The Three Estates

In the 1700's, France was considered the most advanced country in Europe. It was the center of the Enlightenment, and France's culture was praised by the rest of the world. However, life for many people was unfair. Most of France's citizens were living under a repressive government. This political system was known as the **Old Regime** dividing the people of France into three social classes, or **estates**.

<u>Types of people in the:</u> First estate:

Second estate:

Third estate:

STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

UNEMPLOYED AND CRIMINALS

Take a look at the pictures below and answer the question:





How are these pictures similar? How could you describe the relationship between these three estates?

Description of life in the third estate:

"I was joined by a poor woman who complained that France was a sad country...She had only a little bit of land, one cow, and a poor little horse, yet she had to pay forty two pounds of wheat and three chickens to one nobleman; four pounds of oats, and one chicken to another, as well as many other taxes.

This woman might have been taken for sixty or seventy years old but she said she was only twenty eight...it speaks at the first sight, of hard, severe labor. Who should we blame for this? The government."



Describe the problems facing this woman

THE PRIVILAGED AND UNPRIVILAGED CLASSES

Class	Population	Privileges
First Estate- Clergy	130, 000	 Owned 1/5 of the land; paid no taxes; collected Church tax. Supervised education and publication of all books. Registered births, marriages, and deaths Represented the official state religion
Second Estate- Nobility	110, 000	 Owned 1/5 of the land; paid no taxes; collected Nobility tax. Held almost all positions in the state and military service
Third Estate- Bourgeoisie, professionals, workers, and peasants	24, 750, 000	None. The burden of all taxes fell upon this class.

<u>DIRECTIONS:</u> Using the information from the chart above, you and your group are to create a conversation between members of the three estates. Each person in your group MUST write one part of the conversation. Practice your conversations and be ready to perform them!

