

1. Causes Of The French Revolution

A) IDEALS

1. Enlightenment ideals: rights of the citizens, separation of powers, new social organization (social classes) legal equality, freedom to elect a government...
2. Bourgeoisie, who paid tributes didn't have political power.
3. Independence of the USA and its Constitution (1787)
4. British Parliamentary System.



B) SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CRISIS

- In the late 18th century manorialism was in crisis as it was not as profitable as it used to be. The peasants (80% of population) had to pay more taxes to their lords as a compensation.
- Since 1760s there were poor harvests. That produced an increase in the price of wheat (and bread was the main foodstuff).
- Financial crisis. Monarchy had lack of money. They wanted the nobles to pay taxes, but they refused....

And Louis XVI convened Estates-General to approve this tax reform.



C. Beginning of the Revolution

- In May 1789 Estates-General were convened in Versailles. It was chaired by the king and joined by the nobility, clergy and the Third Estate.
- The Third Estate wanted to have a greater representation and insisted on one vote per representative rather than one per estate.
- Clergy and nobility did not accept, so the representatives of the Third Estate met in the *Jeu de Paume* pavilion in Versailles and proclaimed themselves National Assembly (representatives of the nation).
- Their purpose was to draft a CONSTITUTION (National Constituent Assembly) with the will of the majority of the nation.



- On July 14th they captured the Bastille prison and freed political prisoners.
- That summer the revolution spread to the countryside, where nobles' palaces and archives were burnt (Great Fear).
- In Autumn Louis XVI accepted the National Assembly, that was going to make a constitution to limit the royal power.

