As you teach this section, keep students focused on the following objectives to help them answer the Section Focus Question and master core content.

- Describe the social divisions of France’s old order.
- List reasons for France’s economic troubles in 1789.
- Explain why Louis XVI called the Estates-General and summarize what resulted.
- Understand why Parisians stormed the Bastille.

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Prepare to Read

Build Background Knowledge

Ask students to recall some of the ideas of the Enlightenment. Based on their previous reading, ask them to predict how these ideas might influence peasants and the middle class in countries with absolute monarchs, such as France.

Set a Purpose

- WITNESS HISTORY Read the selection aloud or play the audio.

According to Desmoulins, what elements do monarchies thrive on? (vices, concealments, and crimes) Why do you think the crowd would find this speech inspiring? (Sample: It appeals to a desire for an honest government.)

- Focus Point out the Section Focus Question and write it on the board. Tell students to refer to this question as they read. (Answer appears with Section 1 Assessment answers.)

Preview Have students preview the Section Objectives and the list of Terms, People, and Places.

Reading Skills Have students use the Reading Strategy: Recognize Sequence worksheet.

On the Eve of Revolution

Objectives

- Describe the social divisions of France’s old order.
- List reasons for France’s economic troubles in 1789.
- Explain why Louis XVI called the Estates-General and summarize what resulted.
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Terms, People, and Places

ancien régime

Bastille

cahier

Estates-General

Jacques Necker

Tennis Court Oath

Louis XVI

Note Taking

Reading Skill: Recognize Multiple Causes

Create a chart to identify causes of the French Revolution. Add as many boxes as you need.

Causes of the French Revolution

- Inequalities

- Inefficiency

- Deficit spending

- Ancien régime

- Estates

On April 28, 1789, unrest exploded at a Paris wallpaper factory. A rumor had spread that the factory owner was planning to cut wages even though bread prices were soaring. Enraged workers vandalized the owner’s home.

Riots like these did not worry most nobles. They knew that France faced a severe economic crisis but thought financial reforms would ease the problem. The nobles were wrong. The crisis went deeper than government finances. Reform would not be enough. By July, the hungry, unemployed, and poorly paid people of Paris had taken up arms. Their actions would push events further and faster than anyone could have foreseen.

French Society Divided

In 1789, France, like the rest of Europe, still clung to an outdated social system that had emerged in the Middle Ages. Under this ancien régime, or old order, everyone in France was divided into one of three social classes, or estates. The First Estate was made up of the clergy; the Second Estate was made up of the nobility; and the Third Estate comprised the vast majority of the population.

The Clergy Enjoy Wealth

During the Middle Ages, the Church had exerted great influence throughout Christian Europe. In 1789, the French clergy still enjoyed enormous wealth and privilege. The Church owned about 10 percent of the land, collected tithes, and paid no direct taxes to the state. High Church leaders such as bishops and abbots

Vocabulary Builder

Urban, p. 212

adj. of, relating to, or characteristic of a city

Jack grew up in an urban environment where few people had a back yard.
The Third Estate was the most diverse social class. At the top sat the bourgeoisie (boor zhwah ZEE), or middle class. The bourgeoisie included prosperous bankers, merchants, manufacturers, as well as lawyers, doctors, journalists, and professors. The bulk of the Third Estate, however, consisted of rural peasants and manufacturers, as well as lawyers, doctors, journalists, and professors. The bourgeoisie included prosperous bankers, merchants, manufacturers, as well as lawyers, doctors, journalists, and professors. The bulk of the Third Estate, however, consisted of rural peasants who lived very well. Parish priests, however, often came from humble origins and might be as poor as their peasant congregations.

Many nobles hated absolutism and resented the royal bureaucracy that employed middle-class men in positions that once had been reserved for them. They feared losing their traditional privileges, especially their freedom from paying taxes.

