



Women march to the palace.

WITNESS HISTORY AUDIO

Parisian Women Storm Versailles

On October 5, 1789, anger turned to action as thousands of women marched from Paris to Versailles. They wanted the king to stop ignoring their suffering. They also wanted the queen. French women were particularly angry with the Austrian-born queen, Marie Antoinette. They could not feed their children, yet she lived extravagantly. The women yelled as they looked for her in the palace:

“Death to the Austrian! We’ll wring her neck!
We’ll tear her heart out!”

—mob of women at Versailles, October 6, 1789

Focus Question What political and social reforms did the National Assembly institute in the first stage of the French Revolution?

The French Revolution Unfolds

Objectives

- Explain how the political crisis of 1789 led to popular revolts.
- Summarize the moderate reforms enacted by the National Assembly in August 1789.
- Identify additional actions taken by the National Assembly as it pressed onward.
- Analyze why there was a mixed reaction around Europe to the events unfolding in France.

Terms, People, and Places

faction	émigré
Marquis de Lafayette	sans-culotte
Olympe de Gouges	republic
Marie Antoinette	Jacobins

Note Taking

Reading Skill: Identify Supporting Details As you read this section, prepare an outline like the one shown below. Remember to use numbers for supporting details.

- I. Political crisis leads to revolt
 - A. The Great Fear
 1. Inflamed by famine and rumors
 - 2.
 - B.

Excitement, wonder, and fear engulfed France as the revolution unfolded at home and spread abroad. Historians divide this revolutionary era into different phases. The moderate phase of the National Assembly (1789–1791) turned France into a constitutional monarchy. A radical phase (1792–1794) of escalating violence led to the end of the monarchy and a Reign of Terror. There followed a period of reaction against extremism, known as the Directory (1795–1799). Finally, the Age of Napoleon (1799–1815) consolidated many revolutionary changes. In this section, you will read about the moderate phase of the French Revolution.

Political Crisis Leads to Revolt

The political crisis of 1789 coincided with the worst famine in memory. Starving peasants roamed the countryside or flocked to towns, where they swelled the ranks of the unemployed. As grain prices soared, even people with jobs had to spend as much as 80 percent of their income on bread.

Rumors Create the “Great Fear” In such desperate times, rumors ran wild and set off what was later called the “Great Fear.” Tales of attacks on villages and towns spread panic. Other rumors asserted that government troops were seizing peasant crops.

Inflamed by famine and fear, peasants unleashed their fury on nobles who were trying to reimpose medieval dues. Defiant peasants set fire to old manor records and stole grain from storehouses. The attacks died down after a period of time, but they clearly demonstrated peasant anger with an unjust regime.

Paris Commune Comes to Power Paris, too, was in turmoil. As the capital and chief city of France, it was the revolutionary center. A variety of *factions*, or dissenting groups of people, competed to gain power. Moderates looked to the *Marquis de Lafayette*, the aristocratic “hero of two worlds” who fought alongside George Washington in the American Revolution. Lafayette headed the National Guard, a largely middle-class militia organized in response to the arrival of royal troops in Paris. The Guard was the first group to don the tricolor—a red, white, and blue badge that was eventually adopted as the national flag of France.

A more radical group, the Paris Commune, replaced the royalist government of the city. It could mobilize whole neighborhoods for protests or violent action to further the revolution. Newspapers and political clubs—many even more radical than the Commune—blossomed everywhere. Some demanded an end to the monarchy and spread scandalous stories about the royal family and members of the court.

✓ **Checkpoint** What caused French peasants to revolt against nobles?

The National Assembly Acts

Peasant uprisings and the storming of the Bastille stampered the National Assembly into action. On August 4, in a combative all-night meeting, nobles in the National Assembly voted to end their own privileges. They agreed to give up their old manorial dues, exclusive hunting rights, special legal status, and exemption from taxes.

Special Privilege Ends “Feudalism is abolished,” announced the proud and weary delegates at 2 A.M. As the president of the Assembly later observed, “We may view this moment as the dawn of a new revolution, when all the burdens weighing on the people were abolished, and France was truly reborn.”

Were nobles sacrificing much with their votes on the night of August 4? Both contemporary observers and modern historians note that the nobles gave up nothing that they had not already lost. Nevertheless, in the months ahead, the National Assembly turned the reforms of August 4 into law, meeting a key Enlightenment goal—the equality of all male citizens before the law.

