The French Revolution

Created by Ms. Rida

At the start of the 1700s, France was the leading country in Europe financially, militarily, socially, culturally and most importantly, politically. It enjoyed the advantage of a large population, a profitable foreign trade network, the ideas of the Enlightenment, and an enviable culture of arts. Underlying all of these glorifications was a great unrest stemming from bad harvests, high prices on goods and food, high taxes and the skepticism that arose from the new ideas of the Enlightenment thinkers that started people thinking and wishing for a better way of life. Many people are desperate for change but uncertain about the best method of making it happen: peacefully and through law making, or violently and through a revolution. On the morning of July 14, 1789 an angry mob storms into the Bastille, a Paris prison and seized control of the building and began the journey towards reform.

Directions: The following question is based on the accompanying documents in Part A. As you analyze the documents, take into account both the source of the document and the author’s point of view. Be sure to:
1. Carefully read the document-based question.
2. Now, re-read each document carefully, underlining key phrases and words that address the document-based question. You may also wish to use the margin to make brief notes. Answer the questions for each document.
3. Based on your own knowledge and on the information found in the documents, formulate a thesis that directly answers the question.
4. Organize supportive and relevant information into a brief outline.
5. Write a well-organized paragraph proving your thesis. The paragraph should be logically presented and should include information both from the documents and from your own knowledge outside of the documents.

Question: Evaluate whether the changes that resulted from the revolution resolved the problems that caused it.

Task: Using at least 5 documents, write a well-organized essay of three body paragraphs:
- Discuss at least 2 causes of the French Revolution in detail.
- Discuss at least 2 effects of the French Revolution in detail.
- Take a position on the question above and defend it.

Part A For Each Document: You must identify whether it is one that presents a CAUSE, EFFECT, or REVOLUTION EVENT/RESOLUTION. And you must also identify what type of resource is it based on the menu provided. If it is a cause, event, or effect, you must identify which type it is based on the diagram provided on page 676 of your textbook.


Check off what does this document present: □ Cause □ Effect □ Revolution Event/Resolution

Document Analysis:
Type of Source:
□ Primary Source
□ Secondary Source
Social Science Perspective:
□ Geographic
□ Political
□ Economic
□ Cultural
□ Religious

“The condition of France alone did not bring about the overthrow of the monarchy… for the suffering of the people was not greater than they had been before. The ideas of the [Enlightenment philosophers] were not directly responsible for the outbreak…[but] the spark that changed thought into action was supplied by the Declaration of American independence… The American example caused the Revolution to break out…”

What did Lord Acton believe caused the French revolution?

Of the list of causes, event or effects of the French Revolution on page 676 of your textbook, which does this qualify as?
Document B: This diagram illustrates the three estates in 1789 and the land each held during the Old Regime.

What conclusions can you draw about the relationship between the percentage of the population in each estate and the percentage of land owned by that estate?

Of the list of causes, event or effects of the French Revolution on page 676 of your textbook, which does this qualify as?


What unfair conditions existed in pre-revolutionary France?

Of the list of causes, event or effects of the French Revolution on page 676 of your textbook, which does this qualify as?

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What is the First, Second, and Third Estate?

What do you think the rock represents?

What is the cartoonist saying about the relationship among the three estates in France and the social hierarchy of French society in the 18th century?

Of the list of causes, event or effects of the French Revolution on page 676 of your textbook, which does this qualify as?


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. . . Powers of the king.—The King, Louis XVI, was absolute. He ruled by the divine right theory which held that he had received his power to govern from God and was therefore responsible to God alone. He appointed all civil officials and military officers. He made and enforced the laws. He could declare war and make peace. He levied taxes and spent the people’s money as he saw fit. He controlled the expression of thought by a strict censorship of speech and press. By means of lettres de cachet (sealed letters which were really blank warrants for arrest) he could arbitrarily imprison anyone without trial for an indefinite period. He lived in his magnificent palace at Versailles, completely oblivious to the rising tide of popular discontent. . . .

What are some grievances or complaints that people had in terms of the extent of power King Louis XIV had?

Of the list of causes, event or effects of the French Revolution on page 676 of your textbook, which does this qualify as?

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Social Science Perspective:
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(D’Antraigues) “The Third Estate is the People and the People is the foundation of the State; it is in fact the State itself; the other estates are merely political categories while by the immutable (unchangeable) laws of nature the People is everything. Everything should be subordinated (inferior) to it… It is in the People that all national power resides and for the People that all states exist.”

(Sieyes) “What is the third estate? Everything. What has it been heretofore in the political order? Nothing. What does it demand? To become something therein.”

What do these two see as the rightful role of the Third Estate in France?

Of the list of causes, event or effects of the French Revolution on page 676 of your textbook, which does this qualify as?

Document G: Arthur Young, Plight of the French Peasants (1787–1789)

Check off what does this document present: ☐ Cause ☐ Effect ☐ Revolution Event/Resolution

Document Analysis:
Type of Source:
☐ Primary Source ☠ Secondary Source

Social Science Perspective:
☐ Geographic ☠ Political ☠ Economic ☠ Cultural ☠ Religious

The abuses attending the levy of taxes were heavy and universal. . . . The rolls of the taille, capitation, vingtiemes, and other taxes were distributed among districts. . . . A cruel aggravation of their misery, to see those who could best afford to pay, exempted because able! The corvees {taxes paid in labor, often road building}, or police of the roads, were annually the ruin of many hundreds of farmers; more than 300 were reduced to beggary in filling up one vale in Lorraine: all these oppressions fell on the tiers etat {Third Estate} only; the nobility and clergy having been equally exempted from tailles, militia and corvees.

What are some complaints that the peasants have about their life in France?

Of the list of causes, event or effects of the French Revolution on page 676 of your textbook, which does this qualify as?
List some of the reasons that peasants were dissatisfied with their life during this period of French History.

Of the list of causes, event or effects of the French Revolution on page 676 of your textbook, which does this qualify as?
**Document J:** This excerpt is from John Locke’s *Two Treatises of Government*.

Check off what does this document present: □ Cause □ Effect □ Revolution Event/Resolution

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Document Analysis:

*Type of Source:*
- □ Primary Source
- □ Secondary Source

*Social Science Perspective:*
- □ Geographic
- □ Political
- □ Economic
- □ Cultural
- □ Religious

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‘Men being…by nature are free, equal, and independent, no one can be…subjected to the political power of another without his own consent…To protect natural rights governments are established…Since men hope to preserve their property by establishing a government, they will not want that government to destroy their objectives. When legislators try to destroy or take away the property of the people, or try to reduce them to slavery, they put themselves into a state of war with the people who can then refuse to obey the laws.’

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According to the author, what is the purpose of government?

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Of the list of causes, event or effects of the French Revolution on page 676 of your textbook, which does this qualify as?

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**Document K:** The following quotes come from Enlightenment thinkers from the 17th century:

Check off what does this document present: □ Cause □ Effect □ Revolution Event/Resolution

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Document Analysis:

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“I do not agree with what you have to say, but I'll defend to the death your right to say it.” –Voltaire

“All mankind… being all equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty or possessions.” –John Locke

“Man is born free, and everywhere he is in shackles.” –Jean Jacques Rousseau

“Slavery to monarchs and ministers, which the world will be long freeing itself from, and whose deadly grasp stops the progress of the human mind, is not yet abolished.” –Mary Wollstonecraft

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How do these quotes summarize the new ideas about government from the 18th century?

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How did the Enlightenment encourage change?

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Of the list of causes, event or effects of the French Revolution on page 676 of your textbook, which does this qualify as?
The following are excerpts from a list of complaints about the king, taxing, and voting in the Estates General that were presented to the assembled Estates General in 1789. Background—The Estates General was like a Parliament or Congress. Representatives from each of the three Estates could attend. Each Estate was given 1 vote for a total of 3 votes on any issue the Estates General looked at. All of these reforms were rejected.

Document Analysis:

**Type of Source:**
- Primary Source
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**Social Science Perspective:**
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“*That the king be forced to reform the abuses and tyranny [of his rule]….* That every tax…*. Be granted only for a limited time [and periodically re-evaluated]…*. That the taille [a tax on land] be borne equally by all classes…*. The meetings of the Estates General…*. Shall be scheduled for definite times…*. In order to assure the third estate the influence it deserves because of its numbers… its votes in the assembly should be taken by head…”

What three changes did the third estate demand be made in the French government?

What is significant about the fact that the king rejected these demands?

Of the list of causes, event or effects of the French Revolution on page 676 of your textbook, which does this qualify as?

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**Document M:** Excerpt from the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen (1789) approved by the National Assembly of France on August 26, 1789

Check off what does this document present:  □ Cause  □ Effect  □ Revolution Event/Resolution

**Document Analysis:**

**Type of Source:**
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- Secondary Source

**Social Science Perspective:**
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- Religious

1. *Men are born and remain free and equal in rights; social distinctions (distinctions) can be established only for the common benefit.*
2. *The aim of every political association (government) is the conservation (protection) of the imprescriptible (can’t be taken away) rights of man; these rights are liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression….*
4. *Liberty consists of being able to do anything that does not harm another person…*
10. *No one may be disturbed (bothered, arrested) because of his opinions, even religious, provided that their public demonstration does not disturb the public order established by law.*
11. *The free communication of thoughts and opinions is one of the most precious rights of man; every citizen can therefore freely speak, write, print…*
16. *Any society in which guarantees of rights are not assured nor the separation of powers determined has no constitution.*

What are the natural rights of man?

