**American Revolution**

**Causes:**

**Directions:** *Read the following causes of the American Revolution. Annotate and add 5 terms to your vocabulary builder.*

**Taxation**

The French and Indian War, which occurred from 1756 to 1763, was extremely expensive for Britain. To pay off debt that the country had incurred during the war, the British government decided to tax the American colonies. Several tax acts such as the Stamp Act and the Townshend Act were levied -- and subsequently repealed -- in an attempt to pay for the war, the soldiers stationed in the colonies and the goods sent to the colonies from England. The colonists were angry that they were being taxed by a government that was so distant from them and protested against "taxation without representation." Protests, including boycotting goods, escalated, culminating in the Boston Massacre in 1770.

**The Boston Tea Party**

The Townshend Act of 1767 levied taxes on lead, paper, glass and tea. This act was repealed in 1770 with the exception of the tea tax. In several cities, colonists protested the continued taxation by attempting to prevent East India Company ships from docking to deliver tea; in Boston, a group disguised themselves as Mohawk Indians and boarded three vessels in the middle of the night. The group threw 342 chests of tea, worth approximately $800,000 in modern currency, into the Boston Harbor. In response, the British Government passed the Intolerable Acts, laws meant to crush the rebellion and bring the colonists under control.

**The Intolerable Acts**

The Intolerable Acts directly lead to the formation of the Continental Congress and a unified colonial resistance against Britain. The Quartering Act required colonists to provide barracks for British soldiers, and eventually to house them in private homes. Others bills closed the Boston port to colonists until they repaid the losses from the Boston Tea Party and annulled colonial charters, giving British governors control over town meetings. Colonists were also denied trials in colonial courts; any person accused of a crime was required to take a ship to Britain to stand trial there. In addition, the Quebec Act extended the Canadian border, separating Connecticut, Massachusetts and Virginia from the rest of the colonies.

**The Battle of Concord**

The first Continental Congress was formed with the intent of communicating grievances with England without severing ties to the country. After deliberating, however, the members of the Congress determined that they were entitled to rule and tax themselves, form their own united leadership and mobilize a militia. In response, King George III declared the colonies to be in open rebellion in 1775 and sent soldiers to capture the rebellion's leaders. During the resulting encounter between Boston and Concord, eight members of the colonial militia died. When the British advanced to Concord, the Americans were waiting and engaged them in a battle with heavy British casualties. This battle swayed public colonial opinion in favor of separation from England.

*As you read the Declaration of Independence, highlight phrases and ideas that you can tell where influenced by the Enlightenment.*

The Declaration of Independence: A Transcription

IN CONGRESS, July 4, 1776.

**The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America,**

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.--That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, --That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.--Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.

*He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.  
He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.  
He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.   
He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.   
He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.  
He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the mean time exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within.  
He has endeavoured to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.  
He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary powers.  
He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.  
He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harrass our people, and eat out their substance.  
He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures.  
He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil power.  
He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation:  
For Quartering large bodies of armed troops among us:  
For protecting them, by a mock Trial, from punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States:  
For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world:  
For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent:   
For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by Jury:  
For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offences  
For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies:  
For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments:  
For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.  
He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.  
He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.   
He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to compleat the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation.  
He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.   
He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavored to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.*

In every stage of these Oppressions We have petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

Nor have we been wanting in attentions to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which, would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

**Effects of the American Revolution on the World:**

**What was the impact of American Revolution?**

The American Revolution had a tremendous effect on Europe. It not only served as an inspiration for France, but also demonstrated that the liberal political ideas of the Enlightenment were more than mere utterances of intellectuals. The Revolution has been described by historian Eugene Weber:  
  
“Revolution you see is rather like a snowball on a slope. It is hard to get revolution going but once on its way it is hard to stop it from rolling and growing until it becomes an avalanche.”

