

## Events of the Revolution!

It is 1788. You are the French aristocrat, the Count of Camembert [right]. You are an advisor to King Louis XVI of France. Your job is to give him good advice when he faces difficult decisions.

If you do a good job, you will be richly rewarded. If you make bad choices, your fate will be a lot less pleasant...!

1. You make your way to Paris in a grand coach. The journey takes 2 days, and you stay overnight in a small village. It is a typical French village with a church, some humble homes and a Manor House.

You decide to ask the people who live there what life is like for the "Three Estates" in France - in other words the Priests, the Lords and the Peasants.

### A. Speak to a member of the First Estate

*You head off to the Church, which is pretty much in the centre of the village. The door of the Church is heavy, but not locked. You push it open and make your way inside. The Church is cool and dark, but the stained glass glows beautifully. At the front of the Church is the Priest who turns to you with a smile as you approach.*

*You ask the priest what life is like for priests in France.*

*"We pray for the King, so we don't pay any taxes" he tells you. "We also register births, marriages and deaths, run schools and hospitals and do charity work".*

*You then make your way out of the Church.*

### B. Speak to a member of the Second Estate

*You head for the edge of the village, where you find a large estate with a big house in the middle of it. This is the house of the Lord of the Manor. A servant opens the door and because you look so smart you are invited inside.*

*You are shown into the Lord of the Manor's study. Although it is 2 o'clock in the afternoon, he has only just got out of bed! His servant brings you both a cup of chocolate, and you talk to him about life for the nobility in France.*

*"We fight for the King, so we pay no taxes" he tells you. "We also collect rent and taxes from the peasants. There are taxes on salt, cloth, bread and wine". You spend another hour or so chatting before you say goodbye and leave his house.*

### C. Speak to a member of the Third Estate

*You take a short walk across the village square towards a row of run-down cottages. One cottage has smoke coming out of the chimney so you knock on the door. A shabby looking woman opens the door and bows to you. "My house is humble, but you are welcome to enter" she says. "Thank you" you reply, and make your way inside.*

*The peasant's house is cold, damp and smelly. You try not to look too disgusted when she asks you to take a seat on some wet straw.*

*You ask her husband , "What is life like for ordinary people like you?"*

*He replies: "Our job is to work for the Lords. We do all his farming, and get paid very little. We eat meat less than three times a year. We are weak and unhealthy. Yet we pay all of the taxes! Some members of the 'Third Estate' have become wealthy businesspeople, but the King still refuses to let them have a say in how the country is run".*

*This is worrying news. These people are very unhappy. You thank him for his time and make your way outside into the fresh air.*

## **2. You reach the Palace of Versailles**

After all that walking around, you are more than ready for a good night's sleep at the local inn. The landlady of the Inn is a drunkard , but she is pleasant enough. The next morning you make the final stage of the journey to the King's Palace of Versailles.

When you arrive, you are shown into a room to take an examination about how much you have learned about the Three Estates. You will not be allowed to meet the King until you have answered all the questions!

***Each answer is worth half a point (0.5) each.***

The Middle Classes are happy the King hasn't given them power.	True	False
The job of the Third Estate is to work for the other two Estates.	True	False
The Third Estate feel it is fair that they should pay all the taxes.	True	False
The 'Third Estate' is the Peasantry.	True	False
The King is willing to listen to the new middle classes.	True	False
The 'First Estate' is the Clergy.	True	False
The job of the First Estate is to fight for the King.	True	False
The Peasantry, despite being poor, are the only Estate to pay tax.	True	False
The job of the Second Estate is to pray for the King.	True	False
The 'Second Estate' is the Nobility.	True	False

### 3. You meet King Louis XVI

After successfully passing your exam, you are taken to meet the King. He greets you warmly and asks you to sit down. He tells you he is very concerned that the newspapers are making him look an idiot. To prove this, he shows you two pictures. The one on the left is the one he asked the newspapers to use in a story about him. The one on the right is the one they actually chose to use!



The King gives you the task of writing a short four line poem in his honour to replace the story in the newspaper.

The best poem receives **4 points**, second best receives **2 points**, and the rest receive nothing! GO!

#### **4. The American War of Independence**

The King thanks you for doing such a good job on the newspaper article, although he is rather disappointed that there were so few nice things left to say!

"I need a really successful policy to become more popular" he grumbles.

His face then lights up. "I've got an idea! The Americans, led by George Washington, are fighting a War of Independence against the British Empire at the moment. If I send troops over to help them, and they win, I'll be a hero!"

