French History Test—Study Guide

**Key Terms:**

**Absolute Monarchy**—one ruler with full power  
**Administration**—a group of people who work with and for a leader  
**Aristocracy**—government officials, nobles  
**Bourgeoisie**—the intellectuals or “brains” of the revolution in France  
**Colony**—a territory that is ruled by another country and is usually very far from the ruling country  
**Constitutional Monarchy**—Monarchy where the king or queen's powers are limited by a set of rules (a constitution).  
**Democracy**—a political system in which people freely elect government leaders  
**Divine Right of Kings**—the idea that God decides who shall be king  
**Exile**—to send away; to be banished  
**Frivolous**—of little value; trivial  
**Reign**—a period of rule  
**Revolution**—a change or overthrow of a government or social system; a movement in time, caused by people who want change to improve the quality of life.  
**Treason**—betrayal of one’s country

**People, important things and events:**

**The St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre** occurred on August 24, 1572 (St. Bartholomew's Day) when Catholics in France slaughtered large numbers of French Protestants (Huguenots). Thousands of men, women and children died in Paris on the orders of Charles IX who was urged on by his mother, Catherine de Medici.

**Henry IV**—the king of France from 1589-1610; a Huguenot who converted to Catholicism, created the Edict of Tolerance to protect Protestants in France. France experienced religious peace and economic prosperity during his reign.

**Cardinal Armand Richlieu**—French Cardinal; served in the administration of King Louis XIII; limited Huguenot’s power.

**Louis XIV**—king of France from 1643-1715. Believed in divine right & ruled an absolute monarchy. Called the “Sun King” because he viewed himself as the center of the universe, which reinforced his position as an absolute monarchy. His was the longest reign in European History.
Three Estates of France (social classes)

- **First Estate**—clergy
  - Support divine right & the power of royalty
  - Own 10% of the land
  - 1.5% of the population
  - Pay no taxes
  - Kept people silent & fearful

- **Second Estate**—nobility & military
  - Born into this estate
  - Own 20% of the land
  - .5% of the population
  - Pay no taxes
  - Collect taxes from third estate

- **Third Estate**—commoners (the brawn) & Bourgeoisie (the brains)
  - Own 70% of the land
  - 98% of the population
  - Heavily taxed
  - Poor

**King Louis XVI**—an absolute monarch who was detested by his people because he spent money frivolously (palaces, entertainment, American Revolution), bankrupting France, he was unfair to the third estate (highly taxed, little land, no voice in government) and he married Marie Antoinette (an Austrian; forming an alliance between France and Austria).

**Marie Antoinette**—a spoiled Austrian empress who married Louis XVI to secure an alliance between France and Austria. She was accused of having affairs, substance abuse (drugs & alcohol), frivolous spending (clothes, hair, palaces, entertainment), a traitor (giving military secrets to her brother, the ruler of Austria) and a thief (diamond necklace affair). She was detested by the people of France.

**Bastille**—a fortress & a prison (jail); a symbol of evil & where weapons/ammunition (gunpowder) was stored; represented France’s power and wasteful spending.

**Storming the Bastille**—the citizens of France (third estate & some second estate) stormed the Bastille. This act forced the leaders of France to listen to the people. It occurred on July 14, 1789, which is now a national holiday in France; Bastille Day (their Independence Day).
Governor de Launay—in charge of the Bastille. He was killed during the storming of the Bastille and his head was placed on a stake paraded around town.

National Assembly—group formed by the people (mostly third estate) in order for them to express their rights as citizens. Earliest form of government in France.

Tennis Court Oath—a promise that the National Assembly meetings would continue, no matter where or what the cost.

Estates General—an assembly of representatives from all three estates (First, Second & Third).

Declaration of Rights and Citizens—a declaration passed by the National Assembly. It guaranteed basic rights for all French citizens, including “liberty, property, security and resistance to oppression”.

Dr. Joseph Ignance Guillotin—invented the Guillotine, a more humane device used for beheadings.

Guillotine—a machine invented by Joseph Ignance Guillotin used to behead people accused of various crimes. It was intended to be a quicker, more humane way to execute a person.

Maximilien Robespierre—a Jacobin leader during French Reign of Terror who was elected to the “Committee of Public Health & Safety”. He accelerated terror in France by arresting & executing anyone opposed to the revolution. Later began executing members from all estates for various crimes. Was then executed himself on July 28, 1794.

Reign of Terror—the period of time after Louis XVI’s death. During this time, Maximilien Robespierre executed thousands of people, many for trivial crimes. The reign of terror ended with the death of Maximilien Robespierre (guillotined).

Important questions:

What is the difference between an absolute monarchy and a constitutional monarchy?

- Absolute monarchy
- King or queen have total power over the country and its citizens
  - **Constitutional monarchy**
    - People have a voice in their government
    - Can vote for leaders & laws
    - People have power

**When is Bastille Day?**

July 14, 1789

**What did the protesters and the Bastille shout and what does it mean?**

Shouted: “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity!” (Freedom, Equality & Brotherhood)
Meaning: give us free will, to have all citizens be treated equally & brotherhood.

**Explain divine right.**

It is the idea that God decides who shall be king.

**Why was the third estate so angry?**

- Little land
- Heavily taxed
- No voice in government
- Poor, sick & hungry
- Poorly treated