

the french revolution begins answer key

the french revolution begins answer key provides a comprehensive guide to understanding the initial phase of one of history's most significant upheavals. This answer key covers key events, causes, and figures instrumental in the outbreak of the French Revolution. It clarifies common questions related to the revolution's origins, political and social context, and the early actions that set France on a path to radical change. Students and educators will find detailed explanations that align with curriculum standards and historical accuracy. The article also explores the role of the Estates-General, the storming of the Bastille, and the rise of revolutionary ideals. With a clear structure and factual detail, this resource assists in mastering the complexities of the French Revolution's beginnings. The following sections outline the essential components addressed in this answer key.

- Causes of the French Revolution
- The Estates-General and the National Assembly
- The Storming of the Bastille
- Key Figures in the Early Revolution
- Impact and Significance of the Revolution's Beginning

Causes of the French Revolution

The origins of the French Revolution are rooted in a mixture of social, economic, and political factors that destabilized France in the late 18th century. Understanding these causes is essential for answering questions about why the revolution began. The answer key emphasizes the importance of both long-term grievances and immediate crises that fueled revolutionary sentiment.

Social Inequality and the Estates System

France's social structure was divided into three estates, creating widespread inequality. The First Estate consisted of the clergy, the Second Estate included the nobility, and the Third Estate encompassed the commoners, who made up the vast majority of the population. This rigid hierarchy imposed heavy tax burdens on the Third Estate while exempting the privileged classes, leading to significant resentment.

Economic Hardship and Financial Crisis

France faced severe financial difficulties due to costly wars, including support for the American Revolution, and extravagant royal spending. The

government's debt grew unsustainable, and attempts to reform taxation met resistance from privileged estates. Additionally, poor harvests in the late 1780s caused food shortages and increased bread prices, intensifying public discontent.

Political Weakness and Enlightenment Ideas

King Louis XVI's indecisive leadership undermined the monarchy's authority at a critical moment. Meanwhile, Enlightenment thinkers promoted ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity, inspiring demands for political reform. These new ideas challenged the traditional absolutist regime and encouraged the populace to question the existing order.

The Estates-General and the National Assembly

The convening of the Estates-General in 1789 marked a pivotal moment in the beginning of the French Revolution. The answer key clarifies the significance of this event and the subsequent formation of the National Assembly, which symbolized the shift in political power.

Calling the Estates-General

In response to the financial crisis, King Louis XVI summoned the Estates-General for the first time since 1614. This assembly included representatives from all three estates and was intended to address the fiscal emergency. However, disagreements over voting procedures exposed deep divisions.

Formation of the National Assembly

The Third Estate, frustrated by the privileged estates' dominance, declared itself the National Assembly in June 1789. This bold move asserted the principle that political authority derived from the people, not the monarchy or nobility. The answer key highlights this act as the formal start of the revolution's political phase.

Oath of the Tennis Court

After being locked out of the meeting hall, members of the National Assembly gathered in a nearby indoor tennis court and vowed not to disband until a new constitution was established. This event, known as the Tennis Court Oath, is a key moment illustrating the resolve of revolutionary leaders.

The Storming of the Bastille

The storming of the Bastille on July 14, 1789, is one of the most iconic events in the French Revolution's early days. The answer key explains the causes, course, and consequences of this uprising, emphasizing its symbolic importance.

Context of the Bastille Attack

Tensions in Paris escalated as rumors spread that the king planned to suppress the National Assembly by force. Citizens feared military intervention and sought to arm themselves. The Bastille, a royal fortress and prison, was seen as a symbol of tyranny and oppression.

The Event and Its Outcome

On July 14, a crowd of Parisians stormed the Bastille to seize weapons and gunpowder. Although the fortress held only a few prisoners, its capture represented a dramatic challenge to royal authority. The fall of the Bastille galvanized revolutionary fervor across France.

Symbolic Significance

The storming of the Bastille became a powerful emblem of popular resistance and the quest for freedom. It signaled the collapse of the old regime's control and inspired further revolutionary actions. The answer key stresses this event as a turning point in the revolution's narrative.

Key Figures in the Early Revolution

The beginning of the French Revolution involved several influential individuals whose actions and ideas shaped the course of events. The answer key identifies these figures and summarizes their contributions to the revolutionary cause.

King Louis XVI

As the reigning monarch, Louis XVI's indecision and failure to effectively address France's crises contributed to the monarchy's decline. His attempts at reform were too little and too late, and his eventual resistance to revolutionary changes led to his loss of power.

Maximilien Robespierre

Though more prominent later in the revolution, Robespierre emerged as a key advocate for radical change during the movement's early stages. His promotion of democratic ideals and justice influenced revolutionary policies and leadership.

Georges Danton

Danton was a charismatic leader who played a critical role in mobilizing the Parisian populace. His speeches and leadership helped transform revolutionary sentiment into direct action, including support for the storming of the Bastille.

Emmanuel-Joseph Sieyès

As a clergyman and political thinker, Sieyès authored influential pamphlets such as "What is the Third Estate?" which articulated the grievances of commoners and justified their political empowerment.

Impact and Significance of the Revolution's Beginning

The early phase of the French Revolution set in motion profound changes that reshaped France and influenced the world. The answer key highlights these initial impacts and explains why the revolution's beginning remains a crucial subject of study.

