

Name: _____ Date: _____

The French Revolution

Q1. What were the causes for the empty treasury of France under Louis XVI?

Ans. _____

Q2. Who constituted the middle class in French society? How did they participate in French Revolution?

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Q1. What were the causes for the empty treasury of France under Louis XVI?

Ans. Reasons behind an empty treasury upon the accession of Louis XVI in 1774 were:

1. Long years of war had drained the financial resources of France.
2. Added to this was the cost of maintaining an extravagant court at the immense palace of Versailles.
3. Under Louis XVI, France helped the thirteen American colonies to gain their independence from the common enemy, Britain. The war added more than a billion livres to a debt that had already risen to more than 2 billion livres.
4. Lenders, who gave the state credit, now began to charge 10 per cent interest on loans. So the French government was obliged to spend an increasing percentage of its budget on interest payments alone.
5. French society in the eighteenth century was divided into three estates, and only members of the third estate paid taxes.

Q2. Who constituted the middle class in French society? How did they participate in French Revolution?

Ans. i. The eighteenth century witnessed the emergence of social groups, termed the middle class, who earned their wealth through an expanding overseas trade and from the manufacture of goods. It also included included professions such as lawyers or administrative officials.

ii. All of these were educated and believed that no group in society should be privileged by birth. Rather, a person's social position must depend on his merit.

iii. These ideas envisaging a society based on freedom and equal laws and opportunities for all, were put forward by philosophers such as John Locke and Jean Jacques Rousseau.