

# Aim #4: Why did France erupt into a revolution in 1789?



# What was the French Revolution?



- 4 stages

**Stage 1:**  
1789-1791

**National Assembly**

**Stage 2:**  
1792-1794

**Radical Revolution**

**Stage 3:**  
1795-1799

**Directory**

**Stage 4:**  
1799-1815

**Age of Napoleon**

# Stages of the French Revolution

## National Assembly (moderate phase) 1789-1791

- Third Estate takes Tennis Court Oath
- Storming of Bastille
- Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen
- National Assembly sells church lands and puts Catholic Church under state control
- Paris Commune emerges
- Constitution of 1791 limits monarchy and creates Legislative Assembly
- Legislative Assembly declares war on Austria, Prussia, and Britain

## National Assembly (radical phase) 1792-1794

- Radicals take control of Legislative Assembly and set up National Convention
- National Convention abolishes monarchy and declares France a republic
- Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette executed
- Committee of Public Safety set up
- Robespierre leads Reign of Terror: 40,000 people executed

## Directory 1795-1799

- Moderate Constitution of 1795
- Five-man Directory established
- Riots suppressed
- Corrupt leadership
- Chaos threatened

## Age of Napoleon 1799-1815

- Napoleon Bonaparte helps overthrow Directory
- Consulate set up with Napoleon as first consul
- Napoleon names himself consul for life, and later Emperor of the French
- Economic and religious reforms instituted
- Napoleonic Code established
- Military victories create French empire in Europe
- French defeat in Battle of the Nations leads to Napoleon's abdication and exile



# What was the French Revolution?

The French Revolution beginning in 1789 was a political revolution inspired by Enlightenment ideas. French people began to question, or challenge the social hierarchy. During the French Revolution, the lower and middle classes in France were frustrated about political, social and economic problems in the country such as taxes. They wanted to overthrow King Louis XVI's monarchy and to institute a more democratic form of government.

There were 4 stages of the French Revolution:

<b>Stage 1:</b> 1789-1791	<b>Stage 2:</b> 1792-1794	<b>Stage 3:</b> 1795-1799	<b>Stage 4:</b> 1799-1815
<b>National Assembly</b>	<b>Radical Revolution</b>	<b>Directory</b>	<b>Age of Napoleon</b>

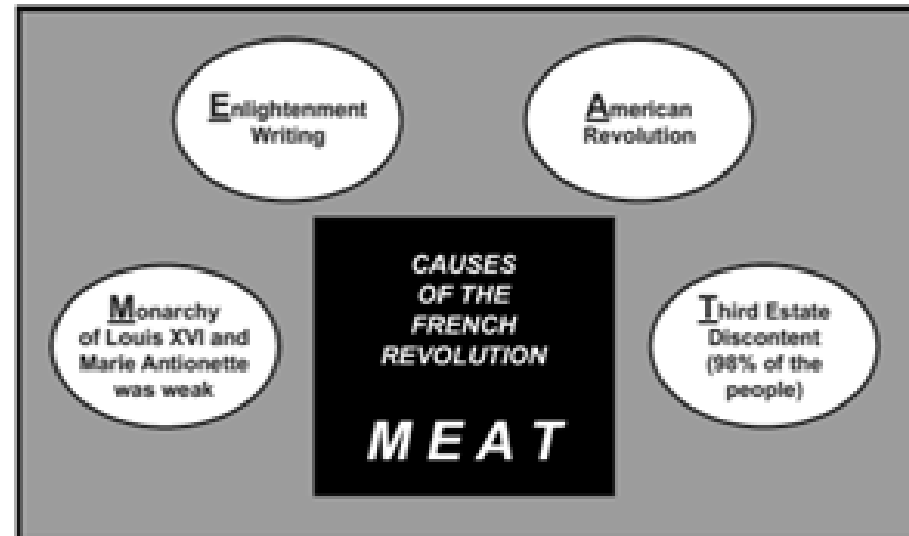
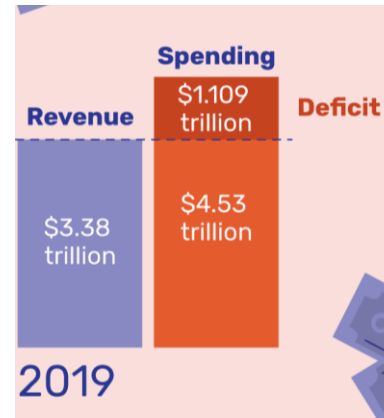
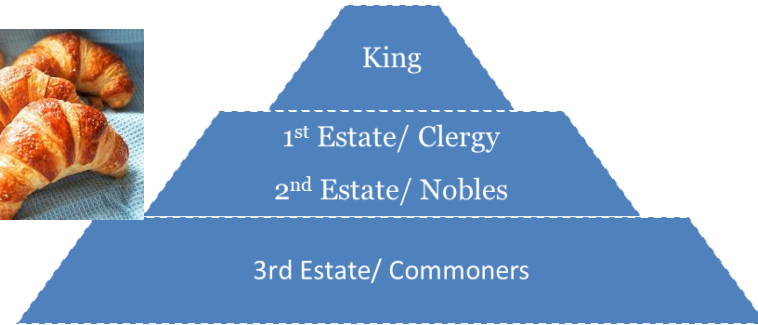


