

Political Revolution

What Was It Good For?

*How valuable was the legacy of the French Revolution
for political life in the modern age?*



Debating the DOCUMENTS

Interpreting Alternative Viewpoints
in Primary Source Documents

Political Revolution What Was It Good For?

The 2017 World History Course and Exam Description of the College Board Advanced Placement Program* lists five themes that it urges teachers to use in organizing their teaching. Each World History *Debating the Documents* booklet focuses on one or two of these five themes.

The Five Themes

- 1. Interaction between humans and the environment.** (demography and disease; migration; patterns of settlement; technology)
- 2. Development and interaction of cultures.** (religions; belief systems, philosophies, and ideologies; science and technology; the arts and architecture)
- 3. State-building, expansion, and conflict.** (political structures and forms of governance; empires; nations and nationalism; revolts and revolutions; regional, transregional, and global structures and organizations)
- 4. Creation, expansion, and interaction of economic systems.** (agricultural and pastoral production; trade and commerce; labor systems; industrialization; capitalism and socialism)
- 5. Development and transformation of social structures.** (gender roles and relations; family and kinship; racial and ethnic constructions; social and economic classes)

This Booklet's Main Themes:

- 3** State building, expansion, and conflict.
- 5** Development and transformation of social structures.

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Contents

Teacher Introduction	1
Suggestions to the Student	5
Introductory Essay	6
Political Revolution Time Line	7
First Group of Documents	8
Study the Documents	10
Comparing the Documents	12
Comparison Essay	13
Second Group of Documents	14
Study the Documents	16
Comparing the Documents	18
Comparison Essay	19
Document-Based Question	20
Worksheet Answers and Guidelines	21
Visual Primary Sources	23

Teacher Introduction

★ Using Primary Sources

Primary sources are called “primary” because they are first-hand records of a past era or historical event. They are the raw materials, or the evidence, on which historians base their “secondary” accounts of the past.

A rapidly growing number of history teachers today are using primary sources. Why? Perhaps it’s because primary sources give students a better sense of what history is and what historians do. Such sources also help students see the past from a variety of viewpoints. Moreover, primary sources make history vivid and bring it to life.

However, primary sources are not easy to use. They can be confusing. They can be biased. They rarely all agree. Primary sources must be interpreted and set in context. To do this, students need historical background knowledge. *Debating the Documents* helps students handle such challenges by giving them a useful framework for analyzing sources that conflict with one another.



*“Multiple,
conflicting
perspectives are
among the truths
of history.
No single
objective or
universal account
could ever put an
end to this endless
creative dialogue
within and
between the past
and the present.”*

From the 2011 Statement on Standards
of Professional Conduct of the Council of
the American Historical Association.

★ *The Debating the Documents Series*

Each *Debating the Documents* booklet includes the same sequence of reproducible worksheets. If students use several booklets over time, they will get regular practice at interpreting and comparing conflicting sources. In this way, they can learn the skills and habits needed to get the most out of primary sources.

Each *Debating the Documents* Booklet Includes

- **Suggestions for the Student and an Introductory Essay.** The student gets instructions and a one-page essay providing background on the booklet's topic. A time line on the topic is also included.
- **Two Groups of Contrasting Primary Source Documents.** In most of the booklets, students get one pair of visual sources and one pair of written sources. In some cases, more than two are provided for each. Background is provided on each source. *Within each group, the sources clash in a very clear way.* (The sources are not always exact opposites, but they do always differ in some obvious way.)
- **Three Worksheets for Each Document Group.** Students use the first two worksheets to take notes on the sources. The third worksheet asks which source the student thinks would be most useful to a historian.
- **One DBQ.** On page 20, a document-based question (DBQ) asks students to write an effective essay using all of the booklet's primary sources.

★ *How to Use This Booklet*

1. Have students read “Suggestions for the Student” and the Introductory Essay.

Give them copies of pages 5–7. Ask them to read the instructions and then read the introductory essay on the topic. The time line gives them additional information on that topic. This reading could be done in class or as a homework assignment.

2. Have students do the worksheets.

Make copies of the worksheets and the pages with the sources. Ask students to study the background information on each source and the source itself. Then have them take notes on the sources using the worksheets. If students have access to a computer, have them review the primary sources digitally.

