

UNIT 2: THE AGE OF REVOLUTION.

Lesson plan

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INTRODUCTION: THE CONCEPT OF REVOLUTION

STARTING POINT:
What is a Revolution?

A revolution is a *radical* and *long-lasting transformation* of the structure. It involves a change with far-reaching consequences. Unlike a reform, the outcome of a revolution is the establishment of a new and different system.

As the reforms undertaken during the Enlightenment didn't solve the problems of the Ancient Regime, the system came to an end through revolution.

The revolutions that started at the end of the 18th century were the American and the French Revolutions. They were both led by the bourgeoisie, that's why they are known as "bourgeois revolutions" although other groups participated in them and benefited from them as well.

The revolutionary changes brought about the end of the Ancient Regime and affected the political, economic and social level, giving birth to what we call the contemporary Period.

1. THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

STARTING POINT:
What was the situation before 1773?

1.1.-The Thirteen Colonies

The first English colonists arrived in North America in 1607 and created the first colony: Virginia. In the mid-18th century, there were Thirteen Colonies that stretched from the French colony of Quebec and the Spanish colony of Florida. (→see [MAP](#) of the Thirteen Colonies).

1.2.-Causes of the American Revolution

Economic reasons: after the Seven Years' War taxes were raised or new ones were passed:

- Stamp Act (1765)→ all the official documents would be charged with a direct tax by fixing a stamp on them.
- Tea Act (1773). All the tea in the colonies had to be bought exclusively to the British East India Company, which would not pay any customs duties.

The *Boston Tea Party* (1773) showed the American reject to this act by dumping all the tea from the British East India Companies in the harbour of Boston dressed up as Indians. Most of the taxes were rejected by the colonists, who did not pay them.

Political reasons:

- The autonomy that the colonies had always enjoyed was bit by bit reduced by the British Parliament, where there was not any American representative. They invented the slogan *No taxation without representation*.
- Republicanism had grown among Americans, who did not want George III of Britain as their king.

Cultural and ideological reasons:

- The Enlightenment had influenced many American colonists, whose demands based on the enlightened principles: (division and balance of powers, Locke political ideas about the origin of the power, freedom...)



ACTIVITY 1.1 and 1.2

1.3.- American Revolutionary War

Some representatives of the Thirteen Colonies met in the **First Continental Congress** (1774) which was held in Philadelphia.

The American representatives agreed to boycott British products. **The Second Continental Congress (1776)** was also held in Philadelphia and it had important effects: The VIRGINIA DECLARATION OF RIGHTS (June 1776) and the DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE, (see extracts of **both TEXTS**) which was passed on 4 July 1776. It was drafted by Thomas **Jefferson**: (*everybody was born free and equal, everybody had natural rights, government must count on citizens' approval, which is the basis of national sovereignty*)



ACTIVITY 1.3

The American Revolutionary War broke out in April 1775. It became a civil war, since there were American loyalists (pro-British king) and patriots (pro-American independence).

The loyalists were supported by the British army; the patriots were led by **George Washington**, and had the support of France and Spain. The victories of Saratoga (1777) and Yorktown (1781) involved the surrender of the British army.

1.4.- The United States of America

- The Treaty of Versailles (1783) signed the end of the war among the adversaries: Great Britain accepted the independence of the United States of America, but kept Canada as a British colony;
- The American Constitution was passed on 17 September 1787 and was the first one to be written in history;
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-It was created a **federal state system**. A federal (central) government has authority over foreign policy, army, and finances.

-It establishes the **division of powers**:

- Legislative. It was composed of a two-Houses Congress whose members were elected in censitary suffrage: Senate and House of the Representatives.
- Executive. It is held by a President, who is elected every four years by the citizens in censitary suffrage.
- Judicial. The Supreme Court is in charge of controlling the conflicts between the federal government and the states. Its members were appointed by the President.
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-This Constitution also acknowledges the **rights** to life, liberty and property; the freedom of expression, press, and religion are also principles contained in this Constitution.

-There is **separation** between State and Church.