Declaration of the Rights of Man In late August, as a first step toward writing a constitution, the Assembly issued the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen. The document was modeled in part on the American Declaration of Independence, written 13 years earlier. All men, the French declaration announced, were “born and remain free and equal in rights.” They enjoyed natural rights to “liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression.” Like the writings of Locke and the *philosophes*, the constitution insisted that governments exist to protect the natural rights of citizens.

The declaration further proclaimed that all male citizens were equal before the law. Every Frenchman had an equal right to hold public office “with no distinction other than that of their virtues and talents.” In addition, the declaration asserted freedom of religion and called for taxes to

French Reaction to the American Revolution

The Marquis de Lafayette (honored on ribbon at right) and Thomas Paine were leading figures in both the American and French revolutions. Lafayette, a French nobleman and military commander, helped the Americans defeat the British at Yorktown. He admired the American Declaration of Independence and American democratic ideals. With these in mind, Lafayette wrote the first draft of the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen.

Thomas Paine was a famous American patriot and writer whose ideas in *Common Sense* had a great influence on the American Revolution. During the French Revolution, Paine moved to France. There, he defended ideals of the revolution and was elected to serve in the revolutionary government.

Identify Central Issues How did the American Revolution influence the French Revolution?



Vocabulary Builder

proclaimed—(proh KLAYMD) *vt.*
announced officially

be levied according to ability to pay. Its principles were captured in the enduring slogan of the French Revolution, "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity."

Many women were disappointed that the Declaration of the Rights of Man did not grant equal citizenship to them. In 1791, Olympe de Gouges (oh LAMP duh GOOZH), a journalist, demanded equal rights in her Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen. "Woman is born free," she proclaimed, "and her rights are the same as those of man." Therefore, Gouges reasoned, "all citizens, be they men or women, being equal in the state's eyes, must be equally eligible for all public offices, positions, and jobs." Later in the revolution, women met resistance for expressing their views in public, and many, including Gouges, were imprisoned and executed.

The Declaration of the Rights of Man met resistance as well. Uncertain and hesitant, Louis XVI did not want to accept the reforms of the National Assembly. Nobles continued to enjoy gala banquets while people were starving. By autumn, anger again turned to action.

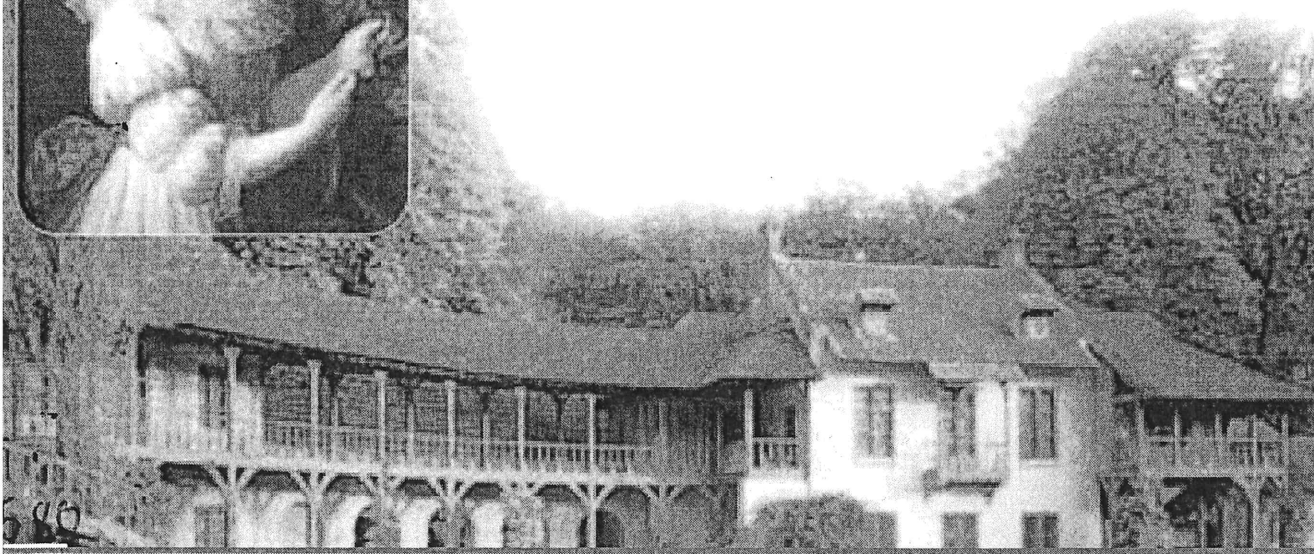
Women March on Versailles On October 5, about six thousand women marched 13 miles in the pouring rain from Paris to Versailles. "Bread!" they shouted. They demanded to see the king.

