Sample from: 'Political Revolution: What Was It Good For?' | Product code: HS743

DOCUMENTS

Interpreting Alternative Viewpoints in Primary Source Documents

Political Revolution

What Was It Good For?

How valuable was the legacy of the French Revolution for political life in the modern age?

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Debating the DOCUMENTS

Interpreting Alternative Viewpoints in Primary Source Documents

Political Revolution
What Was It Good For?

The 2017 World History Course and Exam Description of the College Board Advanced Placement Program* lists five themes that it urges teachers to use in organizing their teaching. Each World History *Debating the Documents* booklet focuses on one or two of these five themes.

The Five Themes

1. **Interaction between humans and the environment.** (demography and disease; migration; patterns of settlement; technology)
2. **Development and interaction of cultures.** (religions; belief systems, philosophies, and ideologies; science and technology; the arts and architecture)
3. **State-building, expansion, and conflict.** (political structures and forms of governance; empires; nations and nationalism; revolts and revolutions; regional, transregional, and global structures and organizations)
4. **Creation, expansion, and interaction of economic systems.** (agricultural and pastoral production; trade and commerce; labor systems; industrialization; capitalism and socialism)
5. **Development and transformation of social structures.** (gender roles and relations; family and kinship; racial and ethnic constructions; social and economic classes)

This Booklet's Main Themes:

3 State building, expansion, and conflict.
5 Development and transformation of social structures.

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Contents

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Teacher Introduction

Using Primary Sources

Primary sources are called "primary" because they are first-hand records of a past era or historical event. They are the raw materials, or the evidence, on which historians base their "secondary" accounts of the past.

A rapidly growing number of history teachers today are using primary sources. Why? Perhaps it's because primary sources give students a better sense of what history is and what historians do. Such sources also help students see the past from a variety of viewpoints. Moreover, primary sources make history vivid and bring it to life.

However, primary sources are not easy to use. They can be confusing. They can be biased. They rarely all agree. Primary sources must be interpreted and set in context. To do this, students need historical background knowledge. *Debating the Documents* helps students handle such challenges by giving them a useful framework for analyzing sources that conflict with one another.

"Multiple, conflicting perspectives are among the truths of history. No single objective or universal account could ever put an end to this endless creative dialogue within and between the past and the present."

From the 2011 Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct of the Council of the American Historical Association.

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The Debating the Documents *Series*

Each *Debating the Documents* booklet includes the same sequence of reproducible worksheets. If students use several booklets over time, they will get regular practice at interpreting and comparing conflicting sources. In this way, they can learn the skills and habits needed to get the most out of primary sources.

Each *Debating the Documents* Booklet Includes

- **Suggestions for the Student and an Introductory Essay.** The student gets instructions and a one-page essay providing background on the booklet's topic. A time line on the topic is also included.
- **Two Groups of Contrasting Primary Source Documents.** In most of the booklets, students get one pair of visual sources and one pair of written sources. In some cases, more than two are provided for each. Background is provided on each source. *Within each group, the sources clash in a very clear way*. (The sources are not always exact opposites, but they do always differ in some obvious way.)
- **Three Worksheets for Each Document Group.** Students use the first two worksheets to take notes on the sources. The third worksheet asks which source the student thinks would be most useful to a historian.
- **One DBQ.** On page 20, a document-based question (DBQ) asks students to write an effective essay using all of the booklet's primary sources.

How to Use This Booklet

1. Have students read "Suggestions for the Student" and the Introductory Essay.

Give them copies of pages 5–7. Ask them to read the instructions and then read the introductory essay on the topic. The time line gives them additional information on that topic. This reading could be done in class or as a homework assignment.

2. Have students do the worksheets.

Make copies of the worksheets and the pages with the sources. Ask students to study the background information on each source and the source itself. Then have them take notes on the sources using the worksheets. If students have access to a computer, have them review the primary sources digitally.

NOTE: If you are using these materials with an AP world history class, an honors class, or some other group of advanced and/or more knowledgable students, you may want to make more written sources available to them on this topic. Do a basic Internet search for sources that provide additional perspectives and then add to the sources provided here.

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3. "Debate the documents" as a class.

Have students use their worksheet notes to debate the primary source documents as a class. Urge students to follow these ground rules:

- Use your worksheets as a guide for the discussion or debate.
- Try to reach agreement about the main ideas and the significance of each primary source document.
- Look for points of agreement as well as disagreement between the primary sources.
- Listen closely to all points of view about each primary source.
- Focus on the usefulness of each source to the historian, not merely on whether you agree or disagree with that source's point of view.

