

French revolution , Enlightenment

French revolution:

The **French Revolution** was a period of far-reaching social and political upheaval in France and its colonies beginning in 1789. Inspired by liberal and radical ideas, the Revolution made a profound impression on the course of modern history, triggering the global decline of absolute monarchies while replacing them with republics and liberal democracies. Through the Revolutionary Wars, it unleashed a wave of global conflicts that extended from the Caribbean to the Middle East. Historians widely regard the Revolution as one of the most important events in human history. The French Revolution is one of the most significant and famous events of world history. Lasting from 1789 to 1799, it resulted, among other things, in overthrowing the monarchy in France. There were various reasons which brought about the Revolution. These include intellectual reasons like the ideas put forward by the philosophers of the Age of Enlightenment; cultural reasons like the rise of the bourgeoisie class; political reasons like the ineffective leadership of French monarch Louis XVI; social reasons like the unjust Estates System; financial reasons like French involvement in expensive wars; and economic reasons like the rise in price of bread. Here are the 10 major causes of the French Revolution.

Causes of French revolution:

1. Social inequality in France due to the estate system

In the 1780s, the population of France was around 24 million and 700 thousand and it was divided into three estates. The First Estate was the Roman Catholic clergy, which numbered about 100,000. The Second Estate consisted of the French nobility, which numbered about 400,000. Everyone else in France; including merchants, lawyers, laborers and peasants; belonged to the Third Estate, which comprised around 98% of the French population. The Third Estate was excluded from positions of honor and political power; and was looked down upon by the other estates. It was thus angered and resented its position in French society. This led to them coming together to launch the French Revolution in 1789.

2. Tax burden on the third estate

The First Estate in France, or the clergy, owned 10% of the land though it comprised less than 0.5% of the population. It was very wealthy and paid no taxes. It had many privileges, including the collection of tithes. Tithes was one-tenth of annual produce or earnings taken as a tax for the support of the Church. The Second Estate, or the nobles, owned about 25% of the land. They were exempted from paying many taxes and were allowed to collect dues from peasants. In contrast, the Third Estate was forced to pay heavy taxes while the other two were exempted. This burdened the Third Estate leading to their questioning this unjust Estates System and planning to overthrow it.

3. The rise of the bourgeoisie

The bourgeoisie were the rich men and women of the Third Estate who started to become influential in the years leading to the revolution. They evolved into a new caste with its own agenda and political aspiration. The bourgeoisie resented the position of the First and the Second Estate, which they believed was derived from their efforts. Moreover, they aspired to attain political equality with the other two estates. The desire of the bourgeoisie to rid themselves of feudal and royal encroachments on their personal liberty, commercial prospects and ownership of property was one of the reasons which led to the French Revolution.

4. Ideas put forward by enlightenment philosophers

The Age of Enlightenment was an intellectual and philosophical movement that dominated the world of ideas in Europe during the 18th century. Enlightenment philosophers like John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Baron de Montesquieu questioned the traditional absolute authority of the monarch and divisions of society like the Estates System. For example, Locke argued that a leader may only govern a society if he had the consent of those he governed; Rousseau was against all class divisions; and Montesquieu advocated for a system of government based on separation of powers. The writings of Enlightenment thinkers were discussed in France more than anywhere else and they greatly influenced the revolutionaries.

5. Financial crises caused due to costly wars

Throughout the 18th century, France participated in a series of expensive wars primarily against its long-term rival Great Britain. Louis XV, who ruled over France from 1715 to 1774, lost the Seven Years' War against Britain. He then drew up a plan to avenge the loss by building a larger navy and an anti-British coalition of allies. However, this only resulted in a mountain of debt. Louis XVI, grandson of Louis XV who succeeded him in 1774, then involved France in the American War of Independence against Britain. Though U.S. won the war, France gained little from it. French support for the war was expensive costing 1.066 million French livres, a huge sum at the time.

6. Drastic weather and poor harvests in the preceding years

In June 1783, Laki volcano in Iceland erupted sending volcanic ash high into the atmosphere in Europe. This led to a severe winter in Europe in 1784 and the following summers included extreme droughts that caused poor harvests and famine. France then experienced another series of poor harvests in 1787 and 1788 with extreme winters. A decade of extreme weather conditions and poor harvests took a toll on the poor peasants of France, who were struggling to survive day to day. The frustration of the peasants angered them to revolt.

7. The rise in the cost bread

The situation in France worsened when poor harvests caused the price of flour to increase dramatically, which in turn raised the price of bread. Bread was the staple food for most French citizens and it has been estimated by historians that the working class of France was spending upwards of 90% of their daily income on just bread. Louis XVI implemented deregulation of the grain market but it resulted in further increasing the bread prices. The rise in the cost of bread severely affected the common French citizens who resented the monarch for his not being able to solve the food crisis.

8. Ineffective leadership of Louis XV and Louis XVI

In France, as in most other European nations, the monarch ruled on the basis of the divine right of kings. He was thus not answerable to his subjects. However, the philosophies of

Enlightenment thinkers made the public think differently. Louis XV failed to overcome the financial problems facing France. He was not able to harmonize the conflicting parties at court to arrive at coherent economic policies. Louis XVI then tried to bring about radical reforms but failed miserably. The poor economic condition of the nation angered the masses and they became critical of their king. Moreover, both Louis XV and his grandson were aware of anti-monarchist forces that were threatening their family's rule but they were unable to stop them.

9. Parliaments' successful opposition to reforms

Several French ministers, including Anne Robert Jacques Turgot and Jacques Necker, proposed revisions to the French tax system so as to include the nobles as taxpayers. This may have reduced the financial crisis in the nation and would have lessened the anger of the poor as the tax system would have become more just. A parliament in France was a provincial appellate court. They were not legislative bodies but consisted of appellate judges. The parliaments were the spearheads of the nobility's resistance to royal reforms and they prevented any reform in taxation which would include the nobility.

10. The extravagant lifestyle of the French monarchy

The extravagant expenditure on luxuries, first by Louis XV and then by Louis XVI, compounded the economic crisis facing the nation and was one of the primary reasons behind the revolution. For example, the construction and remodeling of the Palace of Versailles throughout the 17th and 18th centuries incurred a huge cost to the country. These large expenditures by the French monarchy caused dissatisfaction among the people who began to view its leaders as wasteful while they suffered due to the poor economic state of the nation. This in turn led to national unrest and ultimately the Revolution.

Enlightenment and French revolution

Enlightenment ideas and the success of the American Revolution fueled revolution in France in 1789. The French Revolution was quite different than the American Revolution both in cause and result. However, the French Revolution was similar in that it hailed the principles of

Enlightenment thinking. The bourgeoisie was a growing merchant/professional class in France. They were well educated and familiar with the writings of Locke, Montesquieu, and Rousseau. The bourgeoisie was also familiar with the British system of government that limited the King's power and the success of the Americans in rebelling against the British King that was based on Enlightenment ideas. It was the bourgeoisie, educated, yet without many privileges allotted to the First and Second Estate that began to question whether they could also change their social and political standing in France.

The Enlightenment and the French Revolution could be described as the most influential and significant historical events in Europe during the eighteenth century. The Enlightenment inspired people and the French Revolution encouraged people all over the world to fight for freedom and equality. During the Age of Enlightenment, people started to put emphasis on individualism and challenged the traditional beliefs held by the monarchies and the churches. As a result of this