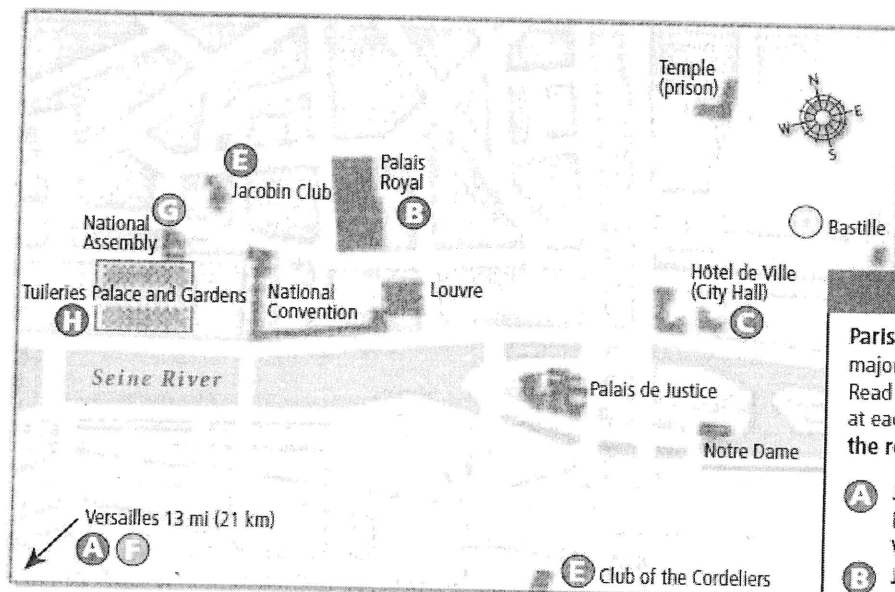
Much of the crowd's anger was directed at the Austrian-born queen, **Marie Antoinette** (daughter of Maria Theresa and brother of Joseph II). The queen lived a life of great pleasure and extravagance, and this led to further public unrest. Although compassionate to the poor, her small acts went largely unnoticed because her lifestyle overshadowed them. She was against reforms and bored with the French court. She often retreated to the Petit Trianon, a small chateau on the palace grounds at Versailles where she lived her own life of amusement.

The women refused to leave Versailles until the king met their most important demand—to return to Paris. Not too happily, the king agreed. The next morning, the crowd, with the king and his family in tow, set out for the city. At the head of the procession rode women perched on the barrels of seized cannons. They told bewildered spectators that they were bringing Louis XVI, Marie Antoinette, and their son back to Paris. "Now

Playing Dress-Up

Marie Antoinette spent millions on her clothing and jewels and set fashion trends throughout France and Europe. This painting (top) was painted by her friend and portraitist, Elisabeth Vigée-Lebrun. Queens traditionally did not own property, but Marie Antoinette had her own small royal mansion and amusement village, or hamlet (bottom), where she played as milkmaid and shepherdess. *Why did the French common people resent Marie Antoinette?*





Analyzing Visuals

Paris in Revolution This map shows major landmarks of the French Revolution. Read below about the events that occurred at each landmark. **Why was Paris the revolutionary center in France?**

- A** June 5, 1789 Delegates of the Third Estate take the Tennis Court Oath in Versailles.
- B** July 12, 1789 Desmoulines incites a crowd at the Palais Royal, a famous meeting place.
- C** July 14, 1789 Crowd meets at City Hall, the traditional protest place, before storming the Bastille.
- D** July 14, 1789 Parisians storm the Bastille.
- E** Oct. 1789 Political clubs (Cordeliers and Jacobins) established in Paris.
- F** Oct. 5, 1789 Women march from Paris to Versailles.
- G** Sept. 3, 1791 National Assembly produces the Constitution of 1791.
- H** Aug. 10, 1792 Mob invades the Tuileries palace after meeting at City Hall.

we won't have to go so far when we want to see our king," they sang. Crowds along the way cheered the king, who now wore the tricolor. In Paris, the royal family moved into the Tuileries (TWEE luh reez) palace. For the next three years, Louis was a virtual prisoner.

