

Ancient History

The French Revolution Project**Welcome to Your Project!**

The French Revolution signified a major turning point in history: the working class rose up in rebellion against the aristocracy. For this project, you will explore aspects of the French Revolution—what happened, what the main influences were, how one event influenced another, and how events during that period were dramatized by the writer Charles Dickens.

Objectives

In this project, you will learn to do the following:

- Explain the factors that led up to the French Revolution
- Describe the ideology of the French Revolution, including the concept of constitutional monarchy
- Explain how the Napoleonic Empire extended the ideologies of the French Revolution throughout Europe

Assignment Overview

For this project, you will write an expository essay on aspects of the French Revolution and Napoleonic Empire. Your paper will be 2½ to 3 pages long, single-spaced. It will also include a “Works Cited” page at the end. Follow these steps to complete the project:

Part 1:

- Write definitions.
- Read a summary of events and an excerpt from a novel, and answer questions.

Part 2:

- Write definitions.
- Read a summary of events and answer questions.
- View a video and write a summary.

Part 3:

- Write definitions.
- Read a summary of events and answer questions.
- Create a timeline.

Part 4:

- Write an expository essay, and submit your completed project worksheet to your teacher.

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

Grading

For each activity and for the final essay, you will enter your responses into this document. Check with your teacher about how to submit this document for a final grade.

Pacing Guide

The project should take about 10 hours to complete. The following list is a suggested way in which you can pace yourself through this project:

- Part 1—2 hours
- Part 2—2 hours
- Part 3—2 hours
- Part 4—4 hours

Rubric

Use the following rubric to complete your project:

- Expository Essay Rubric

Assignment Details

Part	Assignment
Part 1 The Eve of a Revolution	Write definitions for key terms, people, and events. Read a summary of events that led to the French Revolution and answer questions. Read an excerpt from <i>A Tale of Two Cities</i> by Charles Dickens and answer questions.
Part 2 The French Revolution	Write definitions for key terms, people, and events. Read a summary of events that occurred during the French Revolution and answer questions. Select of video of your choice about the French Revolution and write a summary.
Part 3 The Napoleonic Empire	Write definitions for key terms, people, and events. Read a summary of events that led to the rise of the Napoleonic Empire and answer questions. Write down events on a timeline.
Part 4 Expository Essay	Write an expository essay.

You are now ready to begin your project.

Part 1 The Eve of a Revolution

Now, you will learn about the factors that led to the French Revolution.

You will complete the following:

- Write definitions for key terms, people, or events.
- Read a summary and answer questions.
- Read a section from *A Tale of Two Citizens* by Charles Dickens.
- Answer questions about Dickens' novel.

Key Vocabulary, Terms, People, or Events

Before reading a summary about the factors that led to the French Revolution, you will need to learn vocabulary to help you understand the summary. You will also need to learn key terms, people, and events associated with the historical moment in time represented in the summary.

Complete the Part 1: The Eve of a Revolution—Vocabulary section of your project worksheet.

Summary: “On the Eve of Revolution”

Read the passage “On the Eve of Revolution” and answer the review questions that follow. The passage summarizes the events leading up to the French Revolution. Notice that the vocabulary, key terms, key people, or key events that you have just learned have been bolded in the passage.

On the Eve of Revolution

Enlightenment ideas such as equality and justice help lead to a major event in history: the French Revolution. Economic influences were also strong influences, including inequalities among social classes and unrest due to extravagant **monarchy**.

Under France's **ancien régime**, there were three social classes, or **estates**. The First Estate was the clergy, who enjoyed great wealth and privilege. The Second Estate was the titled nobility. They held top jobs in government, the army, and the courts. The vast majority of the population, including the bourgeoisie, or middle class, formed the Third Estate. The bulk of the Third Estate consisted of rural peasants. The poorest members of the Third Estate were urban workers.

Members of the Third Estate resented the privileges enjoyed by their social betters. The First and Second Estates, for example, were exempt from most taxes, while peasants paid taxes on many things, including necessities. Then Enlightenment ideas led people to question the inequalities of the old social structure. The Third Estate demanded that the privileged classes pay their share.

