Stage 1: National Assembly 1789-1791

Stage 2: Radical Revolution 1792-1794

Stage 3: Directory 1795-1799

Stage 4: Age of Napoleon 1799-1815

STAGE 2 | 1792-1794: Radical Stage

1. April 1792
   - France declares war on Austria, Prussia, Britain, Holland, and Spain

2. January 1793
   - Louis XVI is executed by guillotine

3. March 1793
   - Robespierre leads Committee of Public Safety
   - Reign of Terror begins

4. July 1794
   - Robespierre is executed
   - Reign of Terror ends
**Why did France declare war on Austria, Prussia and other monarchs? How did these wars impact revolutionary progress?**

Objective: Describe the reasons for France’s declaration of war on Austria, Prussia, England and other monarchs and the impact these wars had on revolutionary progress.

**April 1792: France declares war on Austria, Prussia, Britain, Holland, and Spain**

The **Constitution of 1791** established a new government that set up a limited monarchy instead of an absolute monarchy. As a result, the **Legislative Assembly** had the power to collect taxes, make laws, and declare war.

1. **How is a limited monarchy different from an absolute monarchy?**

In June 1791, King Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette along with their children attempted to escape Paris in disguises, however, they were caught and escorted back to France.

2. **How might this escape have impacted how King Louis XVI was perceived by the French?**

3. **How do you think this escape impacted how King Louis XVI was perceived by other European monarchs?**

revolutionary fervor would spread to their countries.

4. **What do you think other European monarchs feared? Why did they have these fears?**

The **émigrés**, or the former members of the nobility, Catholic royalist sympathizers, or anti-republicans, were expelled by the Decree of 17 December 1791 or left because they felt threatened by the revolution. These émigrés fled to neighboring European countries where they told stories of attacks and abuses by the revolutionary government.

5. **Who were the émigrés?**

In response to the stories from émigrés and anger over the King Louis XVI’s failed attempt at escape, the king of Prussia and the emperor of Austria wrote...
By 1792, European Monarchs were eyeing France with suspicion. They had seen the overthrow of Louis XVI by the French people and worried that

**6. What was the Declaration of Pillnitz?**

**7. How would such a declaration impact the relationship between the revolutionary government and neighboring monarchical countries?**

the **Declaration of Pillnitz** on August 27, 1791 in which they warned the revolutionary government that if any harm came to the king and his monarchy that they would intervene militarily.

The king of Prussia and the emperor of Austria also began to rally other monarch nations to form an alliance against France. In a preemptive move, France declared war on Austria on April 20, 1792, then on Prussia, Britain and other European nations.

**8. What did France do on April 20, 1792? Why did they do this?**
Why was Louis XVI executed? How did this execution impact revolutionary progress?

Objective: Describe the reasons for and impact of Louis XVI’s execution.

January 1793: Louis XVI is executed

Read the transcript of the French Revolution documentary and respond to the questions.

00:57:16 guillotine’s chilling new device hangs over Paris like a warden, the penalty for defying revolutionary law and order.

01:00:36 Freshly christened with the blood of the king’s guards,,, it will soon put an end to the king himself.

01:00:45 By August 1792, with the king deposed and the royal family secluded in the Temple prison, Robespierre and his Jacobins are locked in a battle with the moderates of the Assembly, the Girondins, for control of the national government.

01:01:01 And on the streets of Paris, a new political movement takes hold.

01:01:05 As a symbol of their rejection of aristocratic tradition, ordinary citizens refuse to wear the knee breeches, orculottes,of the aristocrats.,, They call themselves the sans-culottes, "those without knee pants." >> The sans-culotes considered themselves the true people of France.

01:01:22 They were not the poorest of the poor.

01:01:23 They tended to be fairly well-off artisans, shopkeepers, people like that.

01:01:28 But they were people who at least claimed to work with their hands.

01:01:31 Not wearing the breeches, not wearing the culottes, for the sans-culottes,
was simply symbolism of being not an aristocrat, being an ordinary man of the people.

01:01:41 >> Herrmann: The sans-culottes seized control of Paris' city government while the Jacobins and Girondins steer the rest of the country from the National Assembly, now called the Convention.

