

**The French Revolution and Napoleon****Lesson 2****Revolution Brings Reform and Terror****Key Terms and People**

**Legislative Assembly** assembly that replaced the National Assembly in 1791

**émigré** noble or other person who left France during the peasant uprisings and who hoped to come back to restore the old system

**sans-culotte** radical group of Parisian wage-earners

**Jacobin** member of the Jacobin Club, a radical political organization

**guillotine** machine for beheading people

**Maximilien Robespierre** revolutionary leader who tried to wipe out every trace of France's past monarchy and nobility

**Reign of Terror** period of Robespierre's rule

**Before You Read**

In the last lesson, you read how the French Revolution began.

In this lesson, you will learn what happened during the revolution.

**As You Read**

Use a timeline to identify the major events that followed the creation of the Constitution of 1791.

**THE ASSEMBLY REFORMS  
FRANCE****What reforms resulted from the revolution?**

In August 1789, the National Assembly took steps to change France. One new law ended all the special rights that members of the First Estate and Second Estate had enjoyed. Another law gave French men equal rights. Though women did not get these rights, it was a bold step. Other laws gave the state power over the Catholic Church.

Catholic peasants remained loyal to the Church. They were angry that the Church would be part of the state.

Thereafter, many of them opposed the Revolution's reforms.

For months, the assembly worked on plans for a new government. During this time, Louis was fearful for his safety. One night, he and his family tried to escape the country. They were caught, brought back to Paris, and watched by guards. This escape attempt made the king and queen even more unpopular. It also increased the power of his enemies.

1. What new laws came into being?

---



---

Lesson 2, *continued*

**DIVISIONS DEVELOP**

**What groups called for different kinds of changes?**

In the fall of 1791, the assembly finished its new constitution. It took away most of the king’s power. The assembly then turned over its power to a new assembly, the **Legislative Assembly**.

This new assembly soon divided into groups. Radicals wanted to make many changes in the way government was run. Moderates wanted only some changes in government. Conservatives didn’t mind having a limited monarchy and wanted few changes in government.

Groups outside the Assembly wanted to influence the government, too. One group wanted to return to the old ways, before the Revolution. This group included the **émigrés**, nobles and others who had fled France earlier. Another group wanted even greater changes. This group included the **sans-culottes**. These wage earners and small shopkeepers wanted a greater voice in government.

2. In what ways did the émigrés and sans-culottes have opposite goals?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**WAR AND EXECUTION**

**What caused the French people to take extreme measures?**

At the same time, France faced serious trouble on its borders. Kings in other countries feared that their people would revolt, too. They wanted to use force to give control of France back to Louis XVI. Soon, foreign soldiers were marching toward Paris. Many people thought that the king and queen were ready to help the enemy. Angry French citizens imprisoned them. Many nobles, priests, and other supporters of the

royalty were killed by the peasants.

The government took strong steps to reduce the danger of foreign troops. It took away all the king’s powers. In 1792, the National Convention—another new government—was formed. **Jacobins**, members of a radical political club, soon took control of this new government. They declared Louis a common citizen. He was then tried for treason and convicted. Like many others, the king was beheaded by a machine called the **guillotine**. The National Convention also ordered thousands of French people into the army.

3. What happened to the king?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**THE TERROR GRIPS FRANCE; END OF THE TERROR**

**What was the Reign of Terror?**

**Maximilien Robespierre** became leader of France. He headed the Committee of Public Safety. It tried and put to death “enemies of the Revolution.” Thousands were killed. Robespierre’s rule, which began in 1793, was called the **Reign of Terror**. It ended in July 1794, when Robespierre himself was put to death.

The French people were tired of the killing and the unrest. They wanted a return to order. Moderate leaders drafted a new, less revolutionary plan of government.

4. How long did the Reign of Terror last?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Lesson 2, *continued*

As you read about the events of the French Revolution, answer the questions about the time line.

<b>1789</b> <b>Aug.</b>	<b>National Assembly adopts Declaration of the Rights of Man.</b>	→	1. What are some rights this document guarantees French citizens?
<b>1790</b>	<b>National Assembly reforms status of church.</b>	→	2. What caused the peasants to oppose many of these reforms?
<b>1791</b> <b>Sep.</b>	<b>National Assembly hands power to Legislative Assembly</b>	→	3. What political factions made up the Legislative Assembly?
<b>1792</b> <b>April</b>  <b>Aug.</b>  <b>Sep.</b>	<b>Legislative Assembly declares war on Austria.</b>  <b>Parisians invade Tuileries and imprison royal family.</b>  <b>Parisian mobs massacre more than 1,000 prisoners.</b>	→	4. What did European monarchs fear from France?
<b>1793</b> <b>Jan.</b>  <b>July</b>	<b>Ex-king Louis XVI is executed.</b> <b>Robespierre leads Committee of Public Safety; Reign of Terror begins.</b>	→	5. What effects did the September Massacres have on the government?
<b>1794</b> <b>July</b>	<b>Robespierre is executed; Reign of Terror ends.</b>	→	6. What was the stated aim of Robespierre and his supporters?
<b>1795</b>	<b>National Convention adopts new constitution.</b>	→	7. What were some consequences of the Reign of Terror?