NOTE: If you are using these materials with an AP world history class, an honors class, or some other group of advanced and/or more knowledgeable students, you may want to make more written sources available to them on this topic. Do a basic Internet search for sources that provide additional perspectives and then add to the sources provided here.

3. “Debate the documents” as a class.

Have students use their worksheet notes to debate the primary source documents as a class. Urge students to follow these ground rules:

- Use your worksheets as a guide for the discussion or debate.
- Try to reach agreement about the main ideas and the significance of each primary source document.
- Look for points of agreement as well as disagreement between the primary sources.
- Listen closely to all points of view about each primary source.
- Focus on the usefulness of each source to the historian, not merely on whether you agree or disagree with that source’s point of view.

4. Have students do the final DBQ.

A DBQ is an essay question about a set of primary source documents. To answer the DBQ, students write essays using evidence from the sources and their own background knowledge of the historical era. (See the next page for a DBQ scoring guide to use in evaluating these essays.)

The DBQ assignment on page 20 includes guidelines for writing a DBQ essay. Here are some additional points to make with students about preparing to write this kind of essay.

The DBQ for this Booklet (see page 20):

“The French Revolution was a great turning point in humanity’s struggle for liberty, equality, and constitutional government.” Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why?

- Analyze the question carefully.
- Use your background knowledge to set sources in their historical context.
- Question and interpret sources actively. Do not accept them at face value.
- Use sources meaningfully to support your essay’s thesis.
- Pay attention to the overall organization of your essay.

★ *Complete DBQ Scoring Guide*

Use this guide in evaluating the DBQ for this booklet. Use this scoring guide with students who are already familiar with using primary sources and writing DBQ essays.

Excellent Essay

- Offers a clear answer or thesis explicitly addressing all aspects of the essay question.
- Does a careful job of interpreting many or most of the documents and relating them clearly to the thesis and the DBQ. Deals with conflicting documents effectively.
- Uses details and examples effectively to support the thesis and other main ideas. Explains the significance of those details and examples well.
- Uses background knowledge and the documents in a balanced way.
- Is well written; clear transitions make the essay easy to follow from point to point. Only a few minor writing errors or errors of fact.

Good Essay

- Offers a reasonable thesis addressing the essential points of the essay question.
- Adequately interprets at least some of the documents and relates them to the thesis and the DBQ.
- Usually relates details and examples meaningfully to the thesis or other main ideas.
- Includes some relevant background knowledge.
- May have some writing errors or errors of fact, as long as these do not invalidate the essay's overall argument or point of view.

Fair Essay

- Offers at least a partly developed thesis addressing the essay question.
- Adequately interprets at least a few of the documents.
- Relates only a few of the details and examples to the thesis or other main ideas.
- Includes some background knowledge.
- Has several writing errors or errors of fact that make it harder to understand the essay's overall argument or point of view.

Poor Essay

- Offers no clear thesis or answer addressing the DBQ.
- Uses few documents effectively other than referring to them in “laundry list” style, with no meaningful relationship to a thesis or any main point.
- Uses details and examples unrelated to the thesis or other main ideas. Does not explain the significance of these details and examples.
- Is not clearly written, with some major writing errors or errors of fact.

Suggestions to the Student

★ *Using Primary Sources*

A primary source is any record of evidence from the past. Many things are primary sources: letters, diary entries, official documents, photos, cartoons, wills, maps, charts, etc. They are called “primary” because they are first-hand records of a past event or time period. This *Debating the Documents* lesson is based on two groups of primary source documents. Within each group, the sources conflict with one another. That is, they express different or even opposed points of view. You need to decide which source is more reliable, more useful, or more typical of the time period. This is what historians do all the time. Usually, you will be able to learn something about the past from each source, even when the sources clash with one another in dramatic ways.

★ *How to Use This Booklet*

1. Read the one-page introductory essay.

This gives you background information that will help you analyze the primary source documents and do the exercises for this *Debating the Documents* lesson. The time line gives you additional information you will find helpful.



2. Study the primary source documents for this lesson.

For this lesson, you get two groups of sources. The sources within each group conflict with one another. Some of these sources are visuals, others are written sources. With visual sources, pay attention not only to the image’s “content” (its subject matter) but also to its artistic style, shading, composition, camera angle, symbols, and other features that add to the image’s meaning. With written sources, notice the writing style, bias, even what the source leaves out or does not talk about. Think about each source’s author, that author’s reasons for writing, and the likely audience for the source. These considerations give you clues as to the source’s historical value.