ACTIVITIES 1.4 AND 1.5

GEORGE WASHINGTON was elected as the first American President in 1789.

The American Constitution is still in force. However, it has been modified several times, that's what we call AMENDMENTS. Since 1787, more than 9,000 amendments to the Constitution have been proposed, but only 27 have been accepted. The first 10 amendments formed the Bill of Rights, which

recognizes rights such as freedom of speech, religion, press, the right to bear weapons... Other constitutional amendments abolished slavery (1865), gave the right to vote to non-white people (1870), gave women the right to vote (1920). The last amendment was made in 1992.



ACTIVITIES 1.6, 1.7

2.- THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

WHAT IS THE HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FRENCH REV?

The Revolution that broke out in France in 1789 is considered a landmark in History, so much as to establish the beginning of the Contemporary period. The historical significance of the French Revolution is commonly agreed, as it stated principles that are the pillars of our democratic societies, such as freedom, equality or national sovereignty. It would impact the entire world and become a model for subsequent revolutions.

2.1.- The causes of the French Revolution

There were several causes that led to the outbreak of the French Revolution

Ideological causes: the Enlightenment ideas; the American Revolution was a model of further revolutions and proved that those enlightened ideas could be implemented.

Economic causes: there was a financial crisis due participation in wars and money waste (luxurious habits in the French court). The country was completely exhausted and with very few financial resources, close to declare bankruptcy. Additionally, harvests in the 1780s were really bad and bread prices rose to very high figures. Many riots were caused due to the bread prices. The king was considering to impose new taxes to the privileged estates, advised by his finance ministers (Turgot, Necker).

Social causes: Nobility and clergy did not have as much political importance as before since absolutism had strengthened. They did not want to pay any new tax Louis XVI's ministers wanted to impose. The bourgeoisie did not have any political influence and their economic activity was controlled by the king. Hence, they meant to abolish the absolute monarchy. Peasants and urban workers suffered more and more since taxes were continuously raised. They became the main actors in the French Revolution.

Political causes. The Estates General had not been summoned since 1614, but it was compulsory to hold a meeting in order to raise the taxes to the privileged estates. The voting system in the Estates General gave more importance to the privileged estates, whilst the Third Estate members were almost neglected.

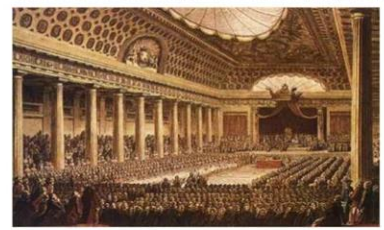
ACTIVITY 2.2

2.2.- From the Estates General to the Legislative Assembly (June 1789- September 1791)

To solve the severe financial crisis of the French monarchy, King Louis XVI summoned the **Estates General** for the first time in 175 years. It consisted on a medieval assembly made up by representatives of the three estates. They had the power to approve new taxes. The three levels of French society, who were able to express their wishes in the *cahiers de doléances* (books of grievances-cuadernos de quejas), sent their representatives to Versailles.

From the beginning, Louis XVI disappointed the members of the third state by denying any reform on society or the monarchy, and ignoring their cahiers de doléances. More precisely, what the Third Estate wanted was the decisions of the general assembly to be voted "per person" (one member, one vote) and not by order (order = one vote). They called themselves **National Assembly**.

MEETING OF THE ESTATES-GENERAL (May 1789)



The representatives of the Third Estate demanded **double representation, collective discussions and per-person voting**.

The king accepted the double representation, but he didn't accept the vote per person. Protests went on and the king closed the Estates-General.



Members of the National Assembly invited representatives of the other two orders to join them on June 20, 1789 in the hall of a tennis court, swearing an oath : *"We swear never to separate ourselves (...) until the constitution is drawn up and fixed upon solid foundations"*.

The tennis court oath → [VIDEO](#)

The king finally agreed to the National Assembly's demands. The 9th July is the birth of the **Constituent Assembly**, as the National Assembly decided to write a constitution. However, people were afraid of the king's actions against the new institution.