4. Have students do the final DBQ.

A DBQ is an essay question about a set of primary source documents. To answer the DBQ, students write essays using evidence from the sources and their own background knowledge of the historical era. (See the next page for a DBQ scoring guide to use in evaluating these essays.)

The DBQ assignment on page 20 includes guidelines for writing a DBQ essay. Here are some additional points to make with students about preparing to write this kind of essay.

The DBQ for this Booklet (see page 20):

"The French Revolution was a great turning point in humanity's struggle for liberty, equality, and constitutional government." Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why?

- Analyze the question carefully.
- Use your background knowledge to set sources in their historical context.
- Question and interpret sources actively. Do not accept them at face value.
- Use sources meaningfully to support your essay's thesis.
- Pay attention to the overall organization of your essay.

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Complete DBQ Scoring Guide

Use this guide in evaluating the DBQ for this booklet. Use this scoring guide with students who are already familiar with using primary sources and writing DBQ essays.

Excellent Essay

- Offers a clear answer or thesis explicitly addressing all aspects of the essay question.
- Does a careful job of interpreting many or most of the documents and relating them clearly to the thesis and the DBQ. Deals with conflicting documents effectively.
- Uses details and examples effectively to support the thesis and other main ideas. Explains the significance of those details and examples well.
- Uses background knowledge and the documents in a balanced way.
- Is well written; clear transitions make the essay easy to follow from point to point. Only a few minor writing errors or errors of fact.

Good Essay

- Offers a reasonable thesis addressing the essential points of the essay question.
- Adequately interprets at least some of the documents and relates them to the thesis and the DBQ.
- Usually relates details and examples meaningfully to the thesis or other main ideas.
- Includes some relevant background knowledge.
- May have some writing errors or errors of fact, as long as these do not invalidate the essay's overall argument or point of view.

Fair Essay

- Offers at least a partly developed thesis addressing the essay question.
- Adequately interprets at least a few of the documents.
- Relates only a few of the details and examples to the thesis or other main ideas.
- Includes some background knowledge.
- Has several writing errors or errors of fact that make it harder to understand the essay's overall argument or point of view.

Poor Essay

- Offers no clear thesis or answer addressing the DBQ.
- Uses few documents effectively other than referring to them in "laundry list" style, with no meaningful relationship to a thesis or any main point.
- Uses details and examples unrelated to the thesis or other main ideas. Does not explain the significance of these details and examples.
- Is not clearly written, with some major writing errors or errors of fact.

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Suggestions to the Student

Using Primary Sources

A primary source is any record of evidence from the past. Many things are primary sources: letters, diary entries, official documents, photos, cartoons, wills, maps, charts, etc. They are called "primary" because they are first-hand records of a past event or time period. This *Debating the Documents* lesson is based on two groups of primary source documents. Within each group, the sources conflict with one another. That is, they express different or even opposed points of view. You need to decide which source is more reliable, more useful, or more typical of the time period. This is what historians do all the time. Usually, you will be able to learn something about the past from each source, even when the sources clash with one another in dramatic ways.

How to Use This Booklet

1. **Read the one-page introductory essay.**

   This gives you background information that will help you analyze the primary source documents and do the exercises for this *Debating the Documents* lesson. The time line gives you additional information you will find helpful.

2. **Study the primary source documents for this lesson.**

   For this lesson, you get two groups of sources. The sources within each group conflict with one another. Some of these sources are visuals, others are written sources. With visual sources, pay attention not only to the image's "content" (its subject matter) but also to its artistic style, shading, composition, camera angle, symbols, and other features that add to the image's meaning. With written sources, notice the writing style, bias, even what the source leaves out or does not talk about. Think about each source's author, that author's reasons for writing, and the likely audience for the source. These considerations give you clues as to the source's historical value.

3. **Use the worksheets to analyze each group of primary source documents.**

   For each group of sources, you get three worksheets. Use the "Study the Document" worksheets to take notes on each source. Use the "Comparing the Documents" worksheet to decide which of the sources would be most useful to a historian.

4. **As a class, debate the documents.**

   Use your worksheet notes to help you take part in this debate.