01:01:54 The Convention struggles with the command of the beleaguered French army, which is swiftly losing ground to Austria and Prussia.

01:02:04 While fighting back incursions at the border, the revolutionary government cracks down on enemies within, royalist traitors who might deliver Paris into the hands of the invaders.

01:02:15 More than 1,000 people are arrested and herded to prison: priests, journalists, ordinary men and women.

01:02:24 Robespierre concentrates on the internal crisis.

01:02:28 But his friend the minister of justice, George Danton, motivates men young and old to join the war on the frontier.

01:02:36 He is gregarious and loud, everything that Robespierre is not.

01:02:40 Soon, Danton's name is heard throughout Paris.

01:02:44 >> Danton is a bigger-than-life character, a man full of life, full of bombast, tremendous drinker and debaucherer who, though he's from the educated classes himself, is a guy who, unlike Robespierre, can physically identify with the working people in a way that Robespierre simply cannot.

01:03:06 >> Herrmann: As the enemy closes in Danton's fiery rhetoric mobilizes the people, inspiring many to take to the battlefront.

01:03:14 >> At one of the moments of greatest peril for the revolution-- the Austrian and Prussian armies are invading--he gets up in front of the people of Paris and shouts, "De l'audace, encore de l'audace, toujours de l'audace, et la patrie est sauvée." "Boldness, more boldness,,, forever boldness, and the
fatherland is saved." He's really one of the people who manages to rally the country against the invaders.

It's an extraordinary moment.

>> Herrmann: With so many able-bodied men leaving for the front, Paris is left defenseless, its jails bursting with political prisoners.

An unsettling fear floods the city.

The growing mass of prisoners may be impossible to contain.

Marat puts out a bloodthirsty call for revolutionary citizens to descend upon the prisons and slaughter all inside.

>> The foreign armies were advancing on Paris.

Had they linked up in Paris with these bitter enemies of the revolution and the prisoners, of course, then the results would have been fairly horrific from the standpoint of the people.

>> Herrmann: In the first week of September, disastrous news arrives from the front.

Prussia has taken Verdun, a town on the road to Paris.

The enemy is now just miles away.

The fear gripping Paris explodes.,, The sans-culottes break into the prisons and unleash a furious assault on the city's inmates.

They will leave no traitor alive.

>> And the sans-culottes went to the prisons, particularly the prisons where refractory priests were being held, where nobles were being held, where political prisoners were being held.

And they started carrying out their own impromptu trials that were very short
and that very often simply ended with slaughter.

01:05:04  >> Herrmann: Women are raped and brutalized, priests disemboweled, aristocrats hacked to pieces.

01:05:11  In a primeval slaughter, more than 1,600 are left dead in a matter of days.

01:05:19  When word of the September massacre spreads throughout Europe, enemies of the revolution are sickened.

01:05:31  Across the English Channel, the London Times gives voice to the revulsion.

01:05:37  >> "Are these the rights of man? Is this the liberty of human nature?"

01:05:43  The most savage four-footed tyrants that range unexplored Africa rise superior to these two-legged Parisian animals." >> Herrmann: The revolution 2HR - Glob Even Robespierre understands that things have gone too far, that the people cannot manage the revolution on their own.

01:06:04  They need guidance, an iron hand.

01:06:08  And with the power of his words, the Incorruptible rises to the forefront as the man who will guide the revolution, Robespierre had once pushed for a constitutional monarchy.

01:06:22  Now he believes there is no longer room for the king.

01:06:26  A momentous decision is made.

01:06:29  France will put its own king on trial. With the verdict a foregone conclusion, the only debate left is punishment.

01:06:43  The moderates, the Girondins, call for sparing Louis' life, which isolates them in the Convention.

01:06:50  >> The Gironde really crystallized as a faction in the Convention over the debate over the king, because they, while they certainly wanted a republic, they were less sure that the king should actually have to die.
Herrmann: But the girondins are outnumbered by the Jacobin call for blood.,

Why did the Jacobins want to kill the king?

I think they wanted to kill the king because, as Robespierre brilliantly said,
you have to kill the king so the revolution can live.

If the king is right, then the revolution is wrong.