The **Storming of the Bastille** on 14 July 1789 showed that the new Assembly had the people's support. The Bastille was attacked in order to get weapons to defend the Assembly from the king's actions. It was the symbol of the absolute monarchy since it was a political prison (just 7 inmates were housed in that prison at the moment of the storming). More riots broke out in the countryside and other cities around France, this is called the **Great Fear** (*La Grande Peur*).

To restore calm in the kingdom, the National Assembly implemented a number of legal reforms.

- They abolished feudal rights of nobles and clergy, on the 4 August 1789.
- They approved the **DECLARATION OF RIGHTS OF MAN AND CITIZEN**, on the 26 August 1789. *Every man has natural rights: property, freedom, and safety. There was freedom of opinion. The division of powers was present in this declaration. It also declared the national sovereignty.* (→[READ TEXT](#))



These decisions put an end to the Old Regime, but the king was still reluctant to put them into force. In October 1789, the people of Paris (mainly women) marched towards Versailles in order to search for the king and bring him back to Paris.

The Constituent Assembly kept on with more relevant legal reforms:

→All the clergymen became civil servants (**Civil Constitution of the clergy**, 12th July 1790). The Civil Constitution reduced the number of bishops and archbishops, made the clergy paid employees of the government and required all members of the clergy to swear an oath of loyalty to the nation, becoming one of the new regime's most controversial, disruptive and divisive measures. It created more dissent and fuelled more opposition than any other revolutionary policy, dividing the clergy into *jurors*, who swore to obey this constitution, and *non-jurors*, who did not accept to swear it);

→They also established standards for weights and measures, replacing the 100 ways to measure land that had existed before the Revolution. Following the Académie Française recommendations, a new system was approved based on mathematics, geometry and physics, creating new units of measurement : metres (measurement in French), litres and grams. Prefixes derived from Greek – deci, centi, milli, deca, hecto, kilo – would be used to indicate divisions or multiples of these units.

→Other measures were the abolition of guilds and a new territorial division (departments).

Louis XVI did not accept all this changes and prepared to flee with his family to Austrian territories . He is discovered and arrested at Varennes (21 June 1791). *The flight to Varennes* is the definite rupture between the king and the people. It means the failure of the constitutional monarchy.

The **Constitution** was finally passed on 3 September 1791 and a new liberal system was imposed: division of powers : legislative (the Legislative Assembly); executive (the king , but did not have any sovereignty) ; judicial (the judges, who were elected by the people). Every man with possessions would be able to vote: censitary suffrage. The political regime that the Constitution established was the constitutional monarchy.

2.3.- The Legislative Assembly (1791-92)

After the approval of the Constitution the National Constituent Assembly changes its name for Legislative Assembly, which passed many laws (confiscation of the lands of the Church, abolition of guilds, torture, universal tax system, creation of the national army...)

There were two major groups: both believed in revolution but **Girondins** (*girondinos*) were moderate since they represented the bourgeoisie. They favoured liberal economic policies and the middle class. They were keen on maintain the censitary suffrage.



Jacobins were more radical, they wanted to abolish monarchy and to judge the king, they believed in universal suffrage. Their economic policies were more protectionist since they meant to control prices rises in order to help the lower classes. Their main supporters were the workers of Paris, known as *sans-culottes*, who caused many riots to favour the Jacobins. The main Jacobin leader was **Maximilien de ROBESPIERRE**.

Some nations did not accept the new French situation and **Austria and Prussia declared the war on France in April 1792**. The international defeats caused a major riot **that attacked the Tuileries Palace (10th August 1792)**. The king was imprisoned, the monarchy was abolished and a republic was proclaimed. A new assembly was established: the **National Convention**.

2.4.- The National Convention (1792-95) and the Terror.

The new government was first controlled by the Girondins. They proclaimed the Republic (sept'92) and faced Louis XVI's trial and a foreign invasion. The king was declared guilty with 387 votes for his guilt, and 360 against. He was finally executed by the guillotine on 21 January 1793.

