

French Revolution

Q1. Describe the circumstances leading to the outbreak of revolutionary protest in France.

Answer: Some of the reasons for the cumulative effect resulting from the revolution in France are following:

- Privilege based on birth: People get privileges and places based on their lineage, not their merit. This caused resentment among common people.
- War with Britain for an independent America: This war led to mounting debt on the French monarchy. This necessitated the imposition of new taxes on the public.
- Concentration of power among the privileged: People belonging to the first and second property had all the power and money. The public was at the mercy of this privileged class.
- Growing middle class: A new class emerged due to increase in foreign trade. This class was rich not because of birth but because of its ability to use opportunities. Middle class people started raising their voice to abolish privileges on the basis of descent.
- Subsidy crisis: Increasing population and less grain production led to a decrease in demand-supply of bread, which was the staple diet. Not keeping pace with rising wage prices. It was becoming difficult for people.

Q2. Which groups of French society benefited from the revolution? Which groups were forced to relinquish power? Which sections of society would have been disappointed with the outcome of the revolution?

Answer: The farmers and artisans of French society benefited from the revolution. The clergy, nobles and the church had to relinquish power. It is clear that those who had to undergo power and privileges must have been disappointed. The people of the first and second possessions must have been very hopeless.

Q3. Describe the legacy of the French Revolution for the peoples of the world during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Answer: The ideas of freedom and democratic rights were the most important legacy of the French Revolution. These ideas became an inspiring force for political movements in the world in the 19th and 20th centuries. The colonial people reworked the idea of freedom from bondage in their movements to create a sovereign nation-state. The impact of the French Revolution will also be seen in India. Tipu Sultan and Raja Rammohan Roy were influenced by the ideas of revolution. Finally, we can say that after the French Revolution, people all over the world became aware of their rights.

Q4. Draw up a list of democratic rights we enjoy today whose origins could be traced to the French Revolution.

Answer: The list of democratic rights are

1. Freedom of speech
2. Freedom of expression
3. Freedom of press
4. Abolition of censorship
5. Right to vote
6. Abolition of slavery
7. Right to liberty
8. Right to property
9. Right to security
10. Right to education
11. Divorce laws

5. Would you agree with the view that the message of universal rights was beset with contradictions? Explain.

Answer: According to the French constitution of 1791, the major contradiction in the message of universal rights was the total ignorance of women. The men were given all rights. Furthermore, the presence of large numbers of people as passive citizens, without voting rights, did not put into practice what you preach. In other words, it can be said that although the Declaration of Universal Rights was a good starting point, there was much left to be desired.

6. How would you explain the rise of Napoleon?

Answer: Napoleon Bonaparte crowned himself Emperor of France. He started winning the neighbouring countries by waging war against him. He saw himself as a modernist of Europe. He introduced a number of laws, such as the protection of private property and a uniform system of weighting systems and the measures provided by the decimal system. Many of his measures carried forward revolutionary ideas of freedom and modern laws in other parts of Europe. This had a positive effect on the people after being disinherited as an emperor for a long time, when he was eventually defeated in the Battle of Waterloo.