Rights and Revolutions

Trace how French revolutionary ideas changed France and influenced later movements.

MWH.C.4.1.C "Explain the major effects of the French Revolution (e.g., contribution to modern nationalism, political, economic, and cultural debilitation of the Catholic church) and analyze how its support for ideas of popular sovereignty and legal..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline statements about who holds political power or has rights, circle evidence of the Church's political, economic, and cultural losses, and number the two examples of later movements influenced by revolutionary ideas.

When Rights Crossed Borders

1. In 1789, crowds in Paris attacked the Bastille, a prison that symbolized royal power. That summer, France's National Assembly ended many privileges held by nobles and issued the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen. It argued that authority came from the nation, not simply from a king. This idea, called popular sovereignty, challenged inherited rule. The declaration also promised equality before the law for citizens, rather than separate rules based on birth. Yet revolutionary governments did not grant women equal political rights. The gap between a broad principle and its limited application would matter far beyond France.

2. Revolutionary leaders also remade the Catholic Church's place in France. The state seized church lands and sold them, cutting off a major source of the Church's wealth. A 1790 law put clergy under state authority and required priests to swear loyalty to the new system; many refused. In the radical phase, some churches closed, and new civic festivals displaced Catholic rituals in public life. These changes weakened the Church's economic resources, political independence, and cultural influence. They also divided communities: some Catholics supported change, while others resisted a government they saw as attacking their faith.

3. The revolution changed how people imagined belonging to a country. Armies recruited in the nation's name encouraged many French people to think of themselves as citizens defending a shared homeland, not merely subjects serving a monarch. This helped spread modern nationalism, though it did not unite everyone. In Saint-Domingue, enslaved people and their allies pressed the language of rights beyond France's initial promises, fighting slavery and founding independent Haiti in 1804. Later independence movements in Spanish America also invoked sovereignty and equality to challenge colonial rule. Their leaders often limited who could vote, showing that revolutionary ideals could inspire change without guaranteeing equal rights.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the Revolution shift authority in both the French government and the Catholic Church?

2. Explain how one economic change and one cultural change weakened the Catholic Church in France.

3. How could recruiting armies in the nation's name help turn popular sovereignty into nationalism?

4. How did revolutionaries in Saint-Domingue apply the language of rights beyond France's initial promises?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence address to an imagined nineteenth-century kingdom deciding whether to copy the French Revolution. Explain how popular sovereignty and legal equality could change its government, then identify a group that might still be excluded and explain one specific risk of that exclusion.

Rights and Revolutions

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline statements about who holds political power or has rights, circle evidence of the Church's political, economic, and cultural losses, and number the two examples of later movements influenced by revolutionary ideas. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the Revolution shift authority in both the French government and the Catholic Church?	**It claimed government authority came from the nation rather than simply from a king, and it placed clergy under state authority rather than leaving the Church politically independent.**
2	Explain how one economic change and one cultural change weakened the Catholic Church in France.	**The sale of seized church lands cut off wealth, while church closures and civic festivals reduced Catholic rituals' place in public life.**
3	How could recruiting armies in the nation's name help turn popular sovereignty into nationalism?	**If authority belonged to the nation, citizens could see defending it as a shared duty. Serving in its armies helped build a sense of belonging to a common homeland.**
4	How did revolutionaries in Saint-Domingue apply the language of rights beyond France's initial promises?	**Enslaved people and their allies fought slavery and founded independent Haiti, extending claims to freedom and self-rule beyond France's initial promises.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

In the imaginary kingdom of Velora, the assembly should replace the king's absolute authority with laws approved by elected representatives. It should end nobles' special courts so every resident faces the same laws. If landless workers cannot vote, lawmakers could tax their wages without hearing their objections, fueling protests and weakening trust in the new government. France's experience shows that calling people equal is not enough when political rights remain limited.

Accept other passage-supported explanations of the Church's losses and nationalism. For Your Turn, look for four sentences that apply both principles and explain a concrete consequence of excluding a named group.