Some people rebelled against the regime and supported the monarchy, the Catholic Church, and the nobility. A counter-revolution broke out in a region in western France called *La Vendée*. The counter-revolutionaries were mainly concerned about the government's treatment of both the king and the Church. (This movement challenged the Convention but will be finally crushed by government troops by 1793).

Popular discontent with war allowed the Jacobins to rise to power (1793). The new government was led by **Maximilien de Robespierre**, who imposed a dictatorship through the powerful **Committee of Public Safety, establishing** the so-called **Reign of Terror** (September 1793-June 1794). Some of the measures implemented were:

- A Republican Calendar is established to erase every Catholic influence. The year I began with the proclamation of the Republic. The beginning of the year was fixed on the day of the proclamation of the Republic (22 September-1 Vendémiaire).

- laws were passed to judge the possible traitors to the revolution, the so-called counter-revolutionaries. Many people were executed during their government (around 50,000 people), such as Marie Antoinette, Louis XVI's wife and most of the Girondins leaders, as well as some Jacobin leaders, like Danton.

- Political measures: a more democratic **Constitution** was passed in **1793**, where universal suffrage was adopted. Hence, every man could vote in the elections; national sovereignty was transformed into popular sovereignty.

- Economic measures: prices were controlled by the State.

2.5.- From the COUP OF THERMIDOR to the coup of Brumaire: the Directory



Robespierre himself was executed after a coup d'état (*coup of Thermidor*-July'94) and power returned to moderate representatives, who drafted a new Constitution in 1795 where censitary suffrage was imposed again. The new government was called the **Directory**, made up by 5 members in order to prevent a new dictatorship. The Directory fought against radical Jacobins as well as against monarchists. It also launched many military campaigns in Italy, Prussia and Egypt, where general Napoleon Bonaparte became very prestigious. On 9 November 1799 **Napoleon** staged a coup d'état (18 Brumaire coup d'état) which meant the end of the Directory. It was the beginning of the **Consulate**, made up of three

consuls.



ACTIVITIES 2.1, 2.3, 2.4

2.6.- From Consulate to Empire (1799-1804)

Napoleon soon became First Consul, and consolidated the revolution's conquests.

- He achieved peace within France eliminating radical factions and making the exiled nobility return. He also signed the **Concordat** with the Catholic Church (1801), recognising the Catholic religion. In exchange, the Church accepted not to claim the lands that were seized during the revolution and the priests and clergymen would be paid by the State
- He implemented several internal reforms: the most important one was the **Civil Code** (Napoleonic Code) in 1804. It codified revolutionary achievements: private property, equality under the law, separation of Church and State, economic freedom, protection of property, civil marriage and divorce, education promoted by the State, creation of the Bank of France and a new currency (the franc). To promote himself, many monuments were built in Paris like the hospital of *Les Invalides*, or *L'Arc du Triomphe*.

Due to Napoleon's popularity, he was elected First Consul for life in 1802. Subsequently he was proclaimed emperor in 1804 after a national plebiscite.

→The [coronation of Napoleon](#)



3. EUROPE UNDER NAPOLEON 1799-1814

Napoleon soon created a vast empire under French rule. He became the master of Europe after defeating Austria in Austerlitz (1805) and Prussia in Jena (1807). He created some satellite states in (Italy, Poland) and annexed Belgium and the Illyrian provinces to France and set up alliances (Spain). Great Britain was the only country that resisted, defeating the Franco-Spanish navy in Trafalgar. (1805). Napoleon responded by imposing an economic blockade to the British.

As Portugal didn't respect the blockade, he planned the invasion of Portugal after having signed a treaty with Spain's prime minister Godoy, (treaty of Fontainebleau, 1807), allowing the French troops to occupy the country. The people's opposition to the French occupation led to the Spanish Independence War (1808-14).

By 1812, Napoleon was the master of Europe (SEE [MAP](#))

The invasion of Russia (1812) was his major failure and the beginning of his decline. A coalition was formed (U.K, Austria, Prussia, Russia) and Napoleon was finally defeated in the battle of the Nations in Leipzig (1813). He was exiled to the island of Elba, close to Corsica, but managed to escape and retake the power for 100 days (*the Empire of the 100 Days*). Napoleon was definitely defeated in Waterloo (1815) and sent to exile in Saint Helena, where he died in 1821.