Watch The [French Revolution in a Nutshell](#) (00:00 to 2:13) & answer questions

- 1. Based on the video and transcript, what problems was France facing in the late 1700s?**
- 2. Which event marked the end of the old monarchy? When did this event occur?**

# Causes

# Old/Ancien Regime



## First Estate



**Clergy**

1% of the people  
owned 10%  
of the land

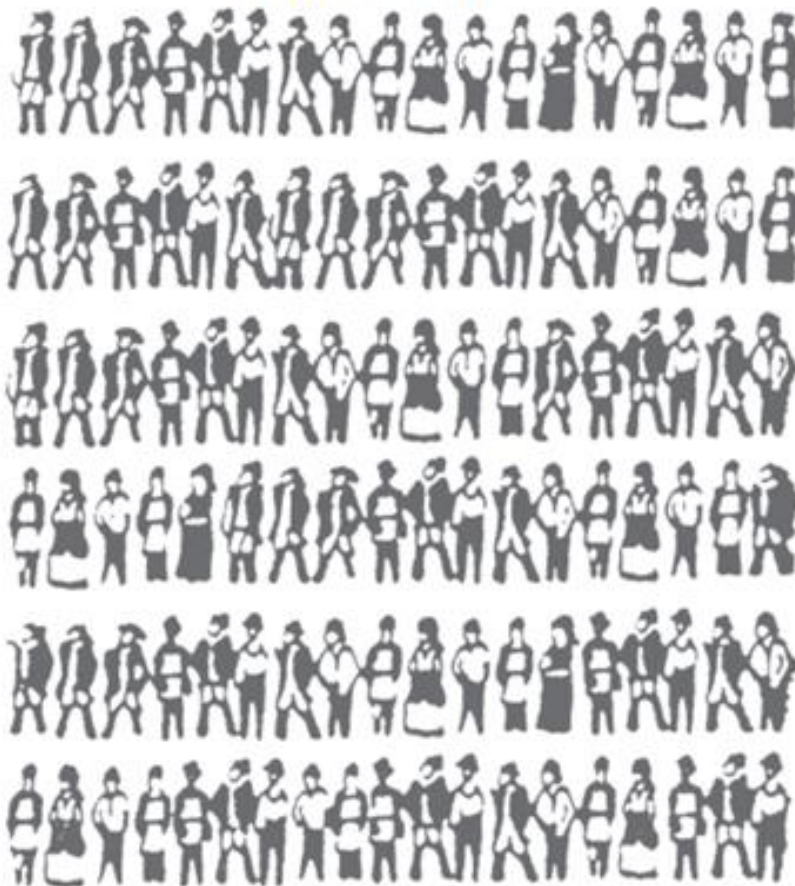
## Second Estate



**Nobles**

2% of the people  
owned 25%  
of the land

## Third Estate

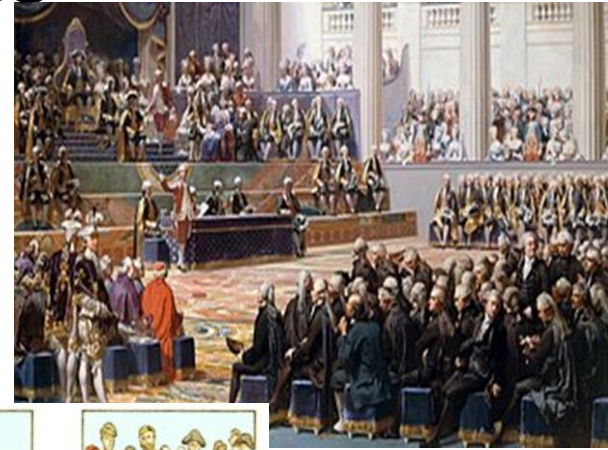


**Middle class, peasants, city workers**

97% of the people owned 65% of the land



# Immediate Causes



The voting system in the Estates-General





# Immediate Causes





# What were the social, economical & political issues that led to the French Revolution?

## Historical Context

Regular people were unhappy with their situation in France because the estate system divided people into three groups and gave all of the power and wealth to the first two estates. In addition, the government was an absolute monarchy, so the king had all of the power and the people had very