

Pre French Revolution

1789-1800

Palace of Versailles



King Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette



Ancien Regime (Phase I)

- French society depended on wheat production & was the basis for taxation & food supply
- Nobles and Clergy did NOT pay taxes
- This system was in place since the days of the Middle Ages

Medieval Farming

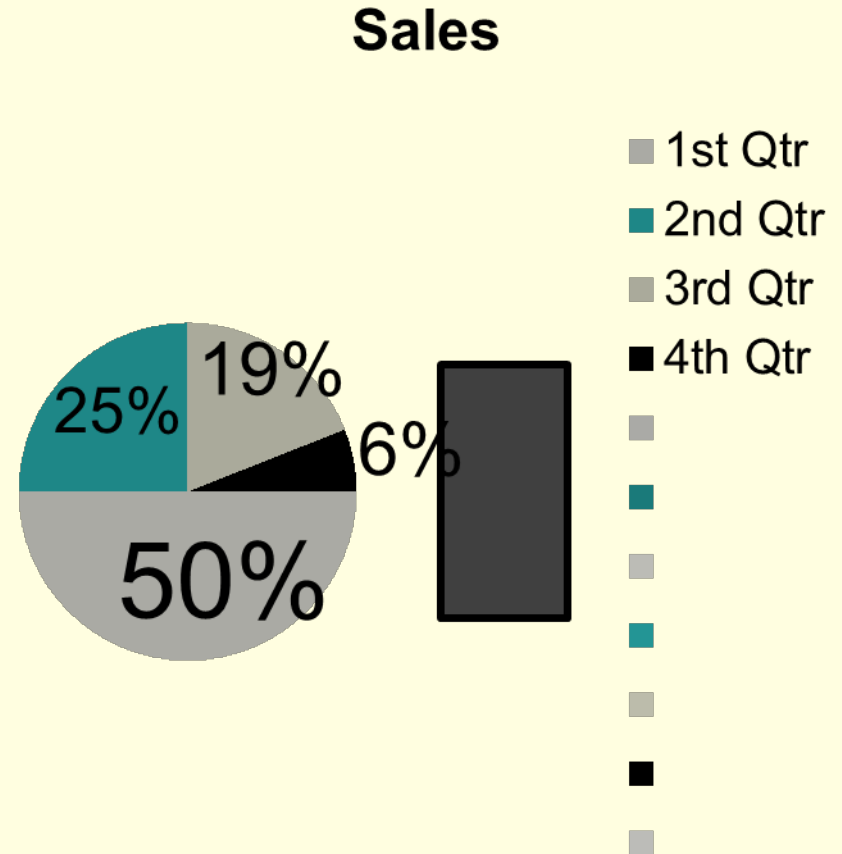


The Estates

- 1st Estate- Clergy- have enormous wealth and privilege. Own 10 percent of the land in France, collect 10% tithe.
- 2nd Estate- Nobles- Received the top jobs in government, army, courts and Church
- 3rd Estate- Commoners- some bourgeoisie (bankers, lawyers, doctors, journalists) but mostly peasants (street peddlers, construction, farming factory work)

FINANCIAL SITUATION IN 1789

- After the poor harvest there was still a shortage of funds to run the French Government
- Huge debts had accumulated from the days of King Louis XIV



MEETING OF THE ESTATES- GENEREAL

- Decided to meet to discuss the financial crisis of 1789
- Traditionally all 3 Estates received one vote, but the 3rd Estate (majority) wanted to change it to one vote per person.