ACTIVITIES 3.1;3.2;3.3.

4.- THE RESTORATION

A new period started in Europe in which some of the powers that had defeated Napoleon tried to restore absolutism. Nevertheless, new ideologies originated in the French Revolution and spread by Napoleon through Europe would finally succeed. These ideologies were Liberalism and Nationalism.

The first one will bring about several waves of revolutions during the first half of the 19th century (1820, 1830, 1848), the second one will lead to the birth of two new countries: Italy and Germany in 1870.

The Restoration period started with the meeting of the powers that had defeated Napoleon (UK, Austria, Prussia, Russia) in the **Congress of Vienna** in 1815.

The principles of this new period were:

- **absolutism** :Absolutism was restored in all the countries that were invaded or attacked by Napoleon , as it happened in Spain with Fernando VII. Only Great Britain did not enforce this principle due to its parliamentary monarchy;

- **legitimacy**. Following these principles, they wanted first to restore de Ancient Regime restoring the monarchs that had been deposed by Napoleon. The restored king had to belong to the traditional dynasty of the nation;

-the right to **intervene** in other nations, creating the HOLLY ALLIANCE to prevent any revolution from succeeding again;



- the British contribution to this international situation was the principle of **balance of powers**, by which no nation could be more powerful than the others.

To achieve these objectives, , they redrew the European map establishing new boundaries and forcing France to return to the boundaries of 1791.

ACTIVITIES

4.1,4.2, 4.3



THE LIBERAL REVOLUTIONS OF THE 19TH CENTURY

During the 19th century, the ideas and values of the French Revolution that were spread out by Napoleon succeeded throughout Europe, in spite of the attempts of the absolutism to contain them.

Liberalism defended individual FREEDOM, EQUALITY before the law, NATIONAL SOVEIRGNTY, SEPARATION OF POWERS, RIGHTS and individual FREEDOMS (speech, association, press, religion...), Written CONSTITUTIONS and limited suffrage that would turn into universal. These ideas gave rise to a new wave of revolutions in 1820, 1830 and 1848.



In **1820** there were liberal revolutions in **Spain** (general Riego forced the king Fernando VII to accept the liberal Constitution of Cádiz), Portugal, some areas of the Italian peninsula and **Greece**, that became independent from the Turks.

In Spain, the three-year period (*Trienio Liberal*) ended up with the intervention of the Holy Alliance (*Los Cien Mil Hijos de san Luis*) who restored Fernando VII in 1823 as an absolute monarch. This absolute decade will be called “*Década Ominosa*” (1823-33) and will last until his death in 1833.

In **1830** the revolution started in **France**, where the absolute king Charles X was replaced by a new king (Louis-Philippe of Orleans), supported by the middle bourgeoisie.

The revolution then spread to **Belgium** (that got its independence from Holland) and **Spain**, where the new queen Isabel II and her mother M^a Cristina had to fight against the Carlists. To do so, M^a Cristina had to get the support of the Liberals against the Carlists who defended the absolutism.

In other parts of Europe the revolutionaries were put down and their achievements limited.



In **1848** the revolutions got a democratic dimension, as the revolutionaries asked for universal (manhood) suffrage and were backed by middle class and the proletariat. This is why this new wave of

revolutions was called “**the springtime of the peoples**” They started in France, where Louis Philippe was deposed and the II Republic was proclaimed. Louis Napoleon Bonaparte was elected president of the Republic, and in 1851 gave a coup d’état. The II Republic ended up and the Second Empire was proclaimed. Louis Napoleon was called Napoleon III. He would have an important role in the unifications of Germany and Italy. Other revolutions occurred in eastern Europe, and serfdom (servitude) was abolished in most of it, with the exception of Russia.



WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE LIBERAL REVOLUTIONS?