5. **Do the final DBQ.**

   "DBQ" means "document-based question." A DBQ is a question along with several primary source documents. To answer the DBQ, write an essay using evidence from the documents and your own background history knowledge.

Sample from: 'Political Revolution: What Was It Good For?' | Product code: HS743

Political Revolution

In the late 1700s, two social upheavals helped launch an age in which political revolution would transform life—first in Europe and North America, later throughout the rest of the Americas, and in time in many other regions all over the world. In a sense, this age of revolution is still with us.

The first of these two upheavals began in 1776 when 13 British colonies in North America went to war in a conflict that gave birth to the United States. That conflict was basically a struggle for independence from British colonial control. However, it can also be called a revolution because the United States based its right to exist on the revolutionary new Enlightenment principles of liberty, equal rights, and popular sovereignty—the idea that legitimate political authority comes from the people.

The American Revolution did not completely uproot society within the 13 colonies. Yet its example and its ideals soon helped inspire another upheaval, one that did seek to transform society entirely. In 1789, "liberty, equality, fraternity" became the watchwords of that upheaval, the French Revolution.

The French Revolution went through several phases. It began when French King Louis XVI called the Estates-General into session in the hope of convincing it to raise more taxes for a nearly bankrupt government. That body was made up of France's three "estates": the clergy (130,000 or so), the nobility (500,000 at most) and the "Third Estate" (everyone else, or some 24 million people). Actually, in the Estates-General of 1789, the Third Estate was largely made up of merchants, lawyers, doctors, and other members of the wealthy middle class. It was these deputies who soon formed themselves into the National Assembly, ended the privileges of the nobility and clergy and, with their "Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen," made liberty, equal rights, and popular sovereignty the basis of French society

This moderate phase of the revolution still left many people unhappy. Under constant pressure from the people of Paris and from radical factions in the legislative body, the French Revolution became more extreme. Starting in 1791, other European nations grew openly hostile and threatening to France and its revolution. Certain rural areas rose up in violent revolt against their landlords, others rose in revolt against the revolution itself. All this only added to a mood of fear, even panic. In this mood, radicals like Jean-Paul Marat or Maximilien Robespierre resorted to ever more terroristic means not only to save the revolution but to achieve the utopian goal of uprooting all injustice and human imperfection in a new "Republic of Virtue."

This radical phase was then followed by the less radical Directory and in time the dictatorship of one man, Napoleon Bonaparte. Napoleon claimed to fulfill the revolution, and in some ways he did. Yet he also put an end to it, or at least to its dreams of liberty and democracy.

Some historians believe all these same stages can be seen in many other revolutions since 1789—in those of 1848, for instance, or in the Russian Revolution of 1917. This view may be a bit too simplistic. Yet it does raise good questions. Do modern revolutions inevitably become more violent? Do they lead in the end to authoritarian dictatorship? And if so, is political revolution of any value at all? Has it been worth it for those who looked to it with such hope for a better future? The sources for this lesson are all about the French Revolution. Together, however, they should help you begin to think about and debate these broader questions having to do with revolution in the modern age.

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Political Revolution Time Line

1776–1783

Thirteen British colonies in North America issue the Declaration of Independence and fight a war to end British rule. In that same year, Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* is published, making a strong case for free markets and individual economic liberty. The American Revolutionary War ends with the Treaty of Paris in 1783.

1787

The Constitution of the United States is signed and sent to the states. Enough of them ratify it by the next year to put it into effect.

1788

The government of France's King Louis XVI agrees to call a meeting of the Estates-General for 1789 in hopes of getting it to agree to new taxes.

1789–1790

The Estates-General meets in May. On June 17, the Third Estate constitutes itself as a national assembly and takes the Tennis Court Oath three days later. On July 14, a crowd storms the Bastille. The "Great Fear" and many uprisings sweep the countryside. Feudalism is abolished. The "Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen" is passed. A women's march to Versailles forces the king to return to Paris where he can be more easily controlled. Church property is confiscated.

1791–1792

Austria and some other European states threaten France if Louis XVI's power is limited. A Legislative Assembly based on limited suffrage meets. France declares war on Austria in August 1792. The power of the Paris Commune grows, and in September a National Convention, based on universal male suffrage, begins to rule France. In 1791, the U.S. Bill of Rights is ratified.

1793–1795

Louis XVI and Queen Marie Antoinette are executed. The "Reign of Terror" executes tens of thousands. It ends with the execution of radical Jacobin leader Robespierre. A reaction to revolutionary excess sets in. In 1795, the Directory begins to rule France.