✓ **Checkpoint** How did the National Assembly react to peasant uprisings?

The National Assembly Presses Onward

The National Assembly soon followed the king to Paris. Its largely bourgeois members worked to draft a constitution and to solve the continuing financial crisis. To pay off the huge government debt—much of it owed to the bourgeoisie—the Assembly voted to take over and sell Church lands.

The Church Is Placed Under State Control In an even more radical move, the National Assembly put the French Catholic Church under state control. Under the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, issued in 1790, bishops and priests became elected, salaried officials. The Civil Constitution ended papal authority over the French Church and dissolved convents and monasteries.

Reaction was swift and angry. Many bishops and priests refused to accept the Civil Constitution. The pope condemned it. Large numbers of French peasants, who were conservative concerning religion, also rejected the changes. When the government punished clergy who refused to support the Civil Constitution, a huge gulf opened between revolutionaries in Paris and the peasantry in the provinces.

The Constitution of 1791 Establishes a New Government The National Assembly completed its main task by producing a constitution. The Constitution of 1791 set up a limited monarchy in place of the absolute monarchy that had ruled France for centuries. A new Legislative Assembly had the power to make laws, collect taxes, and decide on issues

of war and peace. Lawmakers would be elected by tax-paying male citizens over age 25.

To make government more efficient, the constitution replaced the old provinces with 83 departments of roughly equal size. It abolished the old provincial courts, and it reformed laws.

To moderate reformers, the Constitution of 1791 seemed to complete the revolution. Reflecting Enlightenment goals, it ensured equality before the law for all male citizens and ended Church interference in government. At the same time, it put power in the hands of men with the means and leisure to serve in government.

Louis's Escape Fails Meanwhile, Marie Antoinette and others had been urging the king to escape their humiliating situation. Louis finally gave in. One night in June 1791, a coach rolled north from Paris toward the border. Inside sat the king disguised as a servant, the queen dressed as a governess, and the royal children.

The attempted escape failed. In a town along the way, Louis's disguise was uncovered by someone who held up a piece of currency with the king's face on it. A company of soldiers escorted the royal family back to Paris, as onlooking crowds hurled insults at the king. To many, Louis's dash to the border showed that he was a traitor to the revolution.

✓ **Checkpoint** What were the provisions of the Constitution of 1791?

Radicals Take Over

Events in France stirred debate all over Europe. Supporters of the Enlightenment applauded the reforms of the National Assembly. They saw the French experiment as the dawn of a new age for justice and equality. European rulers and nobles, however, denounced the French Revolution.

Rulers Fear Spread of Revolution European rulers increased border patrols to stop the spread of the "French plague." Fueling those fears were the horror stories that were told by émigrés (EM ih grayz)—nobles, clergy, and others who had fled France and its revolutionary forces. Émigrés reported attacks on their privileges, their property, their religion, and even their lives. Even "enlightened" rulers turned against France. Catherine the Great of Russia burned Voltaire's letters and locked up her critics.

Edmund Burke, a British writer and statesman who earlier had defended the American Revolution, bitterly condemned revolutionaries in Paris. He predicted all too accurately that the revolution would become more violent. "Plots and assassinations," he wrote, "will be anticipated by preventive murder and preventive confiscation." Burke warned: "When ancient opinions and rules of life are taken away . . . we have no compass to govern us."

Threats Come From Abroad The failed escape of Louis XVI brought further hostile rumblings from abroad. In August 1791, the king of Prussia and the

Analyzing Political Cartoons

The French Plague European rulers, nobles, and clergy (such as, from left, Catherine the Great of Russia, the Pope, Emperor Leopold II of Prussia, and George III of England) feared the revolution in France would spread to their countries. Many émigrés fueled the flames with their tales of attacks by the revolutionary government.

1. Why were European rulers against revolutionary ideas coming into their countries?
2. How does the cartoonist portray the "plague?"