**What is your reply?**

- A. "That is a brilliant idea! Let's send some troops over now!"**
- B. "That is a rubbish idea! Your soldiers will get a taste for American 'freedom' which is dangerous!"**

#### **5. The Economy**

The King's decision to send troops to America is expensive as well as stupid. Fighting the war costs a fortune and before long he is broke!

He asks the first two Estates - the Clergy and the Nobility - for more money, but they refuse...

**What do you think he should do?**

- A. Put his foot down and TELL them they will have to pay. He is the King, after all!**
- B. Just tax the Third Estate - the peasantry - even more. They might be poor already, but they are less likely to cause trouble.**

#### **6. The Affair of the Necklace**

The following day you are talking to the King when the Queen, Marie-Antoinette, comes into the room with her servant, wearing a wonderful necklace which is up for sale.

It costs a fortune - the equivalent of a million pounds - but it is certainly the most incredible necklace ever made.

The Queen is not sure whether she should buy the necklace, so she asks your opinion. What do you say?

- A. Buy it! It will make you look more majestic and impressive to your people!**
- B. Don't bother! Wasting money on jewels when people are starving is stupid!**

A few days later, you are called into the King's chamber. He is furious - and so too are the crowds which are jeering outside!

Apparently, a local prostitute has tricked the jewellers into giving her the necklace, claiming that she was the Queen's lover and had been sent to collect it!

"The worst thing" says the King, "is that some people think my wife now has the necklace, so there will have to be an investigation. The question is, should this investigation take place in public or in private?"

- A. **"In public. Otherwise the French people will think there has been a cover-up"**
- B. **"In private. Otherwise the Queen's personal life will be dragged through the mud"**

### **7. The Estates General**

By 1788 it is clear that France has serious problems. The Estates System, the King and the Queen, Enlightenment Ideas, the American War of Independence, a bad harvest and much else besides has left the country facing collapse.

So that year the King summons Parliament to Versailles to discuss what to do. This is a major event – the last time Parliament met was in 1614!

The Parliament is called the “Estates General” because it contained representatives (“Deputies”) from all three estates - the Clergy, the Nobility and the Peasantry.

The first thing which the King has to decide is where everyone should sit. Whoever sits at the back will be unable to hear very much, but someone will have to go there!

- A. **The Clergy or the Nobility should sit at the back of the hall. The peasants pay all the taxes and deserve a bit of respect.**
- B. **The Peasantry should sit at the back of the hall. Otherwise the Nobility and Clergy will hate your guts.**

### **8. The National Assembly**

The King is now in a difficult position. Ordinary, smelly peasants aren't taking part in his "Estates General" but the nobility and the clergy aren't too keen to mix with them down at the tennis courts!

- A. **The King should send troops to crush the Third Estate to teach them who is boss.**
- B. **The King should agree to meet with the Third Estate at the Tennis Courts to discuss their grievances.**

### **9. The Storming of the Bastille**

The National Assembly is busy discussing important issues when, on July 14th 1789, news comes through that the peasants of Paris have risen up in a rebellion. The rebel leader is called Marat, who has told his followers that "The great are only great because we are on our knees. Let us rise!". They have stormed the city's prison, the Bastille, and executed its governor, Monsieur de Launay.

Things are spiralling out of control. The King asks you "Is this a revolt?". You reply, "No, Sire - this is a revolution". **(-2 points)**

### 10. The New Constitution

For the next two years the National Assembly works at producing a new constitution aiming to provide "égalité, liberté, fraternité" (equality, liberty, brotherhood). The King has you sent into the National Assembly as a spy.

Your job is to vote for the most popular options for each of the questions they discuss. If you do well, you will be accepted by the representatives and you can pass on useful information to the King. If you vote differently to most Deputies, you'll make no friends and the King will remain ignorant.

***Each answer is worth one point each.***

How often should the assembly be elected?	A. Once a year B. Every two years C. Every five years
Who should be allowed to stand for election to the Assembly?	A. Any French Man or Woman B. Any French Man C. Any French Man with Property
Should the King still be allowed to veto (block) any of our reforms?	A. Yes. He is still the king, after all. B. Sort of. Allow him to delay reforms, but not block them. C. No. We represent the people and he has no right!
Should the Tax system be changed?	A. Yes. The Third Estate should no longer have to pay tax! B. Sort of. The wealthier you are, the more tax you should have to pay. C. No. Let's deal with the tax system in a few years time.
Should the Church be allowed to raise taxes and own land?	A. Yes. The king is the real enemy – let's keep the Clergy happy. B. Sort of. Abolish their taxes, but let them keep their land. C. No, let's take their land AND abolish their right to raise taxes.