3. Use the worksheets to analyze each group of primary source documents.

For each group of sources, you get three worksheets. Use the “Study the Document” worksheets to take notes on each source. Use the “Comparing the Documents” worksheet to decide which of the sources would be most useful to a historian.

4. As a class, debate the documents.

Use your worksheet notes to help you take part in this debate.

5. Do the final DBQ.

“DBQ” means “document-based question.” A DBQ is a question along with several primary source documents. To answer the DBQ, write an essay using evidence from the documents and your own background history knowledge.

Political Revolution

In the late 1700s, two social upheavals helped launch an age in which political revolution would transform life—first in Europe and North America, later throughout the rest of the Americas, and in time in many other regions all over the world. In a sense, this age of revolution is still with us.

The first of these two upheavals began in 1776 when 13 British colonies in North America went to war in a conflict that gave birth to the United States. That conflict was basically a struggle for independence from British colonial control. However, it can also be called a revolution because the United States based its right to exist on the revolutionary new Enlightenment principles of liberty, equal rights, and popular sovereignty—the idea that legitimate political authority comes from the people.

The American Revolution did not completely uproot society within the 13 colonies. Yet its example and its ideals soon helped inspire another upheaval, one that did seek to transform society entirely. In 1789, “liberty, equality, fraternity” became the watchwords of that upheaval, the French Revolution.

The French Revolution went through several phases. It began when French King Louis XVI called the Estates-General into session in the hope of convincing it to raise more taxes for a nearly bankrupt government. That body was made up of France’s three “estates”: the clergy (130,000 or so), the nobility (500,000 at most) and the “Third Estate” (everyone else, or some 24 million people). Actually, in the Estates-General of 1789, the Third Estate was largely made up of merchants, lawyers, doctors, and other members of the wealthy middle class. It was these deputies who soon formed themselves into the National Assembly, ended the privileges of the nobility and clergy and, with their “Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen,” made liberty, equal rights, and popular sovereignty the basis of French society

This moderate phase of the revolution still left many people unhappy. Under constant pressure from the people of Paris and from radical factions in the legislative body, the French Revolution became more extreme. Starting in 1791, other European nations grew openly hostile and threatening to France and its revolution. Certain rural areas rose up in violent revolt against their landlords, others rose in revolt against the revolution itself. All this only added to a mood of fear, even panic. In this mood, radicals like Jean-Paul Marat or Maximilien Robespierre resorted to ever more terroristic means not only to save the revolution but to achieve the utopian goal of uprooting all injustice and human imperfection in a new “Republic of Virtue.”

This radical phase was then followed by the less radical Directory and in time the dictatorship of one man, Napoleon Bonaparte. Napoleon claimed to fulfill the revolution, and in some ways he did. Yet he also put an end to it, or at least to its dreams of liberty and democracy.

Some historians believe all these same stages can be seen in many other revolutions since 1789—in those of 1848, for instance, or in the Russian Revolution of 1917. This view may be a bit too simplistic. Yet it does raise good questions. Do modern revolutions inevitably become more violent? Do they lead in the end to authoritarian dictatorship? And if so, is political revolution of any value at all? Has it been worth it for those who looked to it with such hope for a better future? The sources for this lesson are all about the French Revolution. Together, however, they should help you begin to think about and debate these broader questions having to do with revolution in the modern age.

Political Revolution Time Line

1776–1783

Thirteen British colonies in North America issue the Declaration of Independence and fight a war to end British rule. In that same year, Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* is published, making a strong case for free markets and individual economic liberty. The American Revolutionary War ends with the Treaty of Paris in 1783.

1787

The Constitution of the United States is signed and sent to the states. Enough of them ratify it by the next year to put it into effect.

1788

The government of France's King Louis XVI agrees to call a meeting of the Estates-General for 1789 in hopes of getting it to agree to new taxes.

1789–1790

The Estates-General meets in May. On June 17, the Third Estate constitutes itself as a national assembly and takes the Tennis Court Oath three days later. On July 14, a crowd storms the Bastille. The "Great Fear" and many uprisings sweep the countryside. Feudalism is abolished. The "Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen" is passed. A women's march to Versailles forces the king to return to Paris where he can be more easily controlled. Church property is confiscated.