End of Absolute Monarchy

The revolution's outbreak marked the decline of absolute monarchical power and the rise of popular sovereignty. The establishment of the National Assembly challenged the divine right of kings and laid the groundwork for constitutional government.

Social and Political Reforms

The beginning of the revolution initiated reforms aimed at dismantling feudal privileges and promoting equality. These included the abolition of special rights for the nobility and clergy and the push for legal rights for all citizens.

Inspiration for Future Revolutions

The French Revolution's early success inspired other nations to pursue democratic reforms and challenge authoritarian regimes. Its ideals of liberty and equality resonated globally, shaping modern political thought.

Summary of Key Early Events

- Estates-General convened to address financial crisis
- Formation of the National Assembly and Tennis Court Oath
- Storming of the Bastille as a symbol of popular uprising
- Rise of revolutionary leaders advocating change
- Collapse of royal authority and social privileges

Frequently Asked Questions

What event is commonly considered the beginning of the French Revolution?

The storming of the Bastille on July 14, 1789, is commonly considered the beginning of the French Revolution.

Why was the storming of the Bastille significant in the French Revolution?

The storming of the Bastille was significant because it symbolized the uprising against the monarchy's tyranny and the beginning of popular resistance.

What social and economic conditions contributed to the start of the French Revolution?

Widespread poverty, food shortages, heavy taxation, and inequality between the estates contributed to the start of the French Revolution.

Who were the key social groups involved at the start of the French Revolution?

The key social groups involved were the Third Estate (commoners), including peasants, urban workers, and the bourgeoisie, who challenged the privileges of the First (clergy) and Second (nobility) Estates.

What role did the Estates-General play in the beginning of the French Revolution?

The Estates-General, convened in 1789 to address the financial crisis, led to the Third Estate breaking away and forming the National Assembly, marking the start of revolutionary change.

How did King Louis XVI respond to the initial stages of the French Revolution?

King Louis XVI initially resisted reforms but eventually accepted the National Assembly's authority under pressure, though his indecisiveness fueled further unrest.

What was the Tennis Court Oath and its importance in the French Revolution?

The Tennis Court Oath was a vow taken by members of the Third Estate in June 1789 to not disband until a new constitution was established, signaling a unified stand against the monarchy.

Additional Resources

1. *Citizens: A Chronicle of the French Revolution*

This book by Simon Schama offers a detailed narrative of the French Revolution, exploring the social, political, and cultural upheavals that ignited the movement. Schama provides vivid portraits of key figures and everyday citizens, emphasizing the complexity and violence of the era. The book challenges simplistic interpretations by highlighting the revolution's contradictions and consequences.

2. *The Coming of the French Revolution*

By Georges Lefebvre, this classic work examines the causes and early stages of the French Revolution. Lefebvre analyzes the economic, social, and political conditions that led to widespread discontent and eventual rebellion. His scholarly approach provides insight into the role of the peasantry and the rising bourgeoisie during the revolutionary period.

3. *The French Revolution: A Very Short Introduction*

Author William Doyle offers a concise overview of the French Revolution, ideal for readers seeking a brief yet comprehensive summary. The book covers the origins, key events, and outcomes of the revolution, providing context and clarity. Doyle's accessible style makes complex historical developments easy to understand.

4. *Twelve Who Ruled: The Year of the Terror in the French Revolution*

This work by R.R. Palmer focuses on the Committee of Public Safety, the group that governed during the most radical phase of the revolution. Palmer delves into the personalities and decisions of the twelve leaders who orchestrated the Reign of Terror. The book sheds light on the internal struggles and ideological conflicts that defined this turbulent year.

5. *The Old Regime and the French Revolution*

Alexis de Tocqueville's seminal study explores the social and political structures of pre-revolutionary France. Tocqueville argues that the revolution was partly a product of the contradictions within the old regime itself. His analysis helps readers understand how longstanding institutions and ideas shaped the revolutionary outcome.

6. *Revolutionary Ideas: An Intellectual History of the French Revolution from The Rights of Man to Robespierre*

Jonathan Israel traces the development of revolutionary thought, emphasizing the role of Enlightenment philosophy in shaping the revolution's ideals. The book examines key thinkers and their influence on revolutionary leaders and policies. Israel highlights how ideas about rights, equality, and democracy fueled the transformative events.

7. *A Short History of the French Revolution*

Written by Jeremy D. Popkin, this concise book provides an engaging and balanced account of the revolution's beginnings and progression. Popkin covers major events, social changes, and political developments with clarity and nuance. It serves as an excellent introduction for students and general readers alike.

8. *The French Revolution and Human Rights: A Brief Documentary History*

Edited by Lynn Hunt, this compilation presents primary documents related to human rights during the French Revolution. The texts include declarations, speeches, and legal codes that illustrate the revolution's impact on concepts of liberty and justice. The book offers valuable primary sources for understanding the revolution's ideological foundations.

9. *France in Revolution, 1774-1815*

By Malcolm Crook, this comprehensive history covers the period from the reign of Louis XVI through the aftermath of the revolution. Crook analyzes political, social, and economic transformations, providing context for the revolution's outbreak and its legacy. The book is well-suited for readers interested in a broad yet detailed exploration of revolutionary France.

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