### 11. The King's reaction: (a) The "Cap of Liberty"

In 1791, the National Assembly gives the King a new constitution. He accepts it with a smile, and he agrees to wear a 'cap of liberty' as a symbol of how much he wants the new arrangement to work. **(+1 point)**

Unfortunately, once the Deputies have left his palace he throws the 'cap of liberty' on the ground and jumps up and down on it screaming like a spoilt child. "No way will I accept these limitations on my power!" he bellows. "They can go stuff themselves with sawdust!" To be fair, he is feeling very

humiliated because the Assembly have kept him under armed guard at the Tuileries palace in Paris for the past two years. Nevertheless, his attitude could create some very serious problems if it becomes public... (-2 points)

### 12. The King's reaction: (b) The Flight to Varennes

As the King continues stamping on his 'cap of liberty', a messenger arrives with a top secret letter. Louis opens it and finds that it contains a message from his brother, the Count of Provence, suggesting that at nightfall the King and his family flee from the Tuileries Palace in disguise and head for the Austrian border. Here, they will be met by friendly troops who will invade France and destroy the National Assembly for him.

The King looks excited, but nervous. "What do you think I should do?" he asks.

- A. "Make a run for it! The National Assembly is clearly undermining you and you need to get out fast"
- B. "Stay put. If you get caught, the National Assembly will treat you like a criminal"

### 13. The People Abandon the King: The September Massacres



The King's attempt to escape from France turns many ordinary French people against him.

Riots break out in Paris, and rebels kill hundreds of the King's supporters in the "September Massacres" of 1791.

The rest of Europe thinks the French have gone mad (see the British cartoon) and many countries are threatening France with invasion.

Once the King is safely back in Paris, fresh elections take place. Many people are angry with

the King and vote for Deputies that want to be hard on him. So the new assembly - called The Convention - abolishes the monarchy and declares a new French Republic.

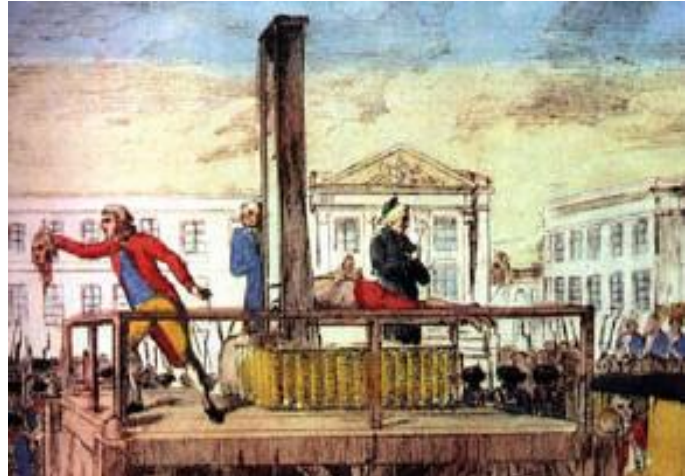
The Convention decides - after a long debate - to execute the King. Loyal to the end, you decide to share his carriage as he makes his way to the place of execution.

80,000 soldiers line the route, and the procession lasts almost two hours. During this time the King reads silently from the Bible. As soon as the carriage stops, the King climbs out of the carriage. He tells the guards to make sure no harm comes to you, then makes his way towards the scaffold.

You watch with horror as the King climbs slowly up the steps to the scaffold at 10am on 21st January 1793. He starts making a speech, but the soldiers quickly start up a drumroll to drown him out.

*"I die innocent of all the crimes laid to my charge; I Pardon those who have occasioned my death; and I pray to God that the blood you are going to shed may never be visited on France..."*

Realising that this is not going to be his day, the King places his head in the guillotine and he is then beheaded. The youngest of the guards, who is about eighteen, seizes the head and shows it to the people. (-1 head)



- A. Wait quietly in the carriage. After all, the King has asked the guards to keep you safe from the mob.
- B. Make a run for it whilst no-one is looking.

You quickly find yourself back in the same square where Louis himself was executed - which has now been renamed the "Place de Revolution". You watch with horror as many former servants of the King are executed that day. The crowds roar with excitement as they are dragged, kicking and screaming, up to the guillotine. They are strapped face downwards and have to stair into the bucket into which, just a few seconds later, their heads land with a splat. Blood spurts from each body over the spectators, who squeal with delight!