Three major events of the American Revolution had great influence on Europe:

* Signing the Declaration of Independence
* Implementing the ideas of Enlightenment
* Forming the U.S constitution

By declaring independence, America demonstrated that it was possible to overthrow “old regimes”. This was the first time a colony had rebelled and successfully asserted its rights to self-government and nationhood. This inspired many European nations and colonies to revolt.  
  
The United States had created a new social contract in the form of its Constitution, in which they realized the ideas of Enlightenment. The natural rights of man, and the ideas of liberty, equality, and freedom of religion, were no longer unrealistic Utopian ideals. The framers of U.S Constitution rejected the Greek model of civic republicanism. They distinguished between the notion of “democracy” and their own proposed system of representative democracy. This made the bourgeoisie of Europe reconsider their own government and monarchic systems.

**How did the American Revolution influence the French Revolution?**

The culmination of all these factors was seen in the French Revolution, where the revolutionaries formed their own slogan, “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity”. Europeans obtained information about the American Revolution from soldiers returning from America. French soldiers returned to France with ideas of individual liberty, popular sovereignty and the notion of republicanism.

The French then revolted against their ineffectual monarchy, which they saw as tyrannical.

**French Revolution**

**Causes:**

**Directions:** *Read the following causes of the French Revolution. Annotate and add 5 terms to your vocabulary builder.*

**F**rance in 1789 was one of the richest and most powerful nations in Europe. Only in Great Britain and the Netherlands did the common people have more freedom and less chance of arbitrary punishment.

Nonetheless, a popular rebellion would first to bring the regime of King Louis XVI of France under control of a constitution, then to depose, imprison, try, and execute the king and, later, his wife Marie Antoinette.  
  
Many factors led to the revolution; to some extent the old order succumbed to its own rigidity in the face of a changing world; to some extent, it fell to the ambitions of a rising bourgeoisie, allied with aggrieved peasants and wage-earners and with individuals of all classes who were influenced by the ideas of the Enlightenment.

As the revolution proceeded and as power devolved from the monarchy to legislative bodies, the conflicting interests of these initially allied groups would become the source of conflict and bloodshed.  
  
Certainly, all of the following must be counted among the causes of the revolution:

* Resentment of royal absolutism.
* Resentment of the seigneurial system by peasants, wage-earners, and a rising bourgeoisie.
* The rise of enlightenment ideals.
* An unmanageable national debt, both caused by and exacerbating the burden of a grossly inequitable system of taxation.
* Food scarcity in the years immediately before the revolution.
* [Absolutism and privilege](http://www.bonjourlafrance.com/france-facts/france-history/causes-of-the-french-revolution.htm#Absolutism)
* [Taxation](http://www.bonjourlafrance.com/france-facts/france-history/causes-of-the-french-revolution.htm#Taxation)
* [Debt](http://www.bonjourlafrance.com/france-facts/france-history/causes-of-the-french-revolution.htm#Debt)
* [American Influence](http://www.bonjourlafrance.com/france-facts/france-history/causes-of-the-french-revolution.htm#American)
* [Food Scarcity](http://www.bonjourlafrance.com/france-facts/france-history/causes-of-the-french-revolution.htm#Food)

### Absolutism and privilege

France in 1789 was, at least in theory, an absolute monarchy, an increasingly unpopular form of government at the time. In practice, the king's ability to act on his theoretically absolute power was hemmed in by the (equally resented) power and prerogatives of the nobility and the clergy, the remnants of feudalism. Similarly, the peasants covetously eyed the relatively greater prerogatives of the townspeople.  
  
The large and growing middle class -- and some of the nobility and of the working class -- had absorbed the ideology of equality and freedom of the individual, brought about by such philosophers as Voltaire, Denis Diderot, Turgot, and other theorists of the Enlightenment.

Furthermore, they had the example of the American Revolution showing that that it was plausible that Enlightenment ideals about governmental organization might be put into practice. They attacked the undemocratic nature of the government, pushed for freedom of speech, and challenged the Catholic Church and the prerogatives of the nobles.