Economic troubles added to the social unrest. **Deficit spending** had left France deeply in debt. In the 1780s, bad harvests sent food prices soaring. **Louis XVI** chose **Jacques Necker** as an economic advisor. Later, the king was forced to dismiss Necker for proposing to tax the First and Second Estates. The crisis deepened. Powerful nobles and clergy called for a meeting of the **Estates-General** to try to control reform. Louis XVI finally set a meeting at Versailles. Beforehand, the king asked all three estates to prepare **cahiers** listing their grievances. Some lists demonstrated the high level of resentment among the classes.

The Estates-General met in May 1789. After weeks of stalemate, delegates of the Third Estate abandoned the Estates-General and formed the National Assembly. Later, when they were locked out of their meeting place, the members of the new legislature took their famous **Tennis Court Oath**. They swore never to separate until they had established a just constitution.

On July 14, 1789, the streets of Paris buzzed with rumors that royal troops were going to occupy the city. More than 800 Parisians assembled outside the Bastille (prison), demanding weaponry stored there. When the commander refused, the enraged mob stormed the Bastille, sparking the French Revolution.

	Complete the Part 1: The Eve of a Revolution—Review Questions section of your project worksheet.
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Connections to Literature: *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens

One of the most dramatic accounts of the French Revolution was written by British novelist Charles Dickens (1812–1870), who had not even been born at the time. His novel *A Tale of Two Cities* describes a real event—the storming of the Bastille on July 14, 1789. In the novel, leaders of the mob include the fictional wine shop owner Defarge and his wife.

Assignment

Complete the following:

1. Find a copy of the novel *A Tale of Two Cities* on the Internet. (Hint: Project Gutenberg is a reliable website to find this novel.)
2. Access the novel and do a keyword search within the text to find the following phrase: “Saint Antoine had been, that morning, a vast dusky mass of scarecrows.” In this portion of the novel, the storming of the Bastille is being described. It signifies the official start of the French Revolution.
3. Read until you reach the end of this chapter, which ends on the following sentence: “For, they are headlong, mad, and dangerous; and in the years so long after the breaking of the cask at Defarge’s wine-shop door, they are not easily purified when once stained red.”

	Complete the Part 1: The Eve of a Revolution—Questions for A Tale of Two Cities by Charles Dickens section of your project worksheet.
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Part 2: The French Revolution

In Part 2, you will learn about the ideologies (main ideas) of the French Revolution.

You will complete the following:

- Write definitions for key terms, people, or events.
- Read a summary and answer questions.
- Watch a video on the French Revolution.
- Write a summary of the video.

Key Vocabulary, Terms, People, or Events

Complete the Part 2: The French Revolution—Vocabulary section of your project worksheet.

Summary: “The French Revolution”

Read the passage “The French Revolution” and answer the review questions that follow. The passage summarizes the French Revolution. Notice that the vocabulary has been bolded in the passage.

The French Revolution

In France, the political crisis of 1789 coincided with a terrible famine. Peasants were starving and unemployed. In such desperate times, rumors ran wild. Inflamed by famine and fear, peasants unleashed their fury on the nobles. Meanwhile, a variety of **factions** in Paris competed to gain power. Moderates looked to the **Marquis de Lafayette** for leadership. However, a more radical group, the Paris Commune, replaced the city’s royalist government.

The storming of the Bastille and the peasant uprisings pushed the National Assembly into action. In late August, the Assembly issued the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen. It proclaimed that all male citizens were equal before the law. Upset that women did not have equal rights, journalist **Olympe de Gouges** wrote a declaration that provided for this. The Assembly did not adopt it, however. Nor was King Louis XVI willing to accept reforms. Much anger was directed at the queen, **Marie Antoinette**, who lived a life of great extravagance.

The National Assembly produced the Constitution of 1791. This document reflected Enlightenment goals, set up a limited monarchy (also known as **constitutional monarchy**), ensured equality before the law for all male citizens, and ended Church interference in government.

In October 1791, the newly elected Legislative Assembly took office, but falling currency values, rising prices, and food shortages renewed turmoil. Working-class men and women pushed the revolution in a more radical direction, and demanded a **republic**. These radicals soon held the upper hand in the Legislative Assembly. Eager to spread the revolution, they declared war against Austria and other European monarchies.