little. The kings of France put the country into debt by building palaces like the Palace of Versailles and waging expensive wars. The people of France had to pay for the debt with taxes, which made them frustrated. Eventually, the inequality and abuses of the government led to the French Revolution.

# Social Issues: The Three Estates

The **estates system** was the **class structure** or **hierarchy** in France before the French Revolution. The same groups that held power during the Middle Ages still had control after the Middle Ages ended.

**clergy:** people who work for the church like the Pope, bishops, and priests

**nobility:** wealthy landowners and people with high status in society

**commoners:** peasants and city-workers

Image 1

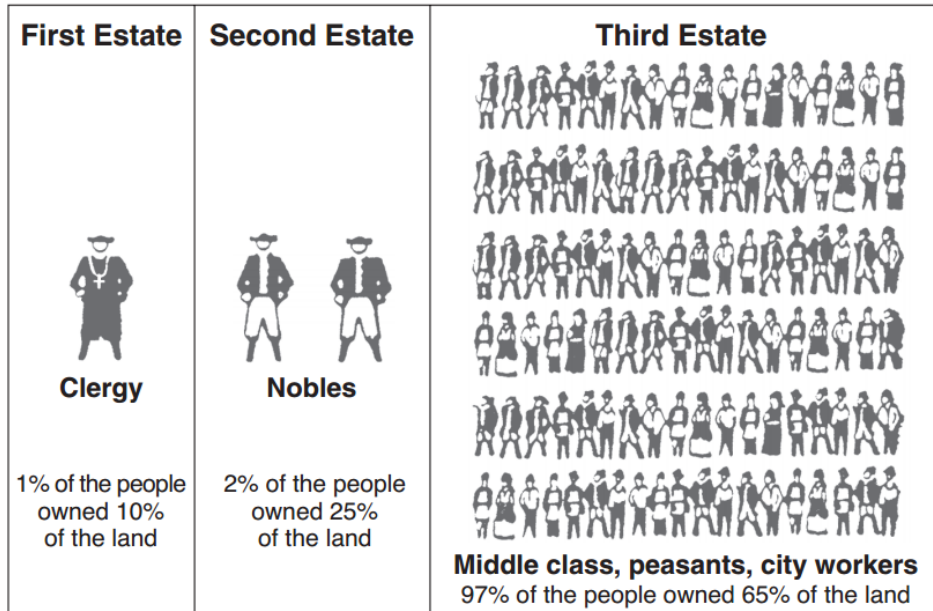
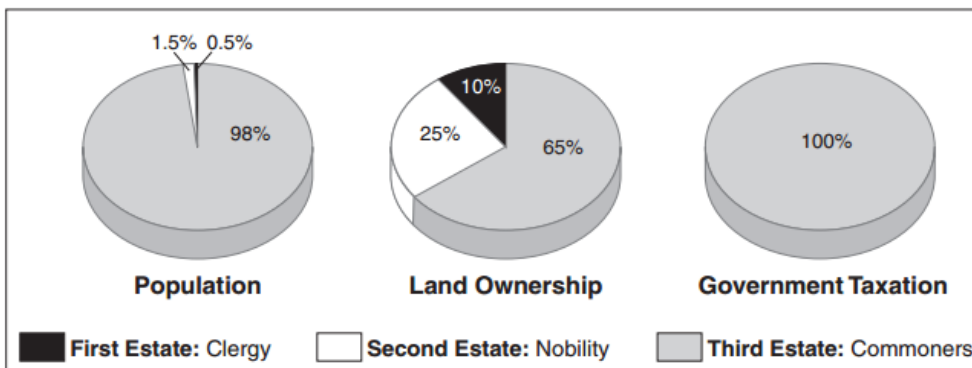


Image 1 The Three Estates, *You Should Hope this Game Will Be Over Soon*, 1788



Image 2



1. What does image 3 reveal about social issues in pre-revolutionary France?
2. Based on the images above, identify the social issues facing pre-revolutionary France & how might that lead to a revolution?

