Oath to Terror

Trace turning points and test revolutionary ideals

MWH.C.4.1.B "Trace the significant events of the French Revolution (e.g., convening of the Estates General, Tennis Court Oath, storming of the Bastille, execution of Louis XVI…"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle five turning points and number them in time order, then underline two principles from the Declaration to track how political power changed.

Who Would Hold Power?

1. In 1789, France faced debt and rising bread prices. King Louis XVI called the Estates General, an assembly of clergy, nobles, and the Third Estate. The Third Estate represented most people but had little power under traditional voting rules. Its delegates declared themselves the National Assembly. Locked out of their meeting hall, they gathered on an indoor tennis court and swore not to separate until France had a constitution. Their oath shifted authority away from the king toward representatives of the nation.

2. On July 14, 1789, a Paris crowd stormed the Bastille, a prison that symbolized royal power, hoping to seize weapons and gunpowder. Later that summer, the National Assembly adopted the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen. It stated that men are born and remain free and equal in rights, and that political authority comes from the nation. It also defended liberty, property, and freedom of expression. Yet women were not granted equal political rights under the new system.

3. The revolution did not stop with a declaration. War and fears of plots against the revolution deepened conflict. In 1792, France became a republic. In January 1793, Louis XVI was executed after a trial for treason, ending any chance that he would rule again. During the Reign of Terror in 1793 and 1794, revolutionary leaders used emergency courts and executions against suspected enemies. The Terror raised a hard question: could a government defend liberty by denying it to others?

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the Tennis Court Oath challenge the king's authority?

2. What did the storming of the Bastille show about opposition to royal power?

3. Which principle in the Declaration conflicted with women's position under the new system?

4. Why did the Reign of Terror raise a question about the Declaration's promise of liberty?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence museum label that traces at least three events in order. Explain how one event changed political authority, then judge whether a later action upheld or violated a principle in the Declaration.

ANSWER KEY

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HIGH SCHOOL · MWH.C.4.1.B

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle five turning points and number them in time order, then underline two principles from the Declaration to track how political power changed. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the Tennis Court Oath challenge the king's authority?	**Delegates promised to create a constitution, claiming authority for representatives of the nation rather than leaving it with the king.**
2	What did the storming of the Bastille show about opposition to royal power?	**A Paris crowd attacked a symbol of royal power and sought weapons and gunpowder.**
3	Which principle in the Declaration conflicted with women's position under the new system?	**The Declaration stated that people have equal rights, but women were not granted equal political rights.**
4	Why did the Reign of Terror raise a question about the Declaration's promise of liberty?	**Revolutionary leaders used emergency courts and executions against suspected enemies, putting those people's liberty at risk.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

When Louis XVI convened the Estates General, the Third Estate challenged voting rules that limited its power. At the Tennis Court Oath, its delegates claimed a role in making France's constitution, shifting authority toward the nation. After Louis XVI was executed, revolutionary leaders used emergency courts during the Reign of Terror. Executing suspected enemies clashed with the Declaration's promise of liberty.

Accept different sets of three events if their order is correct. The judgment must name a principle from the Declaration and connect it to a later action.