

Document A

Source: Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, 1789

Note: The Declaration of Rights of Man and Citizen was written and signed by the National Assembly, which was the governing body in the first stage of the Revolution. This document served as a preamble to the new French constitution.

The representatives of the French people, organized as a National Assembly, believe that the ignorance, neglect, or contempt of the rights of man are the sole causes of public calamities and of the corruption of the government. Therefore, the National Assembly recognizes and proclaims the following rights of man and of the citizen:

Article 1: Men are born and remain free and equal in rights.

Article 2: The aim of all government is the preservation of the natural rights of man. These are liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression.

Article 7: No person shall be accused, arrested, or imprisoned, except in the cases [allowed] by law.

Article 9: All persons are held innocent until they shall have been declared guilty.

Article 10: No one should be silenced on account of his opinions, including his religious views.

Document Analysis

1. Who issued the Declaration of the Rights of Man? When was it written?

2. According to the National Assembly, what were the "sole causes of public calamities and the corruption of government?"

3. According to Article 2, what should be the aim of all government?

4. What Article in the Declaration would be violated if government officials arrested and executed someone without a trial for speaking out against the government?

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Document E

Source: Steven Chalko, *Wright and Teller: The French Revolution, 1793*

Note: In March 1793 the revolutionary Tribunal (a court of justice) was established to try all crimes against the state. Tribunal members would not be elected by the people, but appointed by the National Convention (the revolutionary government) and their power would be absolute. Watch committees were set up in every neighborhood to ferret out and expel any foreigners suspected of counterrevolutionary activities. On April 6, 1793, the revolutionary government established the Committee of Public Safety. The purpose was to "protect the public safety" from enemies both in and outside of France. The Committee soon employed a shadowy network of informers and spies to achieve these ends. No one was safe from suspicion. A constant mood of criticism spoken against the government could put one in prison or worse.

Document Analysis

1. Is this a primary or a secondary source?

2. What was the purpose of the Tribunal and how were the judges chosen?

3. What was the purpose of the watch committees?

4. What sorts of activities could get a person in trouble with the Committee of Public Safety?

5. How many people were executed by the commissions in the countryside?

6. Do you think the activities of the Tribunal and Committee of Public Safety were justified?

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Document F

Source: Jean-Étienne Delacroix, *The Execution by guillotine during the Reign of Terror*, 1793

Note: The guillotine became one of the powerful symbols of the French Revolution. Louis XVI, his wife Marie Antoinette, and even the King Louis XVIII were executed by guillotine. The guillotine was regarded as a humane way to execute criminals. It had a sharp, angled blade, which dropped quickly on a guillotined neck. Death was instantaneous. Historians estimate that 16,000 people were guillotined during the Reign of Terror.

Document Analysis

1. How many people were being executed on this occasion? Who were the people being executed?

2. Where are the executions taking place?

3. Describe the atmosphere.

4. Why was the guillotine regarded as a "humane" way to execute criminals?

5. How could you use this document to argue that the Reign of Terror was justified or not justified?

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Document G

Source: Maximilien Robespierre, *Report on the Principles of Public Morality*, 1793

Note: Maximilien de Robespierre was perhaps the most famous French Revolutionary. Educated as a lawyer, he believed in Rousseau's teaching that the right to govern comes from the people. Robespierre also held the belief that all people should be able to vote. He dreamed of making France a constitutional republic rather than a monarchy. He was one of the creators of the Reign of Terror.

Document Analysis

1. According to Robespierre, what are the goals of the war and the revolution?

2. Whom should the government protect, according to Robespierre?

3. What does Robespierre mean by "internal" enemies and "external" enemies of the Republic? (Hint: Think about the other documents in this Mini-Q.)

4. What does Robespierre believe should be done to enemies of the Republic?

5. How could you use this document to argue that the Reign of Terror was justified or not justified?

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Justified! - Yes

Not Justified! - No

• republican - 3rd E. (PP)
• small 1st E. (PP)
• sacrificed for good (PP)
• sent into prison - 3rd E. (PP)
• punishment - not for (PP)
• right to vote (PP)

• violated natural right (PP)
• 40,000 (PP)
• 2 yrs - too extreme (PP)
• hypocrisy (PP)
• killed - suspicion - (PP)
• innocent children (PP)
• cruel - terrible (PP)

Justified!

Not Justified!

• 1st E. - taking rights away 3rd E. (PP)
• crush revolt - K. escape; royalists (PP)
• revolt saved - working and slavery (PP)
• F - 34. humane (PP)

• innocent - killed (PP)
• 2nd E. - life (PP)
• too far - based on false/random (PP)
• 40,000 - 2 yrs (PP)
• Doc A - 3rd E. (PP)
• Doc F - cheating (PP)