# Political Issues: Absolute Monarchy

An **absolute monarchy** is a **form of government** in which one ruler has supreme authority without limitation.

. . . **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 [without reason] 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 [frustration]. . . .



**Using the text above, identify 5 powers held by King Louis XVI & describe why these powers may lead the French people to revolt against their government.**



# Economic Issues: Debt and Rising Costs

**Debt** is money that is owed to someone else. When a country is in debt, it means that they have to pay the money back to whomever it is owed leaving less money for the country to pay for other things.

## Palace of Versailles

The Palace of Versailles was a royal château [castle] in Versailles and was the center of political power in France from 1682 until 1789. Louis XVI and his wife Marie Antoinette lived in the palace before the French Revolution. They were known for throwing lavish parties.



France's government was in enormous **debt**. King Louis XIV (1638-1715), Louis XV (1710-1774), and Louis XVI (1754-1793) added to the debt, borrowing money to finance the following:

Date	Event that Increased the French Debt
1678-1789	Building of, additions to, and upkeep of the Palace of Versailles
1756-1763	Seven Years' War: Fought against their rivals at the time, Great Britain, and several other European powers in Europe and North America.
1775-1783	American Revolution: France lended 1.3 billion livres, soldiers, and ships to the American colonists in their fight against the British.
1678-1789	<b>Extravagant</b> lifestyles of Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette

**1. What did the kings of France spend money on that put the country into debt?**

**2. Which of these costs seem justified? Which costs seem unjustified?**

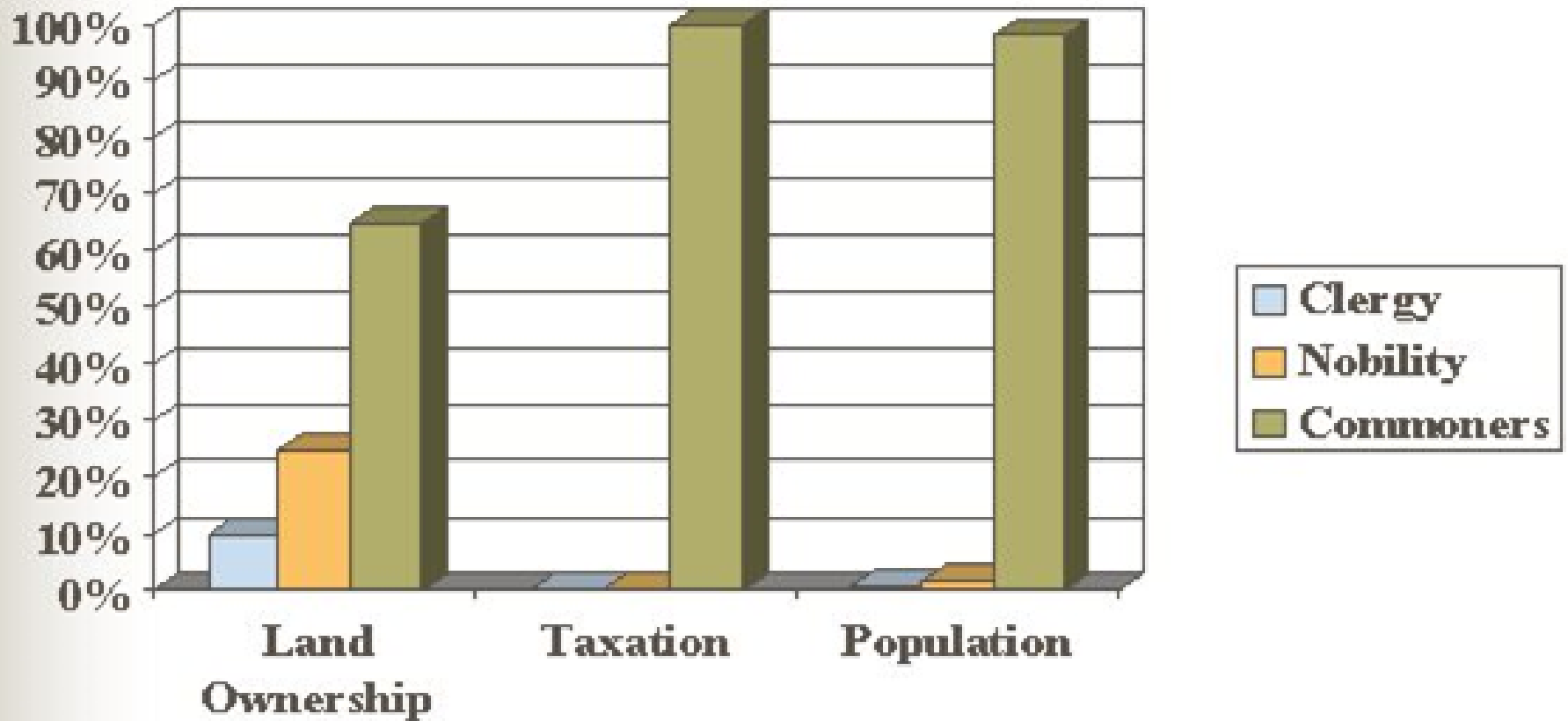
**3. Often to pay back debt, a government will do two things. One, they will cut back on the amount of money they spend. Two, they will raise taxes. Based on your understanding of the estates system, if the king raised taxes in 1789, who would have to pay them?**

