

A Level History – Bridging Materials

France in Revolution, 1774-1815

Welcome to A Level History! This pack contains your bridging materials for the France in Revolution component of A Level History.

This pack is designed to introduce you to the subject matter, ensuring that you begin the course in September with an understanding of the key concepts associated with the early period of course and the 'Big Picture' of this revolutionary period; laying the foundations for our course by exploring what France was like before the Revolution.

The activities will take you a few hours to complete, so don't attempt to do it all at once! You will find it helpful to break up the work to keep it manageable. Please don't hesitate to get in touch if you have any questions, as I'll be happy to help you out.

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Section 1: Securing

Key concepts

Key term	Definition
Absolutism	System where the monarch has complete authority over the lives of his people
Ancien Règime	Term coined in 1790 by the revolutionary Mirabeau; used to describe the political and social system of France before 1789 (especially the estates system)
Clergy	People who work for the Church: archbishops, bishops, parish priests, monks and nuns
Constitution	Set of rules by which a country is governed
Controller – General	Title taken by the minister in charge of finances in France between 1661 and 1791
<i>Don gratuit</i>	Instead of paying tax, the Church decided an amount that they would pay to the king every 5 years; usually amounted to 2% of their income
Enlightenment	Intellectual and cultural movement which spread across Europe during the 18 th century, which questioned traditional ideas, assumptions and institutions.
Estate	Refers to people's social standing; in France, there were three distinct estates with corresponding privileges and burdens: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• First Estate = the clergy (members of the Church)• Second Estate = the nobility• Third Estate = everybody else (commoners)
<i>Lettre de cachet</i>	Letter bearing king's royal seal by which he could order someone to be imprisoned (without a trial)

<i>Lit de justice</i>	Royal session of the Paris Parlement for the compulsory registration of royal edicts (proposed law)
<i>Parlement</i>	High court of law which also registered royal decrees/edicts, establishing them as law
Remonstrance	Document sent by a parlement to the monarch protesting against a royal decree

Section 2: Processing

France before the Revolution

In order to understand the course and nature of the revolution in France, it is essential to have a firm grasp of France's political, economic, religious and social context before 1789. The first part of our course will focus on this in September and you can put yourself in a strong position by laying the foundations through your own research exploring the question: 'What was the *Ancien Regime*?'

What is the task?

You should use the information attached, and your own research if you are investigating the topics listed under 'more challenging', to produce a one-two page summary of the *Ancien Regime*. It is up to you how you present your findings; aim to include photographs, images and charts as these will be useful in helping you to understand and remember the key information.

Essential content:

- Government of the *Ancien Regime*
 - Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette
 - Versailles and the royal court (you will find it useful to explore the website for the Palace of Versailles to get a sense of its grandeur and history: <http://en.chateauversailles.fr/discover>)
 - How the government worked and the problems the government faced
- Social system of the *Ancien Regime*
 - Overview of the estates system
 - Summary of the key details, responsibilities and privileges of each of the three estates
 - Impact of this social system on the financial and economic problems of France

More challenging:

- The role of the Church and religion in France before the Revolution
- France's position in the world and international relations in the 18th Century
- Intellectual context of the French Revolution – the Age of Enlightenment
 - <https://www.sparknotes.com/history/european/enlightenment/section3/>
 - <https://alphahistory.com/frenchrevolution/enlightenment/>

Analysing what you have read:

The first question our course poses is 'why did the French Revolution break out in 1789?'. Your research will have helped you to understand more about some of the longer-term causes of tension in France.

On A4 paper (unless you use a word processor for exams), write two or three paragraphs explaining why tension was increasing in France before 1789. It will be helpful to consider the divisions and weaknesses in France that you have been researching and consider how each area created problems for the French people or the King and his government.

Section 3: Exploring

Royal History's Biggest Fibs – The French Revolution

Documentary link: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m000p3nq/royal-historys-biggest-fibs-with-lucy-worsley-series-2-1-the-french-revolution>

As you watch the documentary, record details of the myth or misconception in the space on the left (you have been given headings to use as prompts) and add evidence that challenges each misconception to the column on the right. Some headings only appear in the right-hand column, this is because there is useful evidence for you to have but no myth to debunk!

Myth/misconception	Evidence
Marie Antoinette	
Financial Crisis	
Who were the revolutionaries?	

French Flag	
Equality	
	Position of Louis and the Royal Family
Revolution was anarchic in nature	
Guillotine	
Louis' trial and execution	
	Trial of Marie Antoinette
Robespierre	

Revolution confined to France	
Autocratic rule in France	
1789	
Legacy	
Memory of the Revolution in France	

Additional recommendations:

If you wish to immerse yourself further in the French revolution (and why wouldn't you?!), here are some recommended podcasts and videos. To ensure that you are actively engaging as you listen/watch, I would recommend taking notes in some form:

