



# The French Revolution: Causes and Consequences

KS3

HISTORY

Ages 11-14 ⌚ 3 min read

## What Was the French Revolution?

The **French Revolution** happened between **1789 and 1799** in **France**. It was a time of huge change when ordinary people rose up against the king and the way the country was run. It wasn't just about fighting—it was about completely rethinking how society should work.

## Why Did It Happen?

France had many serious problems. The **King Louis XVI** and the wealthy nobles had all the power and money, while ordinary people—farmers, workers, and merchants—were desperately poor. The government spent too much money on wars and the king's fancy palaces, leaving the country deep in **debt**.

Food was scarce and expensive, so many people were starving. The system was unfair: rich nobles and the church paid almost no taxes, but poor people paid heavily. This made everyone angry. People felt trapped in a system they couldn't change, with no say in how their country was governed.

Think of it like a school where the headteacher and popular kids get all the best lunches and never do homework, while everyone else is hungry and has triple the work. Eventually, students rebel and demand fairness.

## What Happened During the Revolution?

At first, people demanded a fairer system. They stormed the **Bastille** (a prison) in **1789**, which showed the king's power was crumbling. The revolutionaries created the **Declaration of the Rights of Man**, which said all people deserved freedom and equal treatment.

But the revolution became violent and chaotic. The king and queen were executed. Thousands of people were killed in a period called the **Reign of Terror**. By the end, society was so disrupted that a military leader named **Napoleon** took over.

## What Did It Achieve?

Despite the violence, the French Revolution changed the world. It ended the king's absolute power and introduced the idea that governments should serve the people, not the other way around. It inspired **democracy** and human rights movements everywhere.

**France got a new government** (eventually), **legal equality** became a real idea, and **feudalism**—the old system where peasants belonged to nobles—ended. The revolution showed that ordinary people could stand up and demand change, even from kings.