**Economics**

### Taxation     [http://bonjourlafrance.com/template_images/back2top.gif](http://www.bonjourlafrance.com/france-facts/france-history/causes-of-the-french-revolution.htm#Top)

Unlike the trading nations, France could not rely almost solely on tariffs to generate income. While average tax rates were higher in Britain, the burden on the common people was greater in France. Taxation relied on a system of internal tariffs separating the regions of France, which prevented a unified market from developing in the country.

Taxes such as the extremely unpopular gabelle were contracted out to private collectors ("tax farmers") who were permitted to raise far more than the government requested. These systems led to an arbitrary and unequal collection of many of France's consumption taxes. Further royal and seigneurial taxes were collected in the form of compulsory labor (the corvée).  
  
The system also excluded the nobles and the clergy from having to pay taxes (with the exception of a modest quit rent). The tax burden was thus paid by the peasants, wage earners, and the professional and business classes. These groups were also cut off from most positions of power in the regime, causing unrest.

### Debt     [http://bonjourlafrance.com/template_images/back2top.gif](http://www.bonjourlafrance.com/france-facts/france-history/causes-of-the-french-revolution.htm#Top)

Since 1614, the French monarchy had operated without resort to a legislature. Kings had managed their fiscal affairs by increasing the burden of the ancient and unequal system of taxes, by borrowing money, and sometimes by selling noble titles and other privileges; however, because noble titles exempted the holder from future taxes, the purchasers of titles were effectively buying an annuity.  
  
This led to the long-running fiscal crisis of the French government. On the eve of the revolution, France was deeply indebted, so deeply as to be effectively bankrupt. Extravagant expenditures by Louis XIV on luxuries such as Versailles were compounded by heavy expenditures on the Seven Years War and the American War of Independence.  
  
Britain too had a great of debt from these conflicts, but Britain had a far more advanced fiscal structure to deal with it. There was no counterpart to the Bank of England in France in 1789 and there was also far less ready capital in France, as it was not nearly as much a trading nation as was Britain.  
  
Edmund Burke, no friend of the revolution, was to write in 1790, "...the public, whether represented by a monarch or by a senate, can pledge nothing but the public estate; and it can have no public estate except in what it derives from a just and proportioned imposition upon the citizens at large." Because of the successful defence by the nobles of their privileges, the king of France lacked the means to impose a "just and proportioned" tax. The desire to do so led directly to the decision in 1788 to call the Estates-General into session.

**Other Causes**

### American Influence     [http://bonjourlafrance.com/template_images/back2top.gif](http://www.bonjourlafrance.com/france-facts/france-history/causes-of-the-french-revolution.htm#Top)

France had played a deciding role in the American Revolutionary War, (1775-1783) sending its navy and troops to aid the rebelling colonists. During this time there was much contact between the Americans and the French, and revolutionary ideals spread between the groups.

### Food Scarcity     [http://bonjourlafrance.com/template_images/back2top.gif](http://www.bonjourlafrance.com/france-facts/france-history/causes-of-the-french-revolution.htm#Top)

These problems were all compounded by a great scarcity of food in the 1780s. Different crop failures in the 1780s caused these shortages, which of course led to high prices for bread. Perhaps no cause more motivated the Paris mob that was the engine of the revolution more than the shortage of bread.

The poor conditions in the countryside had forced rural residents to move into Paris, and the city was overcrowded and filled with the hungry and disaffected. The peasants suffered doubly from the economic and agricultural problems.    [http://bonjourlafrance.com/template_images/back2top.gif](http://www.bonjourlafrance.com/france-facts/france-history/causes-of-the-french-revolution.htm#top)

FRENCH REVOLUTION Video

**VIDEO link**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SyXcUMftRs8

**QR CODE:**



After Watching video on French Revolution, complete the following chart.

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| American Revolution | Similarities | French Revolution |
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