1791–1792

Austria and some other European states threaten France if Louis XVI's power is limited. A Legislative Assembly based on limited suffrage meets. France declares war on Austria in August 1792. The power of the Paris Commune grows, and in September a National Convention, based on universal male suffrage, begins to rule France. In 1791, the U.S. Bill of Rights is ratified.

1793–1795

Louis XVI and Queen Marie Antoinette are executed. The "Reign of Terror" executes tens of thousands. It ends with the execution of radical Jacobin leader Robespierre. A reaction to revolutionary excess sets in. In 1795, the Directory begins to rule France.

1799–1812

Napoleon overthrows the Directory in 1799 and rules France as First Consul. In 1804, after years of revolt, former slaves declare Haiti's independence from France, making it the first black nation to gain freedom from European colonial rule. Also in 1804, Napoleon proclaims himself emperor of France. He systematizes French law under the Code Napoleon. In the years ahead, he conquers much of Europe.

1812–1815

Napoleon invades Russia in June 1812. He is forced to retreat in the winter and loses most of his army's 600,000 men. Britain, Austria, Russia, Prussia, Sweden, and Portugal defeat Napoleon and restore the Bourbon king Louis XVIII to the French throne. Later at the Congress of Vienna, the European nations revise borders and restore monarchy to much of Europe.

1811–1825

Simón Bolívar leads several wars as part of a broad independence movement that frees most of Central and South America from Spanish rule.

1830

In France, Louis Philippe becomes king after a revolution forces Charles X to abdicate.

1848

A revolt in Paris forces Louis Philippe to abdicate. Louis Napoleon is elected president of the French Republic. Revolutions in Vienna, Venice, Berlin, Milan, Rome, and Warsaw are put down by troops. Fear of revolutionary disorder may have frightened more moderate, middle-class liberals and nationalists to abandon these revolutions.

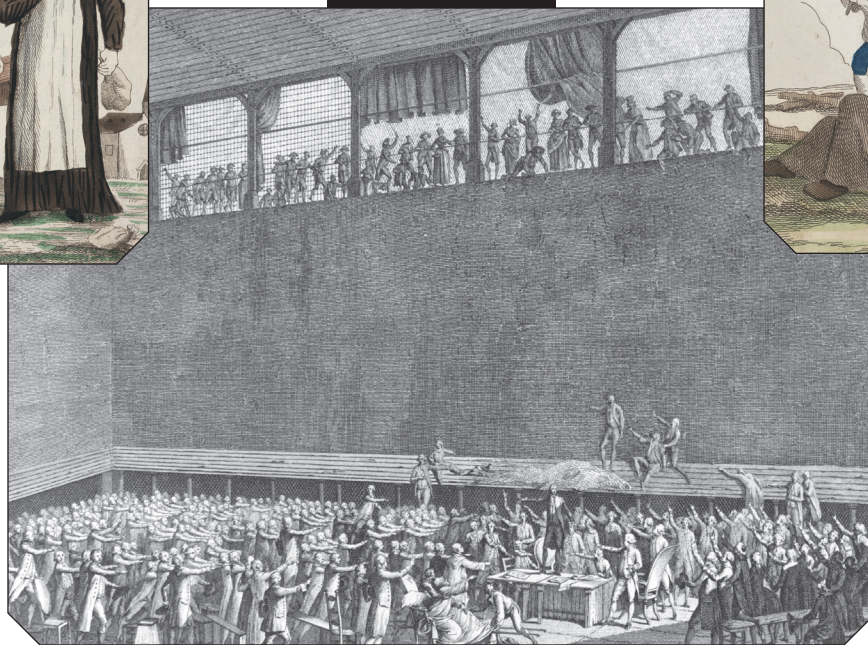
Primary Source Documents 1–3

Document 1



Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, LC-DIG-ppmsca-07709

Document 2



Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, LC-USZ62-117942

Document 3



Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, LC-DIG-ppmsca-07715

Information on Documents 1–3

Document 1. This 1789 French political cartoon shows an official of France's Revolutionary government sitting at a table collecting taxes. A priest refuses to add his bag of money to those on the table. Behind the table, a man from the Third Estate tells the priest to return to the nation that which belongs to the nation.