In 1793, the revolution entered a frightening and bloody phase. The war with Austria was not going well for France. Some felt the king was in league with France's enemies. Others wanted to restore the king's power. On August 10, 1792, a mob stormed the royal palace. Radicals then took control of the Assembly and called for the election of a new legislative body called the National Convention. The Convention that met in September 1792 was a more radical body than earlier assemblies. It voted to abolish the monarchy and establish the French Republic. Louis XVI and his queen were executed.

War with other European nations and internal rebellions concerned the government. The Convention created the Committee of Public Safety to deal with these issues. It had almost absolute power and this time became known as the **Reign of Terror** (September 1793 to July 1794). During that time, courts conducted hasty trials for those suspected of resisting the revolution. Many people were the victims of false accusations. About 17,000 were executed by **guillotine**.

In reaction to the Terror, the revolution entered a third stage, dominated by the bourgeoisie. It moved away from the excesses of the Convention, and moderates created the Constitution of 1795. This set up a five-man Directory to rule, and a two-house legislature. However, discontent grew because of corrupt leaders. Also, war continued with Austria and Britain. Politicians planned to use **Napoleon Bonaparte**, a popular military hero, to advance their goals.

By 1799, the French Revolution had dramatically changed France. It had dislodged the old social order, overthrown the monarchy, and brought the Church under state control. **Nationalism** spread throughout France. From the city of Marseilles, troops marched to

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

a rousing new song that would become the French national anthem. Revolutionaries also made social reforms. They set up systems to help the poor and abolished slavery in France's Caribbean colonies.

	Complete the Part 2: The French Revolution—Review Questions section of your project worksheet.
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Summary of a Video

Find a video online that depicts an event from the French Revolution. For example, you may choose to watch a movie dramatizing an event from the French Revolution, a historical video summing up some of the major events, or a video that depicts the life of an important figure of that time, such as Marie Antoinette.

The video should be at least five minutes and relevant to the topic of the French Revolution.

	Complete the Part 2: The French Revolution—Video Summary section of your project worksheet.
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Part 3: The Napoleonic Empire

In Part 3, you will learn how the French Revolution led to the rise of the Napoleonic Empire.

You will complete the following:

- Write definitions for key terms, people, or events.
- Read a summary and answer questions.
- Complete a timeline.

Key Vocabulary, Terms, People, or Events

Complete the Part 3: The Napoleonic Empire—Vocabulary section of your project worksheet.

Summary: “The Age of Napoleon”

Read the passage “The Age of Napoleon” and answer the review questions that follow. The passage summarizes Napoleon’s rise, reign, and fall. Notice that the vocabulary has been bolded in the passage.

The Age of Napoleon

The final phase of the revolution is known as the Age of Napoleon. When the revolution first broke out, Napoleon Bonaparte was a young lieutenant. Battle victories fueled his ambitions and his rise through army ranks. By 1804, Napoleon had acquired enough power to assume the title Emperor of the French. At each step on his rise to power, Napoleon had held a **plebiscite**. However, he still had absolute power, although he was elected.

Napoleon consolidated his power by strengthening the central government. His economic and social reforms won support across classes. Among his most lasting reforms was the **Napoleonic Code**. This new code of laws embodied Enlightenment principles of equality, religious tolerance, and the abolition of feudalism.

From 1804 to 1812, Napoleon battled the European powers and created a vast French

empire. A brilliant general, before each battle, Napoleon developed a new plan. In this way, opposing generals could never anticipate what he would do next. He rarely lost. Napoleon **annexed** the Netherlands, Belgium, and parts of Italy and Germany to build his Grand Empire. However, Britain remained outside Napoleon's grasp. His attempt to wage economic warfare against Britain through the **Continental System** failed. Many Europeans resented the scarcity of goods. Growing nationalism led to resistance against French influence. In Spain, patriots waged **guerrilla warfare** against the French.

In 1812, Napoleon invaded Russia with 600,000 soldiers. To avoid battles with Napoleon, the Russians retreated, burning crops and villages as they went. This **scorched-earth policy** left the French hungry and cold. Most of the Grand Army was destroyed. Fewer than 20,000 soldiers survived. The retreat from Moscow through the long Russian winter shattered Napoleon's reputation for success.

