

The Reign of Terror

Rulers and nobles all over Europe were frightened by the French Revolution and worried about holding on to their power. Neighboring countries such as Austria and Prussia were worried that the French Revolution might spread to their countries. They urged the French to restore Louis's power as **Absolute Monarch** but the revolutionaries refused. In response, the Legislative Assembly declared war on Austria and Prussia in April 1792.

This war throws France into chaos. In Paris, mobs of protestors kill nobles and priests and take over the National Assembly. To help bring order, a group known as the **Committee of Public Safety** is created in France.

Describe the problems France is facing in 1792.

The Law of Suspects

The Committee of Public Safety created a set of new laws known as The Law of Suspects in September, 1793. Below is what it said:

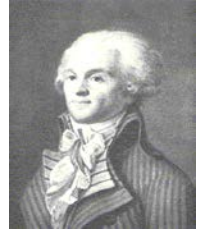
- *The enemies of the people are those who try to destroy public freedom, either by force or trickery...*
- *All of the following are enemies of the people: those who have spread bad news about the government; those who have tried to divide or disturb the people; those who have tried to change people's opinion about the government; and those who encourage people to act immorally (badly)...*
- *The penalty provided for all those offences is death...*

Who is an enemy of the people?

Will these new laws lead to more or less violence in France? Why?

Robespierre and the Reign of Terror

Robespierre was one of the most extreme leaders of the Revolution and head of the Committee of Public Safety. To rid France of the enemies of the Revolution, he started **the Reign of Terror**. Neighborhood watch groups turned suspected traitors over to the courts. 40,000 people were killed during this time. The Reign of Terror had no respect for the class (estate) a person was from. About 8% were nobles, 14% were bourgeoisie (rich middle class), 6% were Church officials, and 70% were peasants and working class.



Which estate suffered the most during the Reign of terror?



Is the guillotine was a more humane (kinder) way to execute someone?

What should be done with King Louis XVI?

According to the Law of Suspects, Louis was found guilty of “having conspired (planned) against the liberty of the Nation”. The only thing left to decide is the punishment. How should King Louis be punished? Work with your partner and make a choice below. Have a reason to back up your decision.

It has been decided that (choose one):

- King Louis should be allowed to return to his palace in Versailles with his family. Louis will continue to be King, but will only act as a **figurehead** (a powerless leader).*
- Allow King Louis and Marie Antoinette to leave for Austria, the place of Marie Antoinette's birth.*
- King Louis has committed numerous crimes against his people. Quickly send him to the guillotine.*

Explain your choice:
