

Sample paragraph: DBQ – Revolutions

KEY:

A = Topic sentence

B = Citations from documents

C = Outside Information and Interpretation

D = Transition Sentences

It was during the volatile period of 1789 to 1799 that France experienced a revolution that forever changed the face of Europe and the world. *The French Revolution was the third in a line of revolutions (Document 8) that were intertwined, and at times, complimented each other. Like many revolutions, the French Revolution had several important causes with the most important oriented on the plight of the Third Estate. Before the Revolution, France's rigid society was broken up into three distinct classes or estates. The vast majority of France's population, almost 97% of it (Document 2), was made up of members from the Third Estate. Unlike the privileged estates, the Third Estate, the poorest of the three estates, had the burden of heavy taxation. As France entered the late 1780's, the commoners, who made up the vast majority of the Third Estate, were mired in poverty as noted by Arthur Young (Document 1). This would present Louis XVI, the reigning monarch of France, with a problem considering such a substantial amount of his citizenry lived under wretched conditions. The problem of taxation would be the spark that ignited the French Revolution in 1789. Another cause of the French Revolution was the ideas that were borrowed from the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment, also referred to as the Age of Reason, occurred primarily in the 18th century and can be best viewed as a philosophical revolution. Spurred on by the 17th century Scientific Revolution that challenged traditional ideas (Document 15), the Enlightenment challenged many ideas, especially those oriented on government. Guided by reason, the philosophes began to question the legitimacy of traditional ideas like that of the theory of divine right (Document 14) and replaced them with Montesquieu's separation of power (Document 13) and Locke's natural rights (Document 3). Ideas like these would serve as the theoretical framework for those, especially the bourgeoisie of the Third Estate, who wanted to change government and society in France. Having already occurred in America, a revolution against tyranny was not beyond comprehension for many people living in France.*

Once it occurred, France and the world would feel its convulsions. **One of the important effects or byproducts of the French Revolution was nationalism.** Defined as love or devotion to one's nation, nationalism rallied the French in the early 1790's as they faced the threat of attack from other European nations who were wary of revolution spreading to their countries. *As reflected in the words of La Marseillaise (Document 12), French men and women were encouraged to defend their country. This nationalism was reflected in the Levy en masse which sought a total mobilization of the French populace for war. One person who gained prominence in these wars and came to power in France because of the instability of the 1780's was Napoleon Bonaparte. In 1799 he led a coup d' etat that overthrew the Directory. Within a few years he gained the title of Emperor. By that time he had conquered parts of Europe and became a hero to many French men and women (Document 4). Napoleon not only affected Europe, he also affected the history of North and South America. For example, in the early 1800's he sold the Louisiana territory to the United States, thus doubling the size of America. He also affected the history of Latin America by attacking Spain in 1808 (Document 8). This provided the opportunity for the natives of Latin America, seeking their own independence (Document 11), to break away from their colonial mother. Another revolution that would affect the world was the English Revolution, also known as the Glorious Revolution.*