Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen

Approved by the National Assembly of France, August 26, 1789

The representatives of the French people, organized as a National Assembly, believing that the ignorance, neglect, or contempt of the rights of man are the sole cause of public calamities and of the corruption of governments, have determined to set forth in a solemn declaration the natural, unalienable, and sacred rights of man, in order that this declaration, being constantly before all the members of the Social body, shall remind them continually of their rights and duties; in order that the acts of the legislative power, as well as those of the executive power, may be compared at any moment with the objects and purposes of all political institutions and may thus be more respected, and, lastly, in order that the grievances of the citizens, based hereafter upon simple and incontestable principles, shall tend to the maintenance of the constitution and redound to the happiness of all. Therefore the National Assembly recognizes and proclaims, in the presence and under the auspices of the Supreme Being, the following rights of man and of the citizen:

Articles:
1. Men are born and remain free and equal in rights. Social distinctions may be founded only upon the general good.
2. The aim of all political association is the preservation of the natural and imprescriptible rights of man. These rights are liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression.
3. The principle of all sovereignty resides essentially in the nation. No body nor individual may exercise any authority which does not proceed directly from the nation.
4. Liberty consists in the freedom to do everything which injures no one else; hence the exercise of the natural rights of each man has no limits except those which assure to the other members of the society the enjoyment of the same rights. These limits can only be determined by law.
5. Law can only prohibit such actions as are hurtful to society. Nothing may be prevented which is not forbidden by law, and no one may be forced to do anything not provided for by law.
6. Law is the expression of the general will. Every citizen has a right to participate personally, or through his representative, in its foundation. It must be the same for all, whether it protects or punishes. All citizens, being equal in the eyes of the law, are equally eligible to all dignities and to all public positions and occupations, according to their abilities, and without distinction except that of their virtues and talents.
7. No person shall be accused, arrested, or imprisoned except in the cases and according to the forms prescribed by law. Any one soliciting, transmitting, executing, or causing to be executed, any arbitrary order, shall be punished. But any citizen summoned or arrested in virtue of the law shall submit without delay, as resistance constitutes an offense.
8. The law shall provide for such punishments only as are strictly and obviously necessary, and no one shall suffer punishment except it be legally inflicted in virtue of a law passed and promulgated before the commission of the offense.
9. As all persons are held innocent until they shall have been declared guilty, if arrest shall be deemed indispensable, all harshness not essential to the securing of the prisoner's person shall be severely repressed by law.
10. No one shall be disquieted on account of his opinions, including his religious views, provided their manifestation does not disturb the public order established by law.

11. The free communication of ideas and opinions is one of the most precious of the rights of man. Every citizen may, accordingly, speak, write, and print with freedom, but shall be responsible for such abuses of this freedom as shall be defined by law.

12. The security of the rights of man and of the citizen requires public military forces. These forces are, therefore, established for the good of all and not for the personal advantage of those to whom they shall be intrusted.

13. A common contribution is essential for the maintenance of the public forces and for the cost of administration. This should be equitably distributed among all the citizens in proportion to their means.

14. All the citizens have a right to decide, either personally or by their representatives, as to the necessity of the public contribution; to grant this freely; to know to what uses it is put; and to fix the proportion, the mode of assessment and of collection and the duration of the taxes.

15. Society has the right to require of every public agent an account of his administration.

16. A society in which the observance of the law is not assured, nor the separation of powers defined, has no constitution at all.

17. Since property is an inviolable and sacred right, no one shall be deprived thereof except where public necessity, legally determined, shall clearly demand it, and then only on condition that the owner shall have been previously and equitably indemnified.

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1. List 3 of the most important rights listed: *(in your own words)*

2. Why do you think the French people in the 3rd Estate decided to write this declaration?
In 1799, Napoleon Bonaparte, a general in the French Revolutionary army, seized control of the faltering French republic to declare a Directory, with himself in charge. With this action, the French Revolution was effectively over, although Napoleon was himself a Revolutionary supporter, and was committed to at least some of the Revolution's earlier principles.