In 1815, British and Prussian forces crushed the French at the Battle of Waterloo. Napoleon was forced to **abdicate**. After Waterloo, diplomats met at the **Congress of Vienna** to restore stability and order in Europe after years of revolution and war. The Congress strived to create a lasting peace through the principle of **legitimacy** and by maintaining a balance of power. Leaders also met periodically in the **Concert of Europe** to discuss problems that threatened peace.

	Complete the Part 3: The Napoleonic Empire—Review Questions section of your project worksheet.
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Timeline

	Complete the Part 3: The Napoleonic Empire—Timeline section of your project worksheet.
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Part 4: Making Connections—Writing an Essay

Now, you will draft an essay about the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Empire.

You will complete the following:

- Write an expository essay.

So far in this project, you have learned that Enlightenment ideas, such as equality and justice, and social inequalities led to the French Revolution. During the revolution, France developed a constitutional monarchy; however, issues arose under this new system of government that ultimately led to the rise of the Napoleonic Empire.

Final Assignment: Expository Essay

For the final assignment, you will write an expository (informational) essay about events surrounding the French Revolution. Your essay should be one-and-a-half to two pages long (or about 1,000 words), using 12-point font and single-spaced, plus a “Works Cited” page. Write in the space provided on this document.

As you complete your Internet research, include a “Works Cited” page using Modern Language Association (MLA) style guidelines (or whatever guidelines are specified by your teacher). Search on the Internet to learn how to format your sources in MLA style.

Use the Expository Essay Rubric to evaluate your work.

Topic Choices

Select **one** of the following topics:

Choice 1:

Write an expository essay tracing the development of the French Revolution and its impact.

Choice 2:

Write an expository essay explaining the significance of a given quote from *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens.

Choice 1

Write an expository essay tracing the development of the French Revolution and its impact by examining the following four phases:

- Constitutional Monarchy/The National Assembly
- The Reign of Terror
- The Directory
- The Age of Napoleon

Each one led to the development of the other:



Recommended Organizational Structure

Introduction	<p>Introduce what you will do in your paper.</p> <p>Write a clear thesis statement.</p>
Body	<p>Describe the National Assembly, its time period, and its philosophies. Also define the term <i>constitutional monarchy</i>.</p> <p>Describe the Reign of Terror, its time period, and its impact.</p> <p>Describe the Directory, its time period, and how it paved the way for the Age of Napoleon.</p> <p>Describe the period of Napoleon’s rule—its rise and fall.</p>
Conclusion	<p>Sum up how each major period influenced the one that came before it.</p> <p>Draw conclusions about what you have learned.</p>

Choice 2

Charles Dickens’ novel *A Tale of Two Cities* depicts the revolution. Write an expository essay explaining how the following quote from Dickens’ novel relates to the French Revolution:

From *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens

“The sea of black and threatening waters, and of destructive upheaving of wave against wave, whose depths were yet unfathomed and whose forces were yet unknown.”

In your essay, be sure to discuss the following questions:

- What happened as a result of the uprising?
- What changes in governing occurred?
- Were these changes successful? Why or why not?
- How did these changes influence the way other countries governed their people?

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

- In what way did these changes create an environment in France that allowed for the rise of the Napoleonic Empire?

Make sure you frequently reference the quote within your essay.

Recommended Organizational Structure

Introduction	<p>Introduce the quote and its significance.</p> <p>Write a clear thesis statement.</p> <p>Be sure to cite the source of the quote.</p> <p>Give an overview of what you will discuss in your paper.</p>
Body	<p>Describe the events surrounding the quote (<i>i.e.</i>, the uprising at the Bastille and its result).</p> <p>Describe what changes occurred in governing as a result of the uprising. Include the impact of such changes on other countries.</p> <p>Describe how the resulting changes led to the rise of the Napoleonic Empire.</p>
Conclusion	<p>Restate the quote.</p> <p>Expand upon the meaning or the quote as you summarize the point made in your paper.</p> <p>Describe lessons learned from the French Revolution.</p>

Complete the Part 4: Final Assignment—Writing an Essay section of your project worksheet.
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Submit the completed French Revolution Project Worksheet to your teacher for a grade.

Congratulations! You are finished with your project!