In any system there had ever been, there's only one penalty for treason,
and that is death.

So in this sense, if the king is guilty of betraying the country in a time of war,
then the argument is that he must suffer, the death of a traitor.

[gavel banging] On January 20, 1793, Louis XVI is declared guilty.

The sentence is read.

The king must die., That evening, Louis is briefly reunited with his family.

Calm in the face of their tears, he promises to return the next morning to say a final good-bye.

He will not.

He cannot bear his family's anguish and must not weaken on the way to the guillotine.

The next morning, a closed carriage brings Louis to the scaffold.

And he stoically makes his way to the blade., He attempts to give a speech.

"I trust that my death will be for the happiness of my people.

But I grieve for France, and I fear that she may suffer the anger of the Lord."

>> Herrmann: But the guards drown him out with a drumroll., At 10:22 a.m.,
the man who once was king is no more.

01:09:36 In the Temple prison, Marie hears the cannons fire, heralding the death of her husband.

01:09:43 She collapses in despair.

01:09:49 The king's blood is spilled, the revolutionaries victorious.

01:09:54 But the enemies of the revolution will soon claim a victory of their own.

01:09:59 Their target: The man who is calling for so many heads to roll, Jean-Paul Marat.

<p>| 1:30 | 1. What problems did the National Convention face? How did this problem impact how revolutionary leaders began to treat suspected traitors within France? |
| 1:53 | 2. What happened to over 1,000 people suspected of being traitors? |
| 2:45 | 3. What did Robespierre want to focus on? ____________________________ |
| 2:45 | 4. What did Danton want to focus on? ____________________________ |
| 3:13-45 | 5. “With so many able-bodied men leaving for the frontlines, Paris is left defenseless, its jails bursting with political prisoners. An unsettling fear floods the city. The growing mass of prisoners may be impossible to contain. Marat puts out a bloodthirsty called for revolutionary citizens to descend upon the prisons and slaughter all inside.” Why do you think Marat made this suggestion? |
| 3:13-45 | 6. How did Marat spread his ideas? What Renaissance technology allowed him to spread his ideas? |
| 4:05 | 7. What event encouraged revolutionaries to follow through with Marat’s plan? |
| 4:05 | 8. Why do you think people were persuaded to follow Marat’s suggestions? |
| 4:05 | 9. What impact does the media [newspaper, TV, etc.] have on influencing the actions of people within a nation? |
| 4:15-45 | 10. Describe what the revolutionaries did to the prisoners. |</p>
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Question</th>
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<tr>
<td>4:45</td>
<td>11. How many people were killed during the September massacre?</td>
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<td>5:08</td>
<td>12. Which nation was critical of the September massacre?</td>
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<td>5:33-46</td>
<td>13. Robespierre realized that the massacre went too far and that the revolutionaries need a leader. He comes forward. What is the first decision he made as the new leader of the revolutionaries?</td>
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<td>6:42</td>
<td>14. According to the historian, Robespierre said, “You have to kill the king so the revolution can live.” What does this sentence mean? What does this reveal about the extent French revolutionaries were willing to go to achieve their goals?</td>
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<td>7:22</td>
<td>15. On January 28, 1793, what is decided about King Louis XVI?</td>
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<td>9:28</td>
<td>16. How do revolutionaries respond to the execution of King Louis XVI?</td>
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17. What did the execution of Louis XVI symbolize?  
19. In your opinion, is it right to use violence to advance your ideas and goals?

18. How did his execution help advance the revolutionary ideals?
Print of Louis XVI’s Guillotined Head

**Artist or maker:** Unknown
**Published by Villeneuve**
(French, active 1789-1814)
**Author of Text**
Maximilien Robespierre
(French, b.1758, d.1794)
**Date:** 1793
**Place of Production:**
Paris, France
**Medium:** aquatint, etching and engraving on paper

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**Directions:** Using the image above, respond to the questions below.

