

French Revolution and English Enlightenment Notes

- Because of Ideas circulating during the renaissance, philosophers in the 17 and 18 century felt that the organization of society was unfair, and would eventually lead to a full scale revolution in France in 1789.

Organization of Society

- There were three estates, the clergy, nobility and the common people.
 1. The clergy were few in number, but they lived luxurious lives and were members of the kings court. Many of them were noble.
 - a. However lower members of the clergy, such as the priests were members of the third estate.
 2. The nobility were the landowners, they did not really work, but made money from their land and royal allowances. The upper nobility were members of the king's court
 - a. They were royal administrators and military commanders.
 3. Finally the third estate was made up of those who weren't clergy or nobility, but regular people.
 - a. Peasants who lived in poverty and the bourgeois, members of the French middle class
 - i. bankers, and lawyers.
 - b. Nobles could by noble titles and become members of the clergy, but life for the peasants was fixed.
- Inequality among the estates
 - Only members of the third estate, which was the poorest paid taxes.
 - At a trial, the word of a member of the third estate was worth less than a noble
 - For the same crime members of the third estate were more harshly punished.
- A conflict was brewing between the bourgeoisie and the nobility.
 - The nobility liked not working and making money of the land and they did not like the bourgeoisie and how they had to work.
- Louis XIV was an absolute monarch, which meant that he had all the power in france.
 - The people who worked for him had no say in the government, but just carried out his orders.
 - It was believed that the king was chosen by god and when the king was crowned the clergy confirmed his divine right.
 - In return the king had to protect the interests of the church.
 - The king was able to make laws, call for taxes and collect them, organize trade with colonies, imprison anyone without explanation, declare war and sign peace and impose the religion of his choice on the people.
- The three estates with an absolute monarch is know as the ancien regime, this came to an end in 1789 with the French revolution.

How Did We Get To Revolution?

- In England the king shared power with representatives of the people.
- France wanted a similar system where the people would have a say.
- In England, in 1350 the king began sharing power with Parliament, which was an assembly of people who had the power to make laws.)
 - Parliament had two parts, the upper house made of the clergy and nobility and the house of commons made up of bourgeois and lower nobility. The king could not collect tax or raise an army without the approval of parliament.
 - It was the king who called parliament to meet.
 - The king enforced the law and the parliament made the laws.
- in 1679 parliament passes a law granting every person the right to justice this law was called **habeas corpus**.
 - You could not be imprisoned without a trial. You have a right to know what you're being charged with and you must be brought before a judge within 3 days.
- **John Locke** was an important philosopher who brought up the idea of property rights and freedom of thought.
 - He thought the parliament was more important than the king.
 - He also felt that if the king did not respect laws then parliament could overthrow him.
- The **bill of rights** made sure that the king could not suspend laws or levy taxes without parliament.
 - It also made sure that no army could stand within the kingdom during peace, election of members of parliament should be free, there should be freedom of speech and parliament should be held frequently.
- The English revolution occurred without violence and meant that Monarch would be chosen by parliament and would not get their power from god and that they had to respect habeas corpus, the bill of rights and no longer had absolute power.
- Part of the reason why the revolution was possible was because the philosophy surrounding rulers was changing.
- The reality is that the French admired the English political system and this made them question the absolute monarchy of Louis XIV.
- They believed in the concept of a separation of powers.
 - Under a king, the king holds all the power so the **legislative** (making of laws), the **executive** (the enforcing of laws) and the **judicial** (judging those who break the laws.)
 - The **philosopher Montesquieu** thought that having the power in one led to injustice, so he thought that the powers should be speratreate and idea that was inspired by the English philosopher John Locke
- The only legal religion in France was catholicism.
 - The protestant were persecuted for having a different faith.
 - Philosophers thought that people of all faiths should be seen as equals and believed in a supreme being who did not interfere with human life.
 - This was known as **deism**

- Enlightenment thinkers took ideas from the humanists to spread their ideas.
 - They used journals, pamphlets and posters.
 - They held meeting in living room and cafes and they published many books that were popular among the bourgeoisie of the third estate.
 - The idea of freedom of expression allowed for a free press and these ideas to be spread.
 - This allowed for a new kind of idea. Public opinion.
 - One of the most important elements in a democracy is well informed electorate. Essentially, it's the job of the press to let the public know what's going on so they can come to an informed decision.

The Revolution in France

- King Louis XVI had borrowed a lot of money to help the American defeat the British during the American Revolution.
 - This left France broke
 - Louis could borrow very little from the banks so the only source of income for himself and the government was taxes, which was paid exclusively by the third estate.
- The third estate also had to pay a tithe, one tenth of a peasant's annual production to the clergy.
 - They also had to pay taxes on salt, window tax and a head tax (for just being alive) along with many others.
- **AGRICULTURAL CRISIS**
 - Poor harvest led to a rise in the price of bread, people could not longer afford bread or goods, this resulted in factories closing and people losing their jobs.
 - The seigneurs or lords stockpiled their wheat and sold it at extremely high prices. People got upset and said that the rich were getting rich of the peasants.
- King Louis XVI was afraid that there may be a revolt.
 - The king decided to call the estates general, which is an assembly of representatives from all 3 estates.
 - It was only the rich who could elect representative.
- Representatives from the third estate demanded an equal vote, the other two estates agreed.
 - The third estate proposed that the clergy and nobility paid taxes, but they again refused.
 - Instead of trying to push tax reform, the third estate opted for a constitution. A new law that would define the structure of government.
 - A clash between the estates was about to happen.
- When the king saw the trouble they were causing he called for a recess and locked the third estate out of the meeting.
 - They went into another room in the king's palace and made an oath not to disband until they had a constitution.
 - Fearing riots, the king orders the other estates to work to draw up a constitution.
 - This puts a limit on the power of the king and an end to an absolute monarchy where the king has all the power.
- Riots were imminent in Paris where people were starving.

- The king sent in the army, which the third estate saw as a threat.
 - They stormed the a prison called the Bastille for weapons and armor.
- In the end the king accepted the constitution.
- The third estate from a national assembly which removed **legislative** and **judicial** powers from the king and there is now a **constitutional monarchy**.
- On August 26, 1789 the National Assembly adopted the **declaration of the rights of man and the citizen**.
 - This was created and inspired by the ideas of the english enlightenment.
- The French revolution ended the three estates got rid of privileges for the clergy, nobility, and seigneurs, people became citizens instead of subjects, powers were separated, men who worked and paid taxes could vote, and an absolute monarch was brought to an end.
- January 21 Louis XVI is sentenced to death and executed.
 - What followed was a series of different political systems
 - The reign of terror of the Jacobins which left 40, 000 people either executed or murdered
 - EVentually even an empire led by Napoleon Bonaparte.
- But in the 19th century, **France chose to be a republic in which the three branch of government are separated and a leader is elected.**