**Chapter 23: French Revolution and Napoleon**

1. France in the 1780s

* Preeminent power in Europe
* Home to 28 million people – making it the third largest country in the world
* Had colonies on five continents
* Cultural capital of the world
* French was the language of education around the world

1. France during the Old Regime

* **Old Regime –**
* **Estates –**

**First Estate**

* Roman Catholic Clergy (130,000)
* Less than 1% of the population
* Owned 10% of France’s land
* Paid no direct tax
* **“Free Gift”** –

**Second Estate**

* French Nobles (600,000)
* 2% of France’s population
* Owned 20% of France’s land
* Were exempt from paying most taxes
* Important government, military, & church positions were held by nobles

**Third Estate**

* Everybody else in France (27 million)
* 97% of France’s population
* 50% of their income went to pay taxes
* **Tithe –**
* No voice in government
* Were resentful of the privileges of the 1st and 2nd Estates

1. Economic Woes

* French government was nearly bankrupt when Louis XVI becomes king
* France’s involvement in the American Revolution (1775-1783) nearly doubled France’s nation debt
* French taxes were heavily increased as a result of the war
* France saw the Revolutionary War as an opportunity to restore its national pride (after its loss in the French and Indian War) and weaken the British

1. Bad Growing Years

* **1780s –**
* Caused the price of bread to double which increased starvation – Flour War
* 80% of a worker’s daily income was sent on bread

1. Weak Leadership

* **Louis XVI –**

* Wrong Person
* Wrong Position
* Wrong Time

**Marie Antoinette**

* French Queen does little to help her husband
* **Madame Deficit –**
* **1786 –**

1. Meeting of Estates-General

* Louis XVI hopes to avoid bankruptcy by taxing the church and nobles
* According to medieval tradition (1614) each estate was given one vote
* Thus, the 1st and 2nd Estates could always outvote the 3rd Estate
* The Third Estate demanded at each individual should be allowed to vote – One Man One Vote
* Louis XVI attempted to terminate the meetings
* **National Assembly –**
* Refuse to meet according to medieval tradition – Louis locked the usually meeting hall
* **Oath of the Tennis Court –**

1. Outbreak of War

* Louis orders the 1st and 2nd Estates to join the National Assembly
* Louis senses trouble and orders Swiss guard to Paris
* Rumors spread that Louis plans to attack France with a foreign army

**Revolution Begins**

* **July 14, 1789 –** Angry mob storms the Bastille (in search of gun powder) which marks the beginning of the French Revolution