The **outcome of the revolutions** was generally positive, in spite of their limitations. Revolutionary values were consolidated, many countries adopted Liberalism, Constitutions were written, rights and freedoms were enlarged, France adopted universal male suffrage, serfdom was abolished in many countries, the bourgeoisie increased their social and political influence and the

proletariat, although they didn't achieve their goals, got class consciousness, beginning to organise themselves in order to stand up to the bourgeoisie and the liberal State.



ACTIVITY 5.1

5. NATIONALISM. THE UNIFICATION OF ITALY AND GERMANY

STARTING POINT:
What is Nationalism?

Nationalism is an ideology which grew in the 19th century in many European areas. This ideology understood that a nation is a community that shares common cultural elements, such as language, religion, history or folklore. Each of these nations should have their own state, where the boundaries should coincide with those of the nation. Some of the nationalisms that grew in Europe were **integrating**, such as in Germany and in Italy. Instead, many others were **disintegrating** and sought the emancipation from larger empires or states, like in Bohemia, Poland, Hungary, Romania, Greece, Belgium, or Ireland. Nationalism was initially linked with Liberalism, but soon evolved to more conservative positions.

6.1.- The unification of Italy

This process was led by the northern kingdom of the Piedmont-Sardinia and its king **Victor Emmanuel II** and his prime minister **Cavour**, along with the revolutionary southern forces of **Giuseppe Garibaldi**.

The Italian peninsula was divided into seven states, and some of them were under foreign control Austria in the north and the Bourbons in the south.

The first step to the unification of the peninsula was the incorporation of **Lombardy** and the central duchies after defeating Austria in Solferino and Magenta (1859). Napoleon III supported Victor Emmanuel II and got Nice and Savoy in exchange. Meanwhile, Garibaldi and his troops conquered the **south**.



The two armies united and Victor Emmanuel was proclaimed king of Italy in 1861. The next territory was the **Veneto**, annexed in 1866 taking advantage of the recent Austrian defeat against Prussia. The process ended up with the annexation of the Papal States (1870)

6.2.- The unification of Germany.-->[MAP](#)

The German unification was led by Prussia, the most industrialized German state, under the rule of **Wilhelm I** and his chancellor **Otto von Bismarck**. **Prussia** started the unification process with a conflict with Denmark over the Duchies of Schleswig and Holstein. After defeating Denmark in 1864, Prussia defeated Austria (1866, battle of Sadowa) and then France in 1870 (battle of Sedan). Napoleon III was captured and Alsace and Lorraine were annexed. The **Second Reich** or German Empire was proclaimed in 1871, in the Hall of the Mirror in Versailles Palace. Germany became the strongest state in Europe and **Bismarck** was the new leader in the European relations-



ACTIVITY 6.1 and 6.2

7.- CULTURE AND ART. Romanticism.

During this revolutionary period, culture was secularised (a lesser degree of religious influence) and more influenced by press and public opinion. Illiteracy was reduced thanks to free public education (primary education) and more women got access to culture.

Science progressed in many fields: natural sciences (Charles Darwin), physics, chemistry, and medicine, bringing about an important demographic growth that will boost the Industrial Revolution.

The dominant artistic style in the first half of the 19th century was Romanticism. It started as a reaction to neoclassicism, as it was inspired by medieval times and promoted creativity, fantasy and the expression of feelings

In architecture there was a revival of older styles: Neo-Mudéjar, Neo-Gothic or Neo-Romanesque.

Sculpture and painting were very dynamic and often represented historical scenes, like the relief “*the Marseillaise*” by **François Rudé**, “*Liberty leading the people*” by **Eugène Delacroix**. Another prominent French painter was **Géricault**, who painted “*The raft of Medusa*” in a very expressive manner.



DELACROIX, Liberty leading the people



GÉRICAUT, The raft of Medusa

In England, the landscape was originally depicted by **John Constable** or **William Turner**, who will advance future artistic movements and it is considered the precursor of abstract painting



WILLIAM TURNER, Rain, Speed and Steam.

As a reaction to Romanticism, **Realism** will focus in daily issues of common people. It will predominate in the second half of the 19th century. (SEE UNIT “THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION”).