

History - The French Revolution

The French Revolution: A Fight for Liberty and Equality

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 democratic ideals.

KEY CONCEPTS

Estates System

French society was divided into three estates: clergy, nobility, and commoners, leading to inequality.

Declaration of the Rights of Man

This document proclaimed the rights of citizens and laid the foundation for modern democracy.

Reign of Terror

A period of extreme violence where thousands were executed to eliminate perceived enemies of the revolution.

Napoleon Bonaparte

A military leader who rose to power after the revolution, eventually becoming Emperor of France.

Bastille Day

Celebrated on July 14, it marks the storming of the Bastille prison, symbolizing the revolution's start.

EXAMPLES

- The fall of the Bastille in 1789 marked the revolution's beginning.
- The execution of King Louis XVI demonstrated the revolution's radical shift.
- The rise of Napoleon changed the course of French and European history.

MEMORY TIPS

- ★ Remember 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity' as the revolution's core values.
- ★ Use 'B.E.N.' to recall key figures: Bastille, Estates, Napoleon.
- ★ Visualize the guillotine to remember the Reign of Terror's violence.

COMMON MISTAKES

- ✗ Confusing the Estates System with social classes in other countries.
- ✗ Overlooking the significance of the Declaration of the Rights of Man.
- ✗ Misunderstanding Napoleon's role as merely a dictator rather than a reformer.

QUICK RECAP

The French Revolution was a pivotal event that reshaped France and inspired democratic movements worldwide. Key events like the storming of the Bastille and the Reign of Terror highlight its complexity and impact.