1799–1812

Napoleon overthrows the Directory in 1799 and rules France as First Consul. In 1804, after years of revolt, former slaves declare Haiti's independence from France, making it the first black nation to gain freedom from European colonial rule. Also in 1804, Napoleon proclaims himself emperor of France. He systematizes French law under the Code Napoleon. In the years ahead, he conquers much of Europe.

1812–1815

Napoleon invades Russia in June 1812. He is forced to retreat in the winter and loses most of his army's 600,000 men. Britain, Austria, Russia, Prussia, Sweden, and Portugal defeat Napoleon and restore the Bourbon king Louis XVIII to the French throne. Later at the Congress of Vienna, the European nations revise borders and restore monarchy to much of Europe.

1811–1825

Simón Bolívar leads several wars as part of a broad independence movement that frees most of Central and South America from Spanish rule.

1830

In France, Louis Philippe becomes king after a revolution forces Charles X to abdicate.

1848

A revolt in Paris forces Louis Philippe to abdicate. Louis Napoleon is elected president of the French Republic. Revolutions in Vienna, Venice, Berlin, Milan, Rome, and Warsaw are put down by troops. Fear of revolutionary disorder may have frightened more moderate, middle-class liberals and nationalists to abandon these revolutions.

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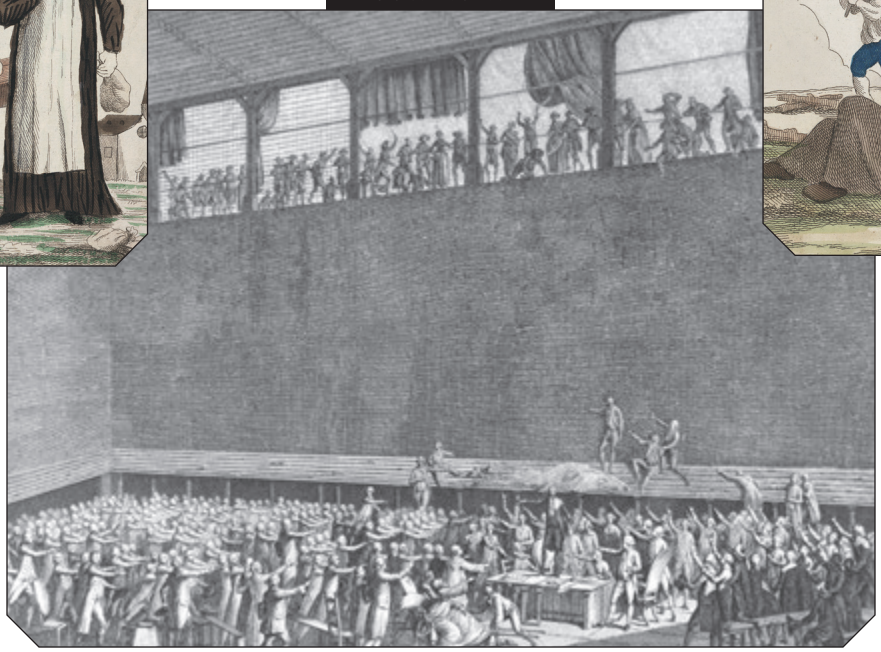
Primary Source Documents 1–3

Document 1

Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, LC-DIG-ppmsca-07709

Document 2



Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, LC-USZ62-117942

Document 3

Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, LC-DIG-ppmsca-07715

Information on Documents 1–3

Document 1. This 1789 French political cartoon shows an official of France's Revolutionary government sitting at a table collecting taxes. A priest refuses to add his bag of money to those on the table. Behind the table, a man from the Third Estate tells the priest to return to the nation that which belongs to the nation.

Document 2. On June 20, 1789, deputies to France's Estates-General found their chamber at Versailles locked and guarded. Many of them, mostly of the Third Estate, defied royal authority and met at a nearby handball court. There they took the famous Tennis Court Oath "never to separate, and to meet wherever circumstances demand" until a constitution was established for the nation. The group began to call itself the National Assembly and to govern as France's primary legislative body. This illustration shows the large group of deputies taking this oath.

Document 3. This French cartoon from 1789 shows a member of the Third Estate, possibly a woman, kneeling on top of a fallen friar, cutting wooden branches or horns from his head.