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emperor of Austria—who was Marie Antoinette's brother—issued the Declaration of Pillnitz. In this document, the two monarchs threatened to intervene to protect the French monarchy. The declaration may have been mostly a bluff, but revolutionaries in France took the threat seriously and prepared for war. The revolution was about to enter a new, more radical phase of change and conflict.

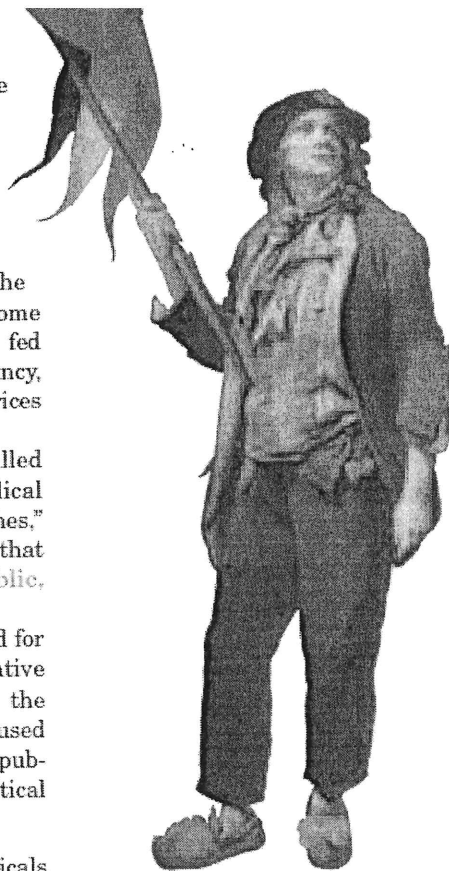
Radicals Fight for Power and Declare War In October 1791, the newly elected Legislative Assembly took office. Faced with crises at home and abroad, it survived for less than a year. Economic problems fed renewed turmoil. Assignats (AS ig nats), the revolutionary currency, dropped in value, causing prices to rise rapidly. Uncertainty about prices led to hoarding and caused additional food shortages.

In Paris and other cities, working-class men and women, called *sans-culottes* (sanz koo LAHTS), pushed the revolution into more radical action. They were called *sans-culottes*, which means "without breeches," because they wore long trousers instead of the fancy knee breeches that upper-class men wore. By 1791, many *sans-culottes* demanded a *republic*, or government ruled by elected representatives instead of a monarch.

Within the Legislative Assembly, several hostile factions competed for power. The *sans-culottes* found support among radicals in the Legislative Assembly, especially the Jacobins. A revolutionary political club, the *Jacobins* were mostly middle-class lawyers or intellectuals. They used pamphleteers and sympathetic newspaper editors to advance the republican cause. Opposing the radicals were moderate reformers and political officials who wanted no more reforms at all.

The National Assembly Declares War on Tyranny The radicals soon held the upper hand in the Legislative Assembly. In April 1792, the war of words between French revolutionaries and European monarchs moved onto the battlefield. Eager to spread the revolution and destroy tyranny abroad, the Legislative Assembly declared war first on Austria and then on Prussia, Britain, and other states. The great powers expected to win an easy victory against France, a land divided by revolution. In fact, however, the fighting that began in 1792 lasted on and off until 1815.

✓ **Checkpoint** How did the rest of Europe react to the French Revolution?



Sans-culotte, 1792

2 Assessment

Progress Monitoring Online

For: Self-quiz with vocabulary practice
Web Code: naa-1821

Terms, People, and Places

1. For each term, person, or place listed at the beginning of the section, write a sentence explaining its significance.

Note Taking

2. **Reading Skill: Identify Supporting Details** Use your completed outline to answer the Focus Question: What political and social reforms did the National Assembly institute in the first stage of the French Revolution?

Comprehension and Critical Thinking

3. **Make Comparisons** How was the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen similar to the American Declaration of Independence?
4. **Summarize** What did the Constitution of 1791 do, and how did it reflect Enlightenment ideas?
5. **Draw Inferences** Describe what happened to France's constitutional monarchy because of the French Revolution.

Writing About History

Quick Write: Create a Flowchart As you prepare to write a cause-and-effect essay, you need to decide how to organize it. To do this, create a flowchart that shows the effects of the French Revolution on other countries. Do you want to write about the events in chronological order? By the importance of each event?