

## Document A

Source: Various sources.

### Timeline of the Reign of Terror

<b>1789</b>	<b>July</b>	Beginning of the French Revolution. King Louis XVI is forced to share power.
<b>1791</b>	<b>August</b>	Austria and Prussia form an alliance to stop the French Revolution.
<b>1792</b>	<b>August 19</b>	Revolution grows more radical. Louis XVI is imprisoned.
	<b>September</b>	Constitutional monarchy ends. Replaced by a republican government. War with Prussia and Austria begins. Louis escapes, flees with family, is caught and imprisoned again.
<b>1793</b>	<b>January 21</b>	Robespierre presides over the guillotining of Louis XVI.
	<b>March–April</b>	Tribunal and Committee of Public Safety is created to fight “enemies of the revolution.”
	<b>April</b>	Counterrevolutionary revolts break out inside France.
	<b>August</b>	Levée en Masse (forced military draft for all French males) fuels revolts.
	<b>November</b>	Festival of Reason. Christian churches are soon closed by revolutionary government.
	<b>December</b>	Committee of Public Safety cracks down on rebels. Counterrevolution in western France is near collapse.
<b>1794</b>	<b>February</b>	All slavery abolished in the French colonies.
	<b>April / May</b>	French victory over foreign enemies is nearly complete.
	<b>June</b>	Government denies legal counsel to accused enemies of the revolution. The number of government executions sharply increases. Two-thirds of all executions during the Reign of Terror occur in June and July of 1794.
	<b>July</b>	Radical leader Robespierre is executed by guillotine. Many government policies of last two years will soon end. The Reign of Terror is declared over.

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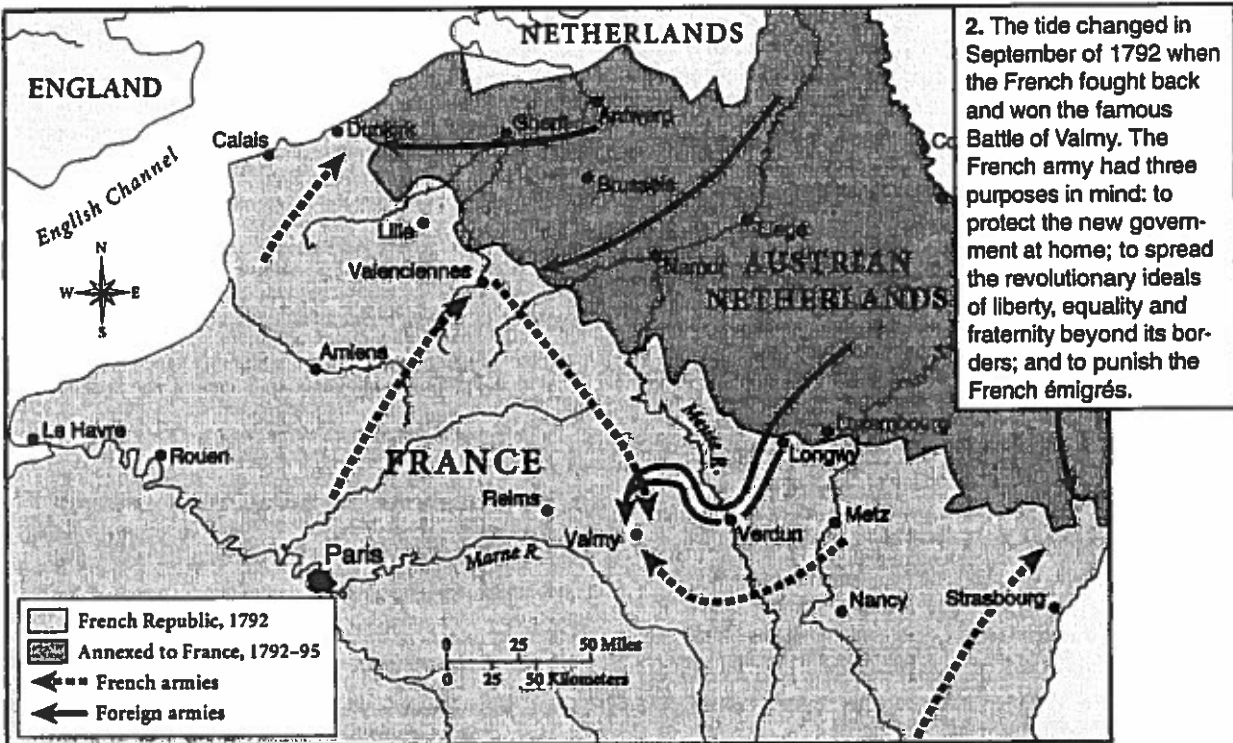
### Document Analysis