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<th><strong>OBSERVE</strong></th>
<th><strong>DESCRIBE</strong></th>
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<td>1. List the object, people or places you see in the image.</td>
<td>4. Describe the action in the image.</td>
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<th><strong>EXPLAIN</strong></th>
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<td>2. In the title, who are the “Crowned Jugglers” and why are they referred to in that way?</td>
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</tbody>
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| 3. Why is Louis XVI’s blood referred to as “impure”? |

| 5. What message does this image send to counterrevolutionaries within France? |

| 6. What message does this image send to revolutionary sympathizers within France? |

| 7. What message does this image send to other European monarchs? |
What was the Reign of Terror? Why did Robespierre initiate it?

Objective: Describe the reasons for the Reign of Terror.

March 1793: Robespierre leads Committee of Public Safety and the Reign of Terror begins

What was the Committee of Public Safety?
The Committee of Public Safety was set up on April 6, 1793, during one of the crises of the Revolution, when France was burdened with foreign and civil war. The new committee was to provide for the defense of the nation against its enemies, foreign and domestic, and to oversee the already existing organs of executive government. From April to July 10, 1793, the Committee of Public Safety was dominated by Georges Danton and his followers, who pursued a policy of moderation and reconciliation but who failed to deal adequately with the precarious military situation. These men were replaced in July by men more determined and more radical in the defense of the Revolution, among them Maximilien Robespierre.

1. What was the purpose of the Committee of Public Safety?

2. Which more radical leader took control of the Committee of Public Safety? ________________

3. Given what you know about the September massacre and the execution of Louis XVI, what predictions can you make about what the revolutionaries were willing to do to meet the Committee’s goals?

What was the Reign of Terror?
The Reign of Terror (June 1793 – July 1794) was a period in the French Revolution characterized by brutal repression. The Terror originated with the Committee of Public Safety that suspended most of the democratic achievements of the revolution, and intended to pursue the revolution on social matters. Its stated aim was to destroy internal enemies and conspirators and to chase the external enemies from French territory. The Terror as such started on September 5, 1793 and, as the Reign of Terror, lasted until the summer of 1794, taking the lives of anywhere between 18,000 to 40,000 people (estimates vary widely). Thousands would die by means of the guillotine. In the single month before it ended, 1,300 executions took place.

4. The Reign of Terror is said to be “characterized by brutal repression”. What does the word “repression” mean?
5. According to this excerpt, what was the aim of the Reign of Terror?

The image to the left is an engraving from France (1793). The text at the bottom of the engraving reads (translated):
“Robespierre, after having all the French guillotined, beheads the executioner with his own hand.”

1. What does this image reveal about Robespierre?

2. What does this image reveal about the Reign of Terror?

Source: Unknown artist, engraving of Robespierre and the guillotine, Robespierre, After Having All The French Guillotined, Beheads the Executioner with His Own Hand, 1793
How did the Reign of Terror impact France?

Objective: Describe the impact of the Reign of Terror

Directions: Examine each of the documents below and answer the questions that accompany them to understand the impact the Reign of Terror had on France and the revolution.

 Executions During the Reign of Terror

1. According to the pie chart to the left, which classes were executed most frequently?

2. What is ironic about who the Committee of Public Safety chose to execute?

3. How might these executions have impacted morale in France?

Robespierre’s Changes to the Government

... When he entered the Committee [of Public Safety], Maximilien [Robespierre] persuaded the other members to accept new procedures, to reorganize the clerical staff and to hold weekly meetings with the other Committee [of General Security]. The press, which, from intimate knowledge, the leader regarded as dangerous, was to be temporarily deprived of its freedom. Only when true democracy had been established would it be possible to allow journalists to have their say again! In all such decisions, the will and interests of the majority of citizens of France were both the pretext [alleged reason] and the inspiration. In other words: the government was to remain revolutionary until peace had been restored and all enemies put to flight....

1. According to John Laurence Carr, what was one change Robespierre persuaded the government to make to address the threat to the revolution?
2. What does the sentence, “The press, which, from intimate knowledge, the leader regarded as dangerous, was to be temporarily deprived of its freedom” mean? Why would Robespierre make this decision?