**Third Estate Is Vastly Diverse**

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Independent Practice
Have students work with a partner to write brief profiles for three of the following: nun, priest, nobleman, banker, manufacturer, lawyer, peasant, member of the royal family, journeyman, servant. In their profiles, students should identify the estate to which each person would have belonged in 1789, the privileges and complaints each might have had, and changes that each might have desired. After students have finished their profiles, invite volunteers to read them to the class.

Monitor Progress
■ As students fill in their charts, circulate to make sure they understand that inequalities among classes was one of the causes of the French Revolution. For a completed version of the chart, see Note Taking Transparencies, 136.
■ If students need more instruction on identifying causes and effects, have them read the Skills Handbook, p. SH36.

Answers
Thinking Critically
1. It wanted to gain political power and recognition.
2. Its members were paying high taxes and dealing with unjust restrictions, but did not have any representation in government.

Vocabulary Builder
urban—is the basic root of, relating to, or characteristic of a city.

What Is the Third Estate?

‘‘What is the Third Estate? Everything.
2. What has it been until now in the political order? Nothing.
3. What does it want to be? Something.’’

—Abbé Emmanuel Sieyès

Sieyès, a clergyman before the revolution, captured the spirit of the Third Estate with these words in a pamphlet published in January 1789. The vast Third Estate—peasants, dentists, laborers, and more—comprising more than 95 percent of France, was ready to fight for equality.

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Thinking Critically
1. Identify Point of View. According to the quote by Sieyès, why was the Third Estate ready to revolt?
2. Make Generalizations. Why did Sieyès say the Third Estate was ‘‘nothing’’?

History Background
Louis XVI as a Young Prince Indecisive and easily influenced, Louis XVI was ill-prepared to guide France through turbulent times. When he was born in 1754, he was the fourth in line for the throne. By age 10, he was the direct heir. Uneasy with this responsibility, he set out to prepare himself emotionally and mentally for his duties. As a student, he was only average, but he possessed an excellent memory, was interested in history and languages, and demonstrated skill as a locksmith. Nevertheless, he still preferred the quiet of the nearby woods to the pressures and politics of the court. When he became king at the young age of 20, he apparently said, ‘‘I am the unhappiest of men.’’

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Economist Jacques Necker was Louis XVI’s financial advisor. He directed the king to make reforms to help improve France’s economy. Today, economists still advise heads of state and other world leaders on such matters.

Economists study how society distributes limited resources, such as land, labor, and capital. Microeconomists study the economic decisions made by individuals and firms; macroeconomists study trends of the whole economy. Some economists focus on the banking system, international markets, or the market structure of a particular industry. Some assess economic conditions for the government or a business; some conduct their own research and teach at a university. Economists can have worldwide effects.

Financial Troubles

Instruct

■ Introduce: Key Terms Ask students to find the key term deficit spending (in blue) in the text and define it. Ask students to speculate on the problems that could occur when a country’s government spends more than it takes in.

■ Teach: Discuss how economic troubles contributed to growing unrest in France. Ask: How did economic problems affect the poorer members of the Third Estate? When food prices went up, they went hungry. Why did the nobles and clergy demand that the king dismiss Jacques Necker and summon the Estates-General? (Necker wanted to tax them, and they hoped the Estates-General would guarantee their privileges and help them gain more power from the king.)

■ Quick Activity Direct students to the image on this page and have them read the accompanying Primary Source quote. Ask: How does the image show the great hunger described by Arthur Young? (The peasants are all gathered around the open pot, with arms outstretched for food.)

Independent Practice

Link to Literature To help students better understand the economic problems and social tensions during this time, have them read the selection from A Tale of Two Cities, by Charles Dickens, and complete the worksheet.

Teaching Resources, Unit 2, p. 29

Monitor Progress

To review this section, ask students to summarize how financial troubles added to the unrest in France.
Louis XVI Calls the Estates-General

As 1788 came to a close, France tottered on the verge of bankruptcy. Bread riots were spreading, and nobles, fearful of taxation, were denouncing royal tyranny. A baffled Louis XVI finally summoned the Estates-General to meet at Versailles the following year.