1. For nearly two years, France was a constitutional monarchy. What kind of government is that?
2. How many months was it between the guillotining of Louis XVI and the guillotining of Robespierre?
3. Why did the revolutionary government in Paris need a military draft in 1793?
4. What evidence is there that the revolutionary government that supporting the Reign of Terror also supported human rights? What evidence is there that the government that supported the Reign of Terror denied civil rights?
5. What evidence is there that the Reign of Terror was successful in fighting both enemies inside France (counterrevolutionaries) and foreign enemies?

**Document B**

**Source:** Map created from various sources.

**Note:** In August 1792, an 80,000-man army marched into France. Nearly half the force was Prussian, and the other half Austrian. Austria and Prussia were monarchies and both were afraid that revolution might spread to their countries. Austria was also concerned about the safety of Louis XVI's wife, Queen Marie Antoinette, who was a daughter in the Austrian royal family. Nearly 10,000 French army officers and aristocrats had also moved to the Austrian-controlled Netherlands. These émigrés formed armies and allied themselves with France's foreign enemies.



2. The tide changed in September of 1792 when the French fought back and won the famous Battle of Valmy. The French army had three purposes in mind: to protect the new government at home; to spread the revolutionary ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity beyond its borders; and to punish the French émigrés.

1. In April of 1792, fearing an attack, France declared war on Austria. Joined by the Prussians, the Austrians responded by invading, easily capturing Longwy and Verdun.

3. Between 1792 and 1795, France defeated Prussia and Austria and took over the Austrian Netherlands.

**Document Analysis**

1. With which countries was France at war in 1792 and 1793?
2. Which major cities did the French lose in 1792?
3. Why was Austria so concerned about the possible spread of the French Revolution?
4. How did émigrés threaten France?
5. Based on this document, do you think executing French supporters of the Austrian and Prussian monarchies was justified? Explain.

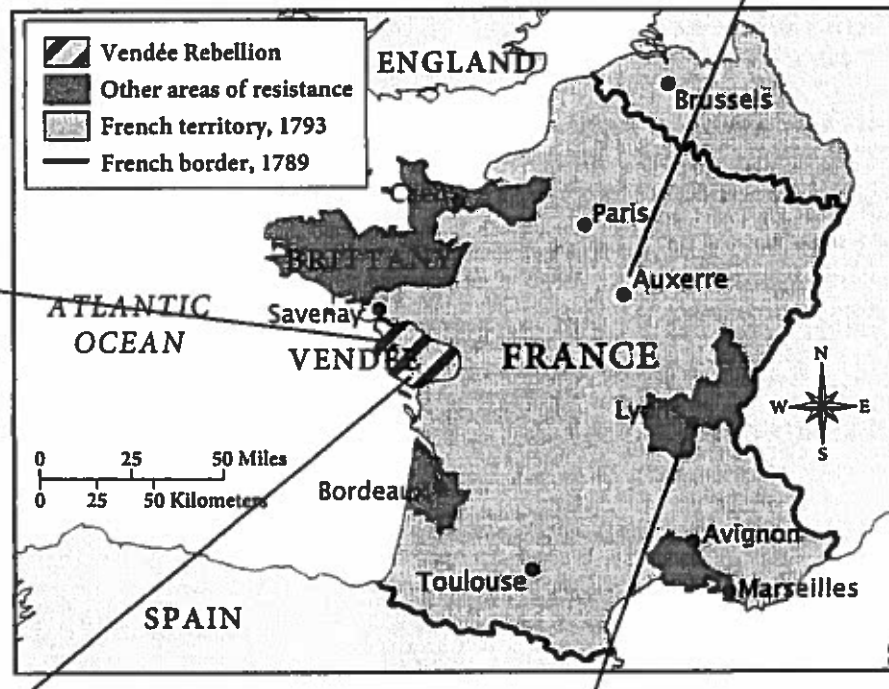
## Document C

Source: Map created from various sources.