# Watch [The French Revolution Documentary from the History Channel](#) (20:30-23:32) & answer questions

1. As the financial problems in France escalate, what does Louis XVI do?
2. What happened in the summer of 1788 and spring of 1789 to make the economic situation worse? What were the effects of these events?
3. Why was bread so important in France?
4. What was the result of the rise in bread prices in 1788-1789?
5. Based on the images, video, and text above, identify the economic issues facing pre-revolutionary France?
6. How might these economic issues lead the French people to revolt against their government?

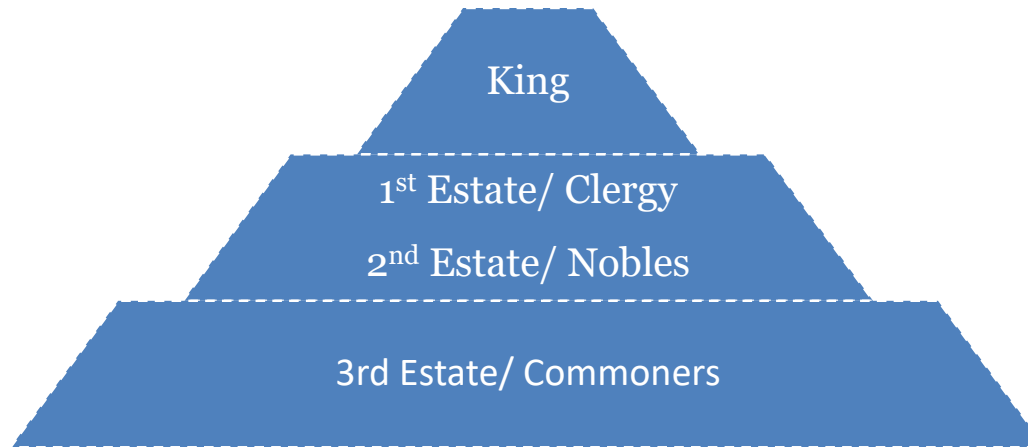
# Think and Write: What was unfair about the treatment of the Three Estates?

## Three Estates





# Old Regime/ Old Order/ *Ancien Régime*



Varied widely in what they contributed in terms of work and taxes

## *First Estate*

- Roman Catholic clergy
- One percent of the population
- Exempt from taxes
- Owned 10 percent of the land
  - Collected rents and fees
  - Bishops and other clergy grew wealthy

## *Second Estate*

- Nobility
- Less than 2 percent of the population
- Paid few taxes
- Controlled much wealth
- Held key positions
  - Government
  - Military

## *Third Estate*

- Largest group—97% of the population
- **Bourgeoisie**—city-dwelling merchants, factory owners, and professionals
- **Sans culottes**—artisans and workers
- **Peasants**—poor with little hope, paid rents and fees

"Walking up a long hill . . . I was joined by a poor women who complained of the times, and that it was a sad country; ... she said her husband had but a morsel of land, one cow, and a poor little horse, yet they had [42lbs.] of wheat and three chickens to pay as rent to one [lord] and 4 [lbs.] of oats, one chicken and 1 franc (currency) to pay to another, besides very heavy tallies and other taxes . . . **This woman . . . might have been taken for sixty or seventy, but she said she was only twenty.-eight. . . it speaks, at first sight, of hard. and severe labor. To what are we to attribute this? To government.**"





# Deficit Spending

## THE FRENCH BUDGET: 1788

<u>Expenses</u>	<u>Francs</u>
Interest on debts	318,000,000
Court	35,000,000
Other purposes	276,000,000
Total	<u>629,000,000</u>
<u>Revenue</u>	503,000,000
<u>Deficit</u>	126,000,000

1) Lavish spending at Court by Louis XVI and his wife Marie Antoinette.