The Estates-General convened in May 1789. From the start, the delegates were deadlock over the issue of voting. Traditionally, each estate had met and voted separately. Each group had one vote. Under this system, the First and Second Estates always outvoted the Third Estate two to one. This time, the Third Estate wanted all three estates to meet in a single body, with votes counted "by head."

After weeks of stalemate, delegates of the Third Estate took a daring step. In June 1789, claiming to represent the people of France, they declared themselves to be the National Assembly. A few days later, the National Assembly found its meeting hall locked and guarded. Fearing that the king planned to dissolve them, the delegates moved to a nearby indoor tennis court. As curious spectators looked on, the delegates took their famous Tennis Court Oath.

It was taken.

Delegates of the Third Estate declared themselves to be the National Assembly, representing the people of France. They took the Tennis Court Oath (bottom), vowing to create a constitution. The National Assembly later issued the assignat (top) as currency to help pay the government's debts. What was the significance of the Tennis Court Oath?

The Oath Is Taken

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Answer

Caption It showed the Third Estate’s commitment to create a constitution.

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and to meet wherever the circumstances might require until we have established a sound and just constitution.”

When reform-minded clergy and nobles joined the Assembly, Louis XVI grudgingly accepted it. But royal troops gathered around Paris, and rumors spread that the king planned to dissolve the Assembly and take the Tennis Court Oath, swearing to meet wherever the circumstances might require.

**Parishans Storm the Bastille**

On July 14, 1789 the city of Paris seized the spotlight from the National Assembly meeting in Versailles. The streets buzzed with rumors that royal troops were going to occupy the capital. More than 600 Parisians assembled outside the Bastille, a grim medieval fortress used as a prison for political and other prisoners. The crowd demanded weapons and gunpowder believed to be stored there.

The commander of the Bastille refused to open the gates and opened fire on the crowd. In the battle that followed, many people were killed. Finally, the enraged mob broke through the defenses. They killed the commander and five guards and released the handful of prisoners who were being held there, but found no weapons.

The Bastille was a symbol to the people of France representing years of abuse by the monarchy. The storming of this event posed a challenge to the sheer existence of the regime. Since 1880, the French have celebrated Bastille Day annually as their national independence day.

**Checkpoint:** What actions did delegates of the Third Estate take when the Estates-General met in 1789?

**Parisians storm the Bastille on July 14, 1789.**

**Terms, People, and Places**

1. What do many of the key terms, people, and places listed at the beginning of the section have in common? Explain.

**Note Taking**

2. Reading Skill: Recognize Multiple Causes: Use your completed chart to answer the Focus Question: What led to the storming of the Bastille, and therefore, to the start of the French Revolution?

**Comprehension and Critical Thinking**

3. Compare Point of View: How did the views of society differ between the nobles and peasants in 1789 France? Identify Point of View: Suppose that you are Jacques Necker. Write a paragraph that explains how your economic reform program would benefit France.

4. Express Problems Clearly: What issues arose when Louis XVI called the Estates-General in 1789?

5. Writing About History: Quick Write: Make a Cause-and-Effect Organizer: Choose a specific event from this section and write it in the center of a piece of paper. List causes above it and effects below it. This will give you the details to include in your cause-and-effect essay. You may need to do additional research to gather more details.

**Answers**

- They declared themselves the National Assembly representing the people of France and took the Tennis Court Oath, swearing to meet until they created a new constitution.
- With their rage, Parisians demonstrated a new sense of empowerment.

**Assess and Reteach**

**Assess Progress**

- Have students complete the Section Assessment.
- Administer the Section Quiz.

**Reteach**

If students need more instruction, have them read the section summary:

- Progress Monitoring Transparencies, 75

**Extend**

Have groups research how the French celebrate Bastille Day. Then have them compare and contrast this holiday with Independence Day in the United States and present their findings to the class.