Note: The map below shows areas of the highest resistance to the revolutionary government. These counter-revolutionaries included some members of the aristocracy, priests, farmers, and townspeople. They were a mixed lot of French men and women whom the revolutionary government regarded as thieves or rabble (lower class mob).

In 1793, a revolutionary campaign was launched against the Catholic Church. Sunday worship, Christmas, and Easter were abolished. A church official wrote that in Auxerre, France government representatives "took a copper crucifix which was on the altar, . . . [and] carried it mockingly, upside down on a cart, offering it to passers-by to spit on."

The Vendée region was the hub of the counterrevolution. People here fiercely fought against the military draft called the *levée en masse* and against laws that tried to abolish Christianity in France.



Historians estimate that anywhere between 80,000 and 500,000 French people on both sides died in the Vendée in 1793.

In October 1793, Revolutionaries decided to make an example of counterrevolutionaries in Lyons. On one day, revolutionaries destroyed 1600 homes and chopped off 12 heads in five minutes.

## Document Analysis

1. What do the shaded areas represent on this map?
2. What was the *levée en masse*?
3. What did the government do to religious property in Auxerre, France?
4. Why do you think so many people in the Vendée were killed in 1793?
5. How could you use this document to prove that the Terror was justified or not justified?

## Document D

Source: Letter from the Vendée, 1793.

Note: This letter was sent to the National Convention (the revolutionary government in Paris) by a local government official in western France. At this time, counterrevolutionary activity had been increasing for more than a year. This official is reporting that soldiers already sent by the government have failed to stop the "rabble" and he is writing for more help. To make matters even more unsettling, Prussians were invading at the same time from the north.

**(Town of) Niort, 25 August, 1793, Year IV of Freedom**

The departmental adviser reported to you, in the last mail, the troubling events which occurred in the district of Châtillon. New information shows us that the crowd is continuing to gather.... The council meanwhile has taken strong measures, and at this moment there are three thousand national guardsmen in the region to establish order. It is with the greatest of sorrow that we inform you that six patriots have already fallen victim to this rabble, but at least forty of their number were killed.

We had reason to hope that these gatherings would cease as soon as the public troops arrived. Our hopes were misguided, and this causes us the greatest of worries. Having already

dispatched all of the armed force that was at our disposal, the departments of the Vendée (and others) showed us ... their fraternity and neighborliness by coming to our aid during these circumstances. Without these departments, this unfortunate region would today have fallen to the rebels. . . .

We can not hide from you, sirs, that a severe and swift example needs to be set. Already several of these bandits have been arrested, and the departmental adviser requests that you issue a decree whereby the criminal court of Niort judges this case as the last resort.\* It is the only way to bring peace back to this unfortunate region. We hope that you will not refuse us this request.

\*Judgment of last resort: the local court has final say. There can be no appeal, even for a death by guillotine conviction.

### Document Analysis

1. When was this letter written?
2. Who wrote the letter and to whom?
3. What is the purpose of the letter?
4. Is there any evidence in the document that helps you measure the size of the revolt? Explain.
5. How can you use the document to argue that the Reign of Terror was justified or not justified?

**Document E**

**Source:** Steven Ottinoski, *Triumph and Terror: The French Revolution*, 1993.

[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 National Convention 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 careless word of criticism spoken against the government could put one in prison or worse.

**Note:** At first, the Tribunal followed a formalized legal procedure, but that gradually broke down. The accused were denied lawyers. Conviction based on patriotic "intuition" rather than evidence was allowed. In Paris, while some members of the upper classes were acquitted, the Tribunal sentenced 2,750 to death. In the countryside, the slow tribunals were replaced with ruthless commissions that killed an estimated 35,000 to 40,000 people. Many of these people were guillotined.

