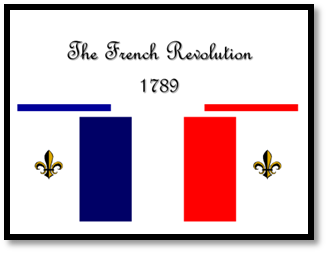
RS Notes: The French Revolution



**Background to the Revolution**

* Estates General:
  + Divided into 3 estates
    - 1st Estate= clergy (.5%)
    - 2nd Estate= nobles (1.5%)
    - 3rd Estate= commoners (98%)
  + Each estate gets one vote in the Estates General
    - 1 & 2 vote together, making 3 powerless
* King had absolute power in gov’t
  + Nobles and bourgeoisie (middle class) wanted power
    - Use Enlightenment principles to gain power
* ***There are 4 causes of the revolution***
  + Near collapse of the gov’t finances
    - Wars: 7 Years War, American Revolution
    - Royal luxuries (Queen especially known for spending $)
      * King wanted to raise taxes to fix this, but the country was going into an economic depression
  + Economic depression
    - Serfdom had been abolished, but people still paid feudal dues (relics of feudalism)
    - Living conditions were terrible
  + Inequality in the gov’t
    - Only the Third Estate pays taxes
    - 98% is the minority in the Estates General
  + New ideas of the Enlightenment
    - People should be free to elect gov’t officials.

**Estate General -> National Assembly**

* King Louis XIV needed to call the Estates General to meet to fix money troubles
  + 3rd Estate wanted to vote with each member getting a vote
    - They had many more members than the other two
  + King used the traditional method of voting (1 per estate)
    - So, the 3rd Estate broke away from the gov’t
* They became the **National Assembly** and went to draft a constitution
  + They were locked out of their meeting place, so they went to a tennis court to draft it
  + There, they promised to meet until it was drafted (Tennis Court Oath)
* The king’s forces were going to attack the National Assembly, but many commoners stepped in
  + They stormed the **Bastille** 
    - Royal armory and prison in Paris
  + The king’s authority collapsed
* The Great Fear
  + Many people felt threatened by the revolution
    - They were scared it would hurt them or their livelihoods
    - They were also scared that foreign monarchs would send troops to support the king
      * They didn’t want this to happen in their countries.
    - Militias were formed to protect themselves

**Destruction of the Old Regime**

* **Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen**
  + The National Assembly proclaimed freedom and equal rights for all men, access to public office based on talent, an end to exemptions from taxation.
  + All citizens have the right to participate in gov’t
  + Freedom of speech and press
    - Women would get these rights, but not be allowed to participate in gov’t (including voting)
* Women in the US got the right to vote in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Louis XIV wanted to stay in Versailles
  + Thousands of Parisian women marched there armed with pitchforks, swords, muskets, etc.
    - They met with him and told them about their plight
  + They captured him and his family and marched them to Paris
    - Louis brought flour as a goodwill gesture
    - The royal family was virtually held prisoner in Paris
* The Church was reformed too
  + Lands were seized
  + Bishops and priests were to be elected by the people and paid by the state
  + Many Catholics became enemies of the revolution
* Constitution of 1791
  + Limited monarchy w/ Legislative Assembly (made laws)
    - Only men over 25 who paid enough taxes could vote
      * Only rich guys got in
* Many people opposed the new order
  + Catholics, nobles, the poor, royalists
  + The king tried to flee, but was returned to Paris
  + Other monarchs (Austria and Prussia)
  + The Legislative Assembly met for the 1st time in 1791
    - Declared war on Austria, but lost
* Because of these factors, political demonstrations broke out
  + **Paris Commune** organized a mob attack on the king and L.A.
    - Captured the king and demanded an end to the monarchy.
  + Power went to the Paris Commune
    - Made up of working people and the poor (*sans-culottes*= without fancy clothes)
  + The revolution was about to enter a more radical phase