Document 2. On June 20, 1789, deputies to France's Estates-General found their chamber at Versailles locked and guarded. Many of them, mostly of the Third Estate, defied royal authority and met at a nearby handball court. There they took the famous

Tennis Court Oath "never to separate, and to meet wherever circumstances demand" until a constitution was established for the nation. The group began to call itself the National Assembly and to govern as France's primary legislative body. This illustration shows the large group of deputies taking this oath.

Document 3. This French cartoon from 1789 shows a member of the Third Estate, possibly a woman, kneeling on top of a fallen friar, cutting wooden branches or horns from his head.

Primary Source Documents 4 & 5

Document 4



Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, LC-USZC4-12943

Document 5

The two opposing spirits that have been represented in a struggle to rule nature might be said to be fighting in this great period of human history to fix irrevocably the world's destinies, and France is the scene of this fearful combat. Without, all the tyrants encircle you; within, all tyranny's friends conspire; they will conspire until hope is wrested from crime. We must smother the internal and external enemies of the Republic or perish with it; now in this situation, the first maxim of your policy ought to be to lead the people by reason and the people's enemies by terror.

If the spring of popular government in time of peace is virtue, the springs of popular government in revolution are at once virtue and terror: virtue, without which terror is fatal; terror, without which virtue is powerless. Terror is nothing other than justice, prompt, severe, inflexible; it is therefore an emanation of virtue; it is not so much a special principle as it is a consequence of the general principle of democracy applied to our country's most urgent needs.

Information on Documents 4 & 5

Document 4. This 1793 French cartoon shows a crowd carrying Jean-Paul Marat with crown of laurel leaves. Marat was a fiery journalist who for a time was a key leader of the French Revolution during its radical phase. A faction in the assembly called the "Girondins" put Marat on trial before the Revolutionary Tribunal, but they were thwarted when the tribunal acquitted him and returned him to the assembly. This illustration shows the crowd celebrating his acquittal. On July 13, 1793, Marat was murdered in his bathtub by a woman who backed the Girondins.

Document 5. A spirit of puritanical perfectionism often inspires revolutionary leaders. Also, the belief that a perfect social order is achievable often justifies (in their minds) the use of violence. One of whom this was true was Maximilien Robespierre, a leader of the French Revolution during its most radical phase (1793–94). In this 1794 speech, Robespierre justifies the use of terror, claiming it to be the form that "virtue" takes in defending the revolution against its enemies.

Study the Documents: Sources 1–3

Instructions: Take notes on these questions. Use your notes to discuss the documents and answer the DBQ.

1 Visual Features—Doc. 1 _____

Describe all the details in this image that make it clear it is the priest who is regarded unfavorably in this scene.

2 Background—Doc. 1 _____

Based on your knowledge of the French Revolution, explain who the priest and the figure behind the table represent. Also explain why they were so hostile to one another at this point in time in France.

3 Compare & Contrast _____

Document 1 and Document 3 both depict the clergy and the Third Estate. Do these two illustrations suggest two different revolutionary moods in France? Why or why not?

4 Visual Features—Doc. 2 _____

Does Document 2 express a point of view about this famous meeting at which deputies took the Tennis Court Oath? What features in the illustration add to the mood the image seems to evoke? For example, how do the people peering in from above add to the impact of the scene?

Study the Documents: Sources 4 & 5

Instructions: Take notes on these questions. Use your notes to discuss the documents and answer the DBQ.

1 Visual Features—Doc. 4

After 1791, the revolution moved into a much more radical phase. How do the visual features in Document 4 reflect that new radical phase? Notice such things as facial expressions, composition, dress, gestures, etc.

2 Interpreting Meanings

In Document 5, Robespierre refers to “the internal and external enemies of the Republic.” From what you know of the French Revolution by 1794, explain who you think these internal and external enemies are.

Choose one phrase or sentence from the document that best sums up Robespierre’s justification of terror. Do you think his arguments do justify the terror? Why or why not?

3 Drawing Conclusions

Look over Documents 1–5 again. Taken together, do they prove that there was a radical shift in the revolutionary mood from 1789 to 1794? Why or why not?

Comparing the Documents

★ *The Sources*

Answer the question by checking one box below. Then complete the statements on the Comparison Essay worksheet. Use all your notes to help you take part in an all-class debate about these documents—and to answer the final DBQ for the lesson.

