. A foreigner shall enjoy in France the same civil rights as are or shall be accorded to Frenchmen by the treaties of that nation to which such foreigner shall belong.
12. The foreigner who shall have married a Frenchman, shall follow the condition of her husband.
13. The foreigner who shall have been permitted by the government to establish his domicil in France, shall enjoy in that country all civil rights so long as he shall continue to reside there.
14. A foreigner, although not resident in France, may be cited before the French courts, to enforce the execution of engagements contracted by him in France with a Frenchman; he may be summoned before the tribunals of France, on account of engagements entered into by him with Frenchmen in a foreign country.
15. A Frenchman may be summoned before a French court, for engagements contracted by him in a foreign country, though with a foreigner.
16. In all causes, except commercial ones, in which a foreigner shall be plaintiff, he shall be required to give security for the payment of the costs and damages incident to the suit, unless he possess in France immoveable property of value sufficient to guarantee such payment.

DOCUMENT # 8: November 20, 1815 Congress of Vienna

In the Name of the Most Holy and Undivided Trinity.

The Allied Powers having by their united efforts, and by the success of their arms, preserved France and Europe from the convulsions with which they were menaced by the late enterprise of Napoleon Bonaparte, and by the revolutionary system reproduced in France, to promote its success; participating at present with His Most Christian Majesty in the desire to consolidate, by maintaining inviolate the Royal authority, and by restoring the operation of the Constitutional Charter, the order of things which had been happily re-established in France, as also in the object of restoring between France and her neighbours those relations of reciprocal confidence and good will which the fatal effects of the Revolution and of the system of Conquest had for so long a time disturbed: persuaded, at the same time, that this last object can only be obtained by an arrangement framed to secure to the Allies proper indemnities for the past and solid guarantees for the future, they have, in concert with His Majesty the King of France, taken into consideration the means of giving effect to this arrangement; and being satisfied that the indemnity due to the Allied Powers cannot be either entirely territorial or entirely pecuniary, without prejudice to France in one or other of her essential interests, and that it would be more fit to combine both the modes, in order to avoid the inconvenience which would result, were either resorted to separately, their Imperial and Royal Majesties have adopted this basis for their present transactions; and agreeing alike as to the necessity of retaining for a fixed time in the Frontier Provinces of France, a certain number of allied troops, they have determined to combine their different arrangements, founded upon these bases, in a Definitive Treaty.

1. The frontiers of France shall be the same as they were in the year 1790, save and except the modifications on one side and on the other, which are detailed in the present Article.

4. The pecuniary part of the indemnity to be furnished by France to the Allied Powers is fixed at the sum of 700,000,000 Francs

5. The state of uneasiness and fermentation, which after so many violent convulsions, and particularly after the last catastrophe, France must still experience, notwithstanding the paternal intentions of her King, and the advantages secured to every class of his subjects by the Constitutional Charter, requiring for the security of the neighbouring States, certain measures of precaution and of temporary guarantee, it has been judged indispensable to occupy, during a fixed time, by a corps of Allied Troops certain military positions along the frontiers of France, under the express reserve, that such occupation shall in no way prejudice the Sovereignty of His Most Christian Majesty, nor the state of possession, such as it is recognized and confirmed by the present Treaty. The number of these troops shall not exceed 150,000 men. . . .

As the maintenance of the army destined for this service is to be provided by France, a Special Convention shall regulate everything which may relate to that object. . . .

The utmost extent of the duration of this military occupation is fixed at 5 years. It may terminate before that period if, at the end of 3 years, the Allied Sovereigns, after having, in concert, with His Majesty the King of France, maturely examined their material situation and interests, and the progress which shall have been made in France in the re-establishment of order and tranquility, shall agree to acknowledge that the motives which led them to that measure have ceased to exist. But whatever may be the result of this deliberation, all the Fortresses and Positions occupied by the Allied troops shall, at the expiration of 5 years, be evacuated without further delay, and given up to His Most Christian Majesty, or to his heirs and successors.

11. The Treaty of Paris of the 30th of May, 1814, and the Final Act of the Congress of Vienna of the 9th of June, 1815, are confirmed. and shall be maintained in all such of their enactments which shall not have been modified by the Articles of the present Treaty.