3. Based on this excerpt, why did Robespierre think the changes in the government were necessary?

The Law of Suspects

This law, passed on 17 September 1793 [by Robespierre and the National Convention], authorized the creation of revolutionary tribunals to try those suspected of treason against the Republic and to punish those convicted with death. This legislation in effect made the penal justice system into the enforcement arm of the revolutionary government, which would now set as its primary responsibility not only the maintenance of public order but also the much more difficult and controversial task of identifying internal enemies of the Republic—such as “profiteers” who violated the Maximum [decree to fix prices]—and then removing them from the citizenry, where they might subvert [sabotage] the general will.

Source: Liberty, Equality, Fraternity: Exploring the French Revolution, online site, a collaboration of the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media and the American Social History Project

1. According to this document, in what way did the Law of Suspects address the threats against the government?

Helen Williams was a foreigner living in Paris in 1793. She sympathized with those who wanted France to form a republic. She was arrested because her views differed from the views of those in power.

. . . After two months in our new prison, we were released. A young Frenchman, who has since married my sister, managed to get us released by haunting all the officials he could find and finally by begging the release from Chaumette, the procurer of the Paris Commune, and a tyrant. So we were free but were watched. We could see very few people and went out little, and yet it was a sort
of liberty. We feared to go out, in case, without realizing it, we committed some transgression [offense] that would lead to being arrested again. We hardly spoke to anyone, for there were spies everywhere, and we jumped at each knock at the door, fearing arrest. For the prisons were growing more crowded daily, and more and more were going to the scaffold as the Reign of Terror tightened its hold. “Suspicion” was now a warrant for imprisonment, and conspiracy and murder were in the air. One man was arrested because he “looked” noble, another because a total stranger swore that he supported monarchy. Some were arrested for having been rich, others for being clever. Many who were arrested asked for the reason in vain. And the numbers of executions rose, and the horrors increased, and the stories of both courage and cowardice were passed from home to home.

[...]

Soon after our release from prison, we decided to move from the center of the town to a house in the most remote part of the faubourg [suburb], Saint Germain. Our new home was but a few moments walk from the countryside. But although we were close, we did not dare to walk there. The parks and woods that surrounded us and had once belonged to royalty were now haunted by revolutionaries, despots, police spies, even the conspirators themselves on occasion. So we walked in the common fields near our house, where people put their animals to graze. [...] The guillotine was claiming both the innocent and the guilty alike, and at such a rate that the gutters seemed to stream with blood.

Source: Jane Shuter, ed., Helen Williams and the French Revolution, Raintree Steck-Vaughn Publishers (adapted)

1. In lines 3-4, Helen Williams recounts, “So we were free but were watched.” What does this suggest about life during the Reign of Terror?

2. In lines 10-11, Helen Williams explains, “One man was arrested because he “looked” noble, another because a total stranger swore that he supported monarchy.” What does this reveal about how the Reign of Terror impacted the everyday lives of the French?

3. In lines 21-23, Helen Williams writes, “The guillotine was claiming both the innocent and the guilty alike, and at such a rate that the gutters seemed to stream with blood.” Why were both the innocent and guilty killed?
July 1794: Robespierre is executed and the Reign of Terror ends

TIMETABLE, 1794

... July 27: The Convention ordered the arrest of Robespierre and his friends. They were taken to Luxembourg. The jailer refused to lock them up. They left and went to the Town Hall to plan their next move. They could have beaten the Convention, but the Paris Commune did not help in time. They were declared to be outlaws and arrested again.

July 28 (early morning): The Convention made Robespierre and his friends outlaws and arrested them at the Town Hall. Now either Robespierre was shot, or he shot himself. He was wounded.

July 28: Robespierre and 21 friends went to the guillotine....

Source: Jane Shuter, ed., Helen Williams and the French Revolution, Raintree Steck-Vaughn (adapted)

1. According to Jane Shuter, what was one consequence Robespierre faced as a result of his actions?

2. What is ironic about the death of Robespierre?

... By 1795, the Revolutionary armies had restored peace to the French borders, but, once again, turmoil threatened to sweep across France itself. The National Convention (now controlled by the moderate and conservative representatives, who had condemned Robespierre) could not prevent new outbreaks of radical demonstrations....

Source: Sean Connolly, The French Revolution, Heinemann Library

3. According to Sean Connolly, what was one issue France faced after Robespierre was removed from power?
Writing Task: What effects did the Reign of Terror have on France and the French Revolution?