2) Constant wars. French and Indian War and support for the Americans in the American Revolution.

3) Bad harvests in 1780's.

4) Louis XVI tries to solve this by taxing the third estate more. He tries to take the second estate but they do not allow him to.

# Population and Farming in France in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century

## Population

## Farming

Year

Population

1. Huge growth in Pop.
2. Little Ice Age
3. Terrible winters in the 1780s.
4. Rising Prices.
5. Widespread Hunger.

1700

21,000,000

1715

19,200,000

1740

24,600,000

1792

28,000,000

“Everything conspires to render the present period in France critical -, the lack of bread is terrible; accounts arrive every moment from the provinces of riots and disturbances, and calling in the military, to preserve the peace in the markets”

-Arthur Young, English visitor to France from  
*Travels, 1789*

- Who is the author’s audience?
- What is the author’s purpose in writing this document?



# Enlightenment Ideas



"The purpose of government exist to serve the people, and when it no longer does so, the people may set up a new government" John Locke



Enlightenment ideas and the American Revolution encourage the French people to overthrow their government.

# Violence breaks out, June 1788





# Louis XVI and his wife, Marie Antoinette

“Qu'ils mangent de la brioche”

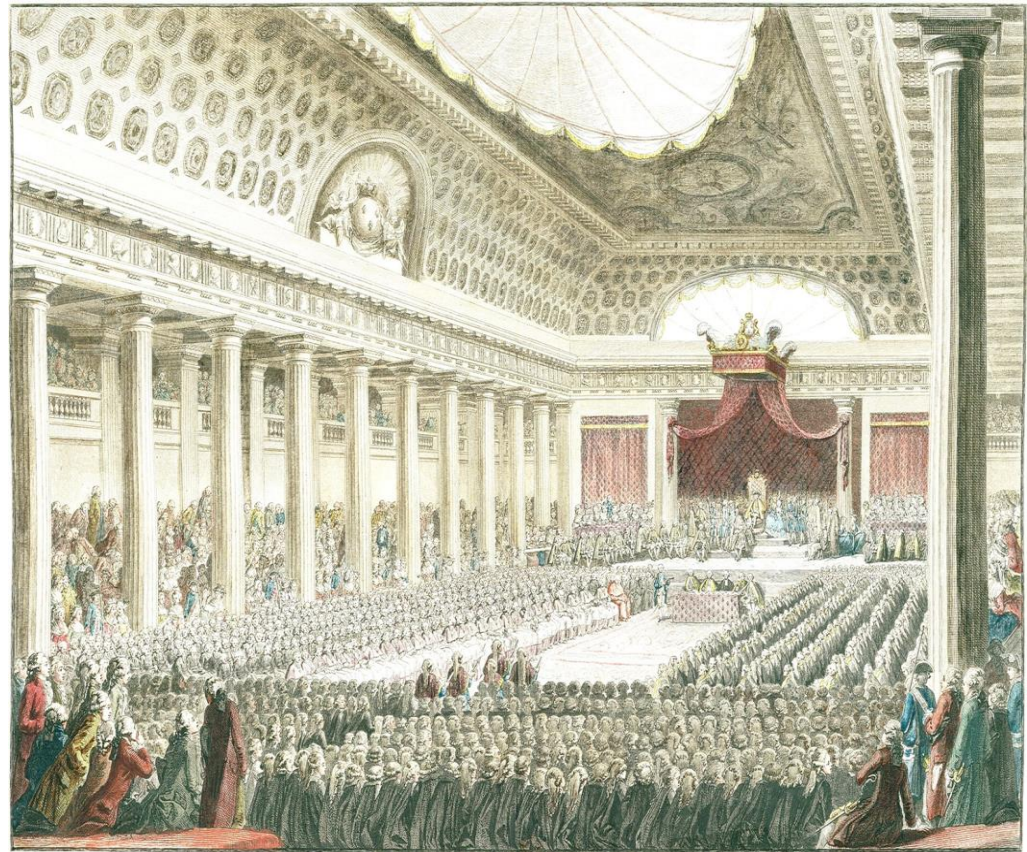




Jacques Necker, finance minister,  
proposes reform -- 1788



# The Estates General, Summoned in January, Meets in May 1789



# The Tennis Court Oath, June 1789





Jacques Necker, finance minister, is  
**FIRED**

July 11, 1789



# The Storming of the Bastille -- July 14, 1789