How might a belief in these ideas lead the French to start a Revolution against their king?

Of the list of causes, event or effects of the French Revolution on page 676 of your textbook, which does this qualify as?
Document N: Except from the London Times January 25, 1793

Check off what does this document present: □ Cause □ Effect □ Revolution Event/Resolution

Document Analysis:
Type of Source:
☐ Primary Source
☐ Secondary Source
Social Science
Perspective:
☐ Geographic
☐ Political
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EXECUTION of LOUIS XVI
KING OF THE FRENCH

By an express which arrived yesterday morning from Messrs. Fctor and Co. at Dover, we learn the following particulars of the King's execution.

... The greatest tranquility prevailed every street through which the procession passed. About half past nine, the King arrived at the place of execution, which was in the Place de Louis XV, between the pedestal which formerly supported the statue of his grandfather, and the promenade of the Elysian Fields. Louis mounted the scaffold with composure, and that modest intrepidity peculiar to oppressed innocence, the trumpets sounding and drums beating during the whole time. He made a sign of wishing to harangue [criticize] the multitude, when the drums ceased, and Louis spoke these few words: "I die innocent. I pardon my enemies. I only sanctioned upon compulsion the Civil Constitution of the Clergy..." He was proceeding, but the beating of the drums drowned his voice. His executioners then laid hold of him, and an instant after, his head was separated from his body; this was about a quarter past ten o'clock.

After the execution, the people threw their hats up in the air, and cried out Vive la Nation! Some of them endeavoured to seize the body, but it was removed by a strong guard to the Temple, and the Inquisitors remain of the King were executed from those outrages which his Majesty had experienced during his life.

What is the extent to which problems were solved by executing the king of France?

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... 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 procureur 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. Yet it seemed to me that there was more courage than cowardice to be found, which gave us hope for humanity even in these dark days.

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 German. 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. I have no words to describe how reluctantly we returned from our walks to Paris, that den of carnage, that slaughterhouse of man. The guillotine was claiming both the innocent and the guilty alike, and at such a rate that the gutters seemed to stream with blood. And just when it seemed that things could get no worse, when you thought it was not possible to increase the stream of people flowing to the scaffold, you were proved wrong, and the pace of the flow quickened even more. ...

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... By 1799, however, Frenchmen had had the experience of enjoying, at least in theory, freedom of speech and freedom of the press. Education had been reorganized along the lines which it still follows in most modern states—free, compulsory, universal, and secular. The Revolution had given rise to an extensive, if not always great, periodical press. Lack of opportunities had yielded to the “careers open to talents” already mentioned, and such talents were encouraged and brought to fruition through public prizes, state patronage, and similar devices. Moreover, while there had been few museums and libraries prior to 1789, the revolutionaries established many more, planned still additional ones, and endeavored to integrate them with the educational system... 

What changed in French Society because of the revolution?

Of the list of causes, event or effects of the French Revolution on page 676 of your textbook, which does this qualify as?

### Document Q: Thomas E. Kaiser, University of Arkansas, Encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia

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... However, the majority of Europeans and non-Europeans came to see the Revolution as much more than a bloody tragedy. These people were more impressed by what the Revolution accomplished than by what it failed to do. They recalled the Revolution’s abolition of serfdom, slavery, inherited privilege, and judicial torture; its experiments with democracy; and its opening of opportunities to those who, for reasons of social status or religion, had been traditionally excluded.

One of the most important contributions of the French Revolution was to make revolution part of the world’s political tradition. The French Revolution continued to provide instruction for revolutionaries in the 19th and 20th centuries, as peoples in Europe and around the world sought to realize their different versions of freedom. Karl Marx would, at least at the outset, pattern his notion of a proletarian revolution on the French Revolution of 1789. And 200 years later Chinese students, who weeks before had fought their government in Tiananmen Square, confirmed the contemporary relevance of the French Revolution when they led the revolutionary bicentennial parade in Paris on July 14, 1989... 

What is one change that occurred within France from the French Revolution?

What are two effects that the French Revolution had outside of France?

Of the list of causes, event or effects of the French Revolution on page 676 of your textbook, which does this qualify as?
Fill out the following chart with details from your book on page 676 and the documents above. Not all of the information will have a document to support it:

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