

French Revolution Timeline

May 5, 1789

A meeting of the Estates-General is called by Louis XVI in Versailles to discuss and approve a new tax plan.

June 17, 1789

Three Poitevin cures decide to join the Third Estate, leaving the Chambers of the Clergy. Accepting the proposition of the delegate Abbe Sieyes, the Third Estate proclaims itself "The National Assembly." A few liberal nobles and many clergy join the movement of the Third Estate.

Tennis Court Oath: After being locked out of their meeting room, deputies of the Third Estate assembled on a tennis court and swore not to separate until a constitutional regime was established.

July 7-13, 1789

The National Assembly appoints a committee of thirty members to draft a constitution. The National Assembly proclaims itself the Constituent National Assembly, with full authority and power to decree laws; their primary task is to draw up and adopt a constitution. Necker is dismissed. Demonstrations and speeches take place at the Palais-Royal. The electors of Paris form a standing committee and a citizens' militia.

July 14, 1789

The storming and fall of the Bastille.

August 4, 1789

The end of feudalism and serfdom in France is announced by the National Assembly.

August 26, 1789

The National Assembly adopts the Declaration of the Rights of Man.

October 5, 1789

The women of Paris invade Versailles. Parisians, led by a large number of women, march upon Versailles and force the royal family back to Paris, where they take up residence at the Tuileries. Louis XVI is considered by many a "prisoner" in Paris. The Assembly, still in Versailles, declares, in the spirit of constitutional monarchy, its inseparability from the king.

July 12, 1790

The Civil Constitution of the Clergy is passed.

September 3, 1791

The Constitution of 1791 is adopted.

June 20, 1791

Louis XVI and his family are arrested while trying to flee from France.

April 20, 1792

France declares war on Austria

September 1792

The First meeting of the National Convention is held.

December 1792

Trial of Louis XVI begins.

January 21, 1793

Louis XVI is sentenced to the guillotine.

August 1793

A National Draft is issued calling for all able-bodied men to enlist in the army.

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September 1793 to July 1794

The Reign of Terror sentences 20,000 to 40,000 people to death.

July 27, 1794

The National Convention arrests Robespierre.

July 28, 1794

Robespierre is beheaded.

1795

A new Constitution is adopted.

1799

Napoleon Bonaparte overthrows the Directory heralding the end of the French Revolution.