Napoleon was the child of minor, but poor, Corsican nobility — he always used his first name because it sounded more aristocratic than "Bonaparte." Of not particularly high social status, he got where he was by being a stand-out general during the French Revolutionary wars. Aided both by the French Revolution's more egalitarian standards and by the flight of much of the old aristocratic officer corps, he gained his first generalship at 25. He proved highly effective against the Austrians in Italy in 1796, although an attempted invasion of Egypt was a flop — it was an overreach; a mistake similar to the crucial one he would later make in Russia. Crushed by the British navy, he was forced to abandon much of his army to hurry back to the European front.

Napoleon returned from Egypt a military hero (the French public had heard only of the successes). With his prestige and ambition and the loyalty of the French troops, he was a natural leader for those plotting to overthrow the now-tottering republic. Napoleon's 1799 coup d'état (1) initially aimed to defeat pro-royalist forces in France, who were poised to make a comeback in the wake of France's military losses. Napoleon forced the directory to resign and took personal control of France. He established a new constitution (his first of several), with himself in complete control, and set out to make peace with France's military enemies. Achieving peace with Austria and Britain, he restored order at home by 1801, and in 1802 a plebiscite appointed him "dictator for life." Under his command, a general codification of the laws called the Napoleonic Code was passed, and in 1804, Napoleon declared himself emperor.

The Napoleonic Code is one of Napoleon's more enduring legacies (Louisiana is still under a modified version of it). It reformed various aspects of the old French law codes to provide more equality under the law and greater guarantees of basic rights, yet it was still conservative in some aspects, with an emphasis on maintaining families by giving fathers control over their children and husbands control over their wives. The Code also reinforced the French Revolution's legacy by ensuring religious toleration and the abolition of serfdom and the feudal codes.

Napoleon ruled as emperor from 1804-1814. Generally a popular ruler in France among all but the most embittered aristocrats, he ruled as an absolutist (freedom of the press was severely restricted) but succeeded in putting the country back on a stable financial footing and bringing practical reforms to the lives of the commoners, reforming the tax system, and setting up a nationwide education system. During this time, he also conquered most of Europe as the fighting renewed. In 1803, Great Britain, alarmed at Napoleon's rising power, declared war again, and she was soon joined by the other allies. While Britain proved a more formidable foe, Napoleon made short work of Austria, Prussia and Russia, defeating them in 1805-1807 to become the ruler of much of continental Europe; including Italy, Spain and parts of the German territories (Austria and Russia sought an alliance).
An excellent military strategist, Napoleon could put as many as 70,000 men under arms at any one time, and depended on mobility and quick decisive attacks to defeat the enemy. He organized his conquered parts of Europe into the French Empire, with a system of satellites states over which he stuck members of his family. However, Napoleon recognized true military supremacy couldn't come unless he defeated the British. Unable to defeat them militarily, in 1808 he tried to starve them out economically by a continental boycott of English goods, which he called the Continental System. Unfortunately for Napoleon, Britain had such significant non-European markets in the Americas, Asia and the Mediterranean by this time that France and the French-held territories were far more hurt by Napoleon's boycott then was England.

Napoleon's conquests had the effect of stimulating liberalism and nationalism in the areas he conquered, as he rewrote their constitutions and reorganized their governments, but generally these sentiments crystallized out of opposition to his rule. The conquered peoples of his satellite states grew restless under his leadership, which was clearly designed to benefit France rather than Europe. In 1808, a general rebellion began in Spain after Napoleon deposed the Bourbon Dynasty and tried to put his brother on the thrones of Spain and Portugal. This soon developed into a hard-fought guerilla campaign that tied up many of Napoleon's troops. In 1810, Russia withdrew from its alliance with France. It had been terribly hurt by the Continental System, as it depended on Britain as a market for its grain. Napoleon soon invaded Russia, in what would prove to be the worst military mistake of his career.

Napoleon expected to defeat the Russian forces quickly; he had huge military force of 600,000 men, far larger than anything the Russians could mobilize. The Russian army responded by retreating further and further, and burning their own countryside while they moved, so that it could not sustain the French forces. Once the French forces had been dragged deep into Russian territory, the huge Russian continent and the Russian winter did the rest. French supplies lines were stretched too thin, and army began to starve in the winter of 1812-1813. As in Egypt, Napoleon eventually abandoned his army, and hurried back to Paris to quell an internal revolt that was brewing. Of the 600,000 troops, only 50,000 ever made it back to France; the rest starved, froze or were captured on the long march back.