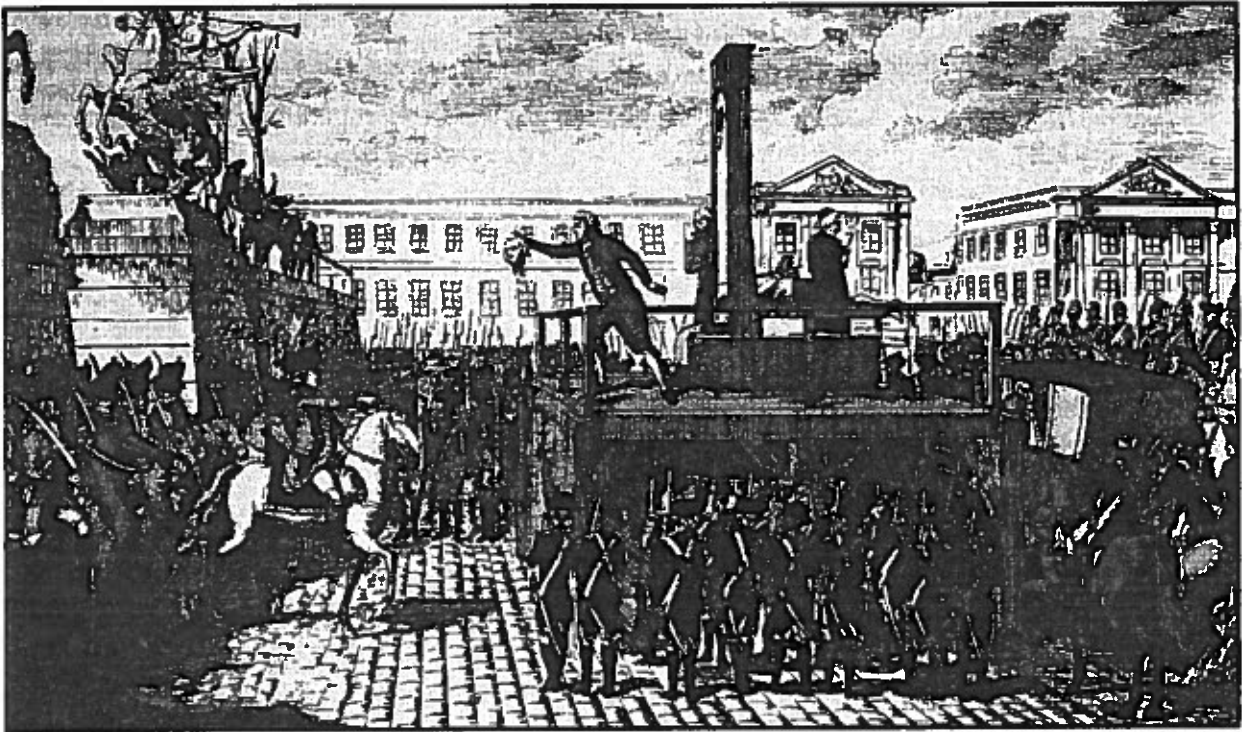
**Document Analysis**

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?

## Document F

**Source:** Death of King Louis XVI on 21st of January 1793. Engraving by Faucher-Gudin, 19th century.

**Note:** The guillotine became one of the powerful symbols of the French Revolution. Louis XVI, his wife Marie Antoinette, and even the key figure behind the Reign of Terror, Robespierre, all died by decapitation. The guillotine was regarded as a humane way to execute criminals. It had a sharp, angled blade, which dropped quickly on a guided track. Historians estimate that between 20,000 and 40,000 people were killed by the guillotine during the Reign of Terror. The public guillotining was memorable events. One observer who attended Louis's beheading wrote, "[The king's] blood flowed and cries of joy from eighty thousand armed men struck my ears . . . I saw people pass by arm in arm, laughing and chatting familiarly as if they were at a festival."



### Document Analysis

1. What was the date of this event?
2. Whose head is the executioner holding?
3. Where is the execution taking place?
4. Describe the crowd in attendance.
5. How could you use this document to argue that the Terror was justified or not justified?

## Document G

**Source:** Maximilien Robespierre, *Report on the Principles of Public Morality*, speech to the National Convention, February 5, 1794.

**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 architects of the Reign of Terror.

### Citizen-representatives of the people.

... In order to lay the foundations of democracy among us and to consolidate it, in order to arrive at the peaceful reign of constitutional law, we must finish the war of liberty against tyranny and safely cross through the storms of the revolution: that is the goal of the revolutionary system which you have put in order. You should therefore still base your conduct upon the stormy circumstances in which the republic finds itself....

Social protection is due only peaceful citizens; there are no citizens in the Republic but the republicans. The royalists, the conspirators are, in its eyes, only strangers or, rather, enemies.... Are not the enemies within the allies of those without?...

We must smother the internal and external enemies of the Republic or perish...

### 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?
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?