Which of these primary source documents would be most useful to a historian trying to understand the nature of political revolutions in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries?

Two French cartoons of members of the Third Estate dealing with priests, and an illustration of deputies taking the Tennis Court Oath

Documents 1–3 ☐

A cartoon of a crowd carrying Marat with a crown of laurel leaves, and a passage from a speech on virtue and terror by Robespierre

Documents 4 & 5 ☐

Comparison Essay

I chose Documents _____ because:

*I did **not** choose Documents _____.*

However, a historian still might use the documents in the following way:

Keep this in mind: Some sources are very biased. A biased source is one that shows you only one side of an issue. That is, it takes a clear stand or expresses a very strong opinion about something. A biased source may be one-sided, but it can still help you to understand its time period. For example, a biased editorial cartoon may show how people felt about an issue at the time. The usefulness of a source depends most of all on what questions you ask about that time in the past.

Primary Source Documents 6 & 7

Document 6



Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, LC-USZC4-6752

Document 7



Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, LC-DIG-ppmsca-07510

Information on Documents 6 & 7

Document 6. This December 1792 British cartoon shows France as a woman (on the right) wearing a liberty cap, holding a cat-o'-nine-tails in one hand and the reins of a donkey in the other. On the donkeys are monarchs identified as Prussia, Germany, Russia, Sweden, Brunswick, Turkey, and Spain. China is on the ground, as is Louis XVI beneath the donkey held by the woman. In front on the left, Marie I of Portugal sits tearing her hair. The cartoon's title is: "The genius of France extirpating despotism tyranny & oppression from the face of the earth. Or the royal warriors defeated."

Document 7. On November 10, 1799, in a move known as the "Coup d'État of 18th Brumaire," Napoleon seized control of the French government and installed himself as First Consul. He governed as a dictator. James Gillray was a famous British caricaturist of his era, producing popular cartoons satirizing the English court of George III and later of Napoleon and the French Revolution. Here, he shows Napoleon with his grenadiers driving off the Council of Five Hundred, the lower house of France's legislature.

Primary Source Document 8

Document 8

Heretofore you fought for sterile rocks, made famous by your courage, but useless to the fatherland; today, by your accomplishments you equal the armies of Holland and the Rhine. Destitute of everything, you have supplied everything. You have won battles without cannon crossed rivers without bridges, made forced marches without shoes, camped without brandy and often without bread. Only republican phalanxes, soldiers of liberty, could have endured what you have endured. Soldiers, you have our thanks! The grateful nation will owe its prosperity to you . . .

Soldiers, your fatherland has the right to expect great things of you. Will you justify its faith? The greatest obstacles have been overcome; but you still have battles to fight, cities to take, rivers to cross. Which of you lacks courage?

Which of you prefers to return across the summits of the Apennines and the Alps to bear patiently the insults of that slavish soldiery? No, there is no one among the conquerors of Montenotte, of Dego, of Mondovi. Everyone is burning to extend the glory of the French people; everyone wishes to humiliate those haughty kings who dare contemplate binding us in fetters. Everyone wishes to dictate a glorious peace . . .

Peoples of Italy, the French army comes to break your chains; the French people is the friend of all peoples. Come to them with confidence. Your property, your religion, and your customs will be respected. We are waging war as generous enemies, and we wish only to crush the tyrants who enslave you.

Information on Document 8

In the spring of 1796, Napoleon invaded Italy. He quickly defeated the Austrians and part of Piedmont, in Italy, in several battles. Then on April 26, he delivered the above proclamation to his armies. Napoleon said his dictatorial rule was needed to protect the gains of the revolution. After years of

the Napoleonic wars, he was defeated, and monarchy returned to France. The spirit of revolution was only temporarily dampened, however. Throughout the nineteenth century the hope for or the fear of revolution was ever-present.

Study the Documents: Sources 6 & 7

Instructions: Take notes on these questions. Use your notes to discuss the documents and answer the DBQ.

1 Background—Doc. 6 _____

This cartoon is from the year 1792.
Summarize the events in Europe that year that explain the cartoon's main elements.

2 Main Idea—Doc. 7 _____

Create a caption for this cartoon that helps explain why this event was a turning point in the entire story of the French Revolution.

3 Bias, or Point of View _____

Documents 6 & 7 are both British cartoons. What bias, or point of view, do they express?

For Document 6, what opinion do you think the artist had about France and its enemies? What features help this cartoon express this opinion? Do you think the fact that the artist was British has influenced his thinking in any way? Why or why not?

For Document 7, what opinion do you think artist James Gillray had about Napoleon and his takeover in 1799? What features of his cartoon show this point of view?

Study the Document: Source 8

Instructions: Take notes on these questions. Use your notes to discuss the documents and answer the DBQ.

1 Main Idea—Doc. 8

In a few sentences, explain what Napoleon wants his soldiers to do, as well as why he thinks they should want to do it.

2 Interpreting Meanings

Why do you suppose Napoleon tells his soldiers, “*Only republican phalanxes, soldiers of liberty, could have endured what you have endured*”? In what other phrases does he appeal to their republican or revolutionary loyalties?

3 Drawing Conclusions

Some see Napoleon as a dictator who put an end to the French Revolution. Yet others say he also promoted the spirit of the French Revolution. In what ways does this document back up either of these views or even both of them?

Comparing the Documents

★ *The Sources*

Answer the question by checking one box below. Then complete the statements on the Comparison Essay worksheet. Use all your notes to help you take part in an all-class debate about these documents—and to answer the final DBQ for the lesson.

Which of these primary source documents would be most useful to a historian trying to understand the nature of political revolutions in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries?

Document 6



Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, LC-USZC4-6752

Document 7



Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, LC-DIG-ppmsca-07510

Document 6 ☐

Document 7 ☐

Comparison Essay

I chose Documents _____ because:

*I did **not** choose Documents _____.*

However, a historian still might use the documents in the following way:

Keep this in mind: Some sources are very biased. A biased source is one that shows you only one side of an issue. That is, it takes a clear stand or expresses a very strong opinion about something. A biased source may be one-sided, but it can still help you to understand its time period. For example, a biased editorial cartoon may show how people felt about an issue at the time. The usefulness of a source depends most of all on what questions you ask about that time in the past.

Document-Based Question

Your task is to answer a document-based question (DBQ) on the French Revolution and the nature of political revolution in general. In a DBQ, you use your analysis of primary source documents and your knowledge of history to write a brief essay answering the question. Using all four sets of documents, answer this question. Below are two DBQs. The first is somewhat less demanding than the second. Use whichever DBQ your teacher assigns.

Document-Based Question

1

**“The French Revolution was a great turning point in humanity’s struggle for liberty, equality, and constitutional government.”
Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why?**

OR

2

Using these sources and the French Revolution as an example, evaluate modern political revolutions in terms of the ideals they sought to realize, the actual way they unfolded, and their long-term consequences.

Below is a checklist of key suggestions for writing a DBQ essay. Next to each item, jot down a few notes to guide you in writing the DBQ. Use extra sheets to write a four- or five-paragraph essay.

- *Introductory Paragraph*
Does the paragraph clarify the DBQ itself? Does it present a clear thesis, or overall answer, to that DBQ?
- *The Internal Paragraphs—1*
Are these paragraphs organized around main points with details supporting those main ideas? Do all these main ideas support the thesis in the introductory paragraph?
- *The Internal Paragraphs—2*
Are all of your main ideas and key points linked in a logical way? That is, does each idea follow clearly from those that went before? Does it add something new and helpful in clarifying your thesis?
- *Use of Primary Source Documents*
Are they simply mentioned in a “laundry list” fashion? Or are they used thoughtfully to support main ideas and the thesis?
- *Concluding Paragraph*
Does it restate the DBQ and thesis in a way that sums up the main ideas without repeating old information or going into new details?

Worksheet Answers and Guidelines

Some worksheet questions call for specific answers to factual questions. In these cases, correct answers are provided here. Most worksheet questions are open-ended and call on students to offer their own interpretations and personal reactions. In those cases, we offer suggestions based on the purpose of the question and the sort of interpretive activity it calls for.

Worksheet 1

Sources 1–3

1. The expression on his face, posture, the accusing looks of the other two figures, etc.
2. The Third Estate theoretically included the entire nation except for the First Estate (the clergy) and the Second Estate (the aristocracy). In the National Assembly, the Third Estate actually was made up mainly of middle-class professionals and other politically important people. It resented greatly the privileges of the clergy.
3. Answers may vary. Document 3 is definitely more violent and does seem somewhat angrier in tone.
4. Answers may vary. The illustration does seem to dramatize the scene in a favorable way.

Worksheet 2

Sources 4 & 5

1. Expressions are much wilder, their dress less formal, the crowd seems more like a mob, etc.
2. Aristocrats, rich people, religious people ready to defend the Church, those opposed to the revolution for other reasons, other hostile nations such as Austria, Prussia, Great Britain, etc. The second part of this question may produce many choices and answers; discuss these in class.
3. Answers may vary. The image of Marat and the statement by Robespierre embracing terror do suggest the extreme emotions aroused by the revolution over time, but perhaps they were present from the start.

Worksheet 3

Sources 6 & 7

1. Many nations expressed hostility toward the French Revolution. France declared war on Austria and Prussia and held them off at Valmy (in Belgium). By 1793, France was at war with Britain, Holland, and Spain as well.
2. Captions may vary. Students should be able to use the information accompanying the source to write their captions.
3. Answers may vary. Students should back up their judgments with specific references to details in each cartoon.

Worksheet 4

Source 8

1. He asks them to fight harder even though they have clearly been pushed hard already. He appeals to their patriotic desire for honor and to their democratic desire to take on kings and free people from tyranny.
2. Answers may vary. Several statements about kings, tyrants, and breaking the chains for various peoples express these republican or revolutionary sentiments.
3. Answers will vary. Napoleon clearly has assumed power over his soldiers and the nation, yet he appeals to his men as citizens whose nationalist and patriotic feelings are based on the values of liberty and equality.

Visual Primary Sources

First Group—Documents 1-3

Document 1



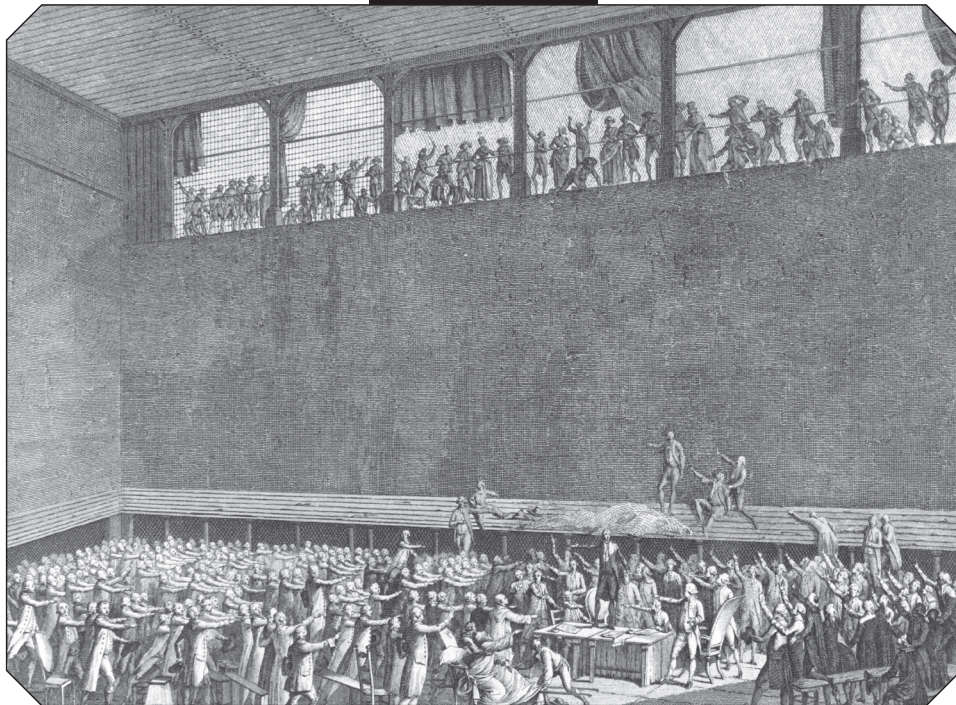
Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division,
LC-DIG-ppmsca-07709

Document 3



Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division,
LC-DIG-ppmsca-07715

Document 2



Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, LC-USZ62-117942

First Group—Document 4

Document 4



Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, LC-USZC4-12943

Political Revolution | *Debating the Documents* 27