By this time, a powerful coalition of other European nations was gathering to defeat France, which met the French forces in the "Battle of Nations" in 1813. In 1814, the Allied army took Paris and Napoleon abdicated, going into exile on the Island of Elba.

The Congress of Vienna met to settle European affairs in 1814-1815. Arrangements were essentially made by four powers: Britain, Austria, Prussia, and Russia, although the talented and wily French ambassador, Talleyrand, got some influence for the defeated France by playing off the hostility between Russia and the other three. The victors agreed that no single state should dominate Europe, and the concept of a "balance of power" was born as the goal of European treaty-making for a century thereafter.

Goals of the Congress of Vienna:

- Return the borders of Europe to the way they were before the French Revolution
- Restore the original monarchies and restore generally conservative governments
- Repress the forces of radicalism and ethnic nationalism
- Arrange the powers so that no single state could dominate Europe

Proceedings were interrupted by the brief return of Napoleon, who had managed to escape from Elbe and made a short but triumphant return to Paris and bid for renewed power — the "Hundred Days." The coalition defeated him for the second and last time at Waterloo in 1815. This time the Allies placed him on the much more inaccessible island of St. Helena, where he died, possibly poisoned, in 1821.
The goal of the Congress of Vienna was something relatively new in European affairs — in contrast to the near-constant militarism of the 18th century, Europeans by the 19th century had had enough of war. The French Revolution had disrupted all of the European governments and caused a great deal of damage. The Bourbon monarchy was restored in France, and France’s borders were returned to their 1792 state. The Allies attempted to make a settlement which would preserve the peace, and set up a 20-year coalition to try to solve any problems arising out of treaty. They created a European peace which lasted, despite increasing tensions in the late 19th century, until 1914.

**LATIN AMERICAN REVOLUTIONS**

In the South American colonies of Spain and Portugal, revolutionary movements were sparked both by the example of American Revolution and more immediately by the chaos caused in Europe by the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars. The French wars disrupted the Spanish and Portuguese empires and greatly weakened both powers. Unlike American Revolution, the early 19th century Latin American revolutions were generally very limited in their goals, and their revolutions were conducted by small groups of elite Creole leaders who wanted merely to conduct their own affairs, but emphatically did not want a rearrangement of the social order. The exception to this rule was the revolution in Haiti, which was an entirely different kind of revolution. The Haitian revolt, which ended in 1804, was the largest and only successful slave revolt. It resulted in the largest freeing of slaves in the Atlantic world.

**Haitian Revolution**: The slave revolt was led by Toussaint L’Ouverture; and led to the island’s eventual independence from France. It inspired similar attempts at slave revolts in other slave-holding areas, including Virginia in 1820s and 1830s, which were brutally suppressed.

On the opposite end of the spectrum was the revolution in Brazil, the most conservative of the Latin American revolutions. Once the Portuguese monarch was deposed by Napoleon, he fled to the Portuguese possession of Brazil and set up his government there, making Brazil the new capital of the Portuguese empire. This actually made sense — Brazil by this time was a lot larger and more prosperous than Portugal itself. The heir to the Portuguese throne, placed on the Brazilian throne, eventually declared Brazil a sovereign state and made the rest of the court go back home, but Brazil remained a monarchy (the only one among the Latin American nations) until the late 19th century. An important factor in Brazil’s conservatism was their significant dependence on slavery; they wanted nothing to disrupt the institution their economic system was based on. Brazil remained remarkably resistant to anti-slavery forces, and was the last western country to abolish slavery, in 1888.

The Latin American rebellions liberated the Latin American countries from Spanish and Portuguese direct control, but the countries were too weak to stand alone economically. They became economically dependent on England and the U.S. as their major trading powers. Few social changes occurred as a result of the revolutions. The Creole elite landowners replaced colonial officials as the major governing group and ran the states almost entirely in their own interests.

**Paragraphs** — make sure to answer the following on a separate sheet of paper with multiple sentences.

1. Summarize Napoleon’s rule over France using at least 4 specific facts from the reading.
2. Explain 2 major effects of the Revolution and Napoleon’s rule on Europe as a whole, use at least 3 facts from the reading in your paragraph.
3. Explain what the Latin American Revolutions were and how Napoleon influenced these events.