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The French Revolution

The French Revolution: A Fight for Equality and Rights

DEFINITION

> The French Revolution was a period of radical social and political change in France from 1789 to 1799. It aimed to overthrow the monarchy and establish a republic based on the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity.

KEY CONCEPTS

Estates System

French society was divided into three estates: clergy, nobility, and commoners. The commoners, despite being the majority, had the least power.

Declaration of the Rights of Man

This document, adopted in 1789, outlined individual rights and the principles of democracy, asserting that all men are born free and equal.

Reign of Terror

A period during the revolution marked by extreme violence and political purges led by Robespierre, where thousands were executed.

Napoleon Bonaparte

A military leader who rose to power after the revolution, eventually becoming Emperor of France and spreading revolutionary ideals across Europe.

Guillotine

A device used for executions during the revolution, symbolizing the era's radical approach to justice.

EXAMPLES

- → The storming of the Bastille on July 14, 1789.
- → The execution of King Louis XVI in 1793.
- → The rise of Napoleon after the revolution.

MEMORY TIPS

- ★ Remember 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity' as the revolution's motto.
- ★ Use 'Bastille' to recall the start of the revolution.
- ★ Think of 'Napoleon' as the end of the revolutionary chaos.

COMMON MISTAKES

- ✗ Confusing the Estates System with a class system in modern society.
- ✗ Overlooking the significance of the Reign of Terror.
- ✗ Assuming the revolution was solely about democracy without considering social changes.

QUICK RECAP

The French Revolution transformed France by abolishing the monarchy and establishing a republic. Key events include the storming of the Bastille and the Reign of Terror, leading to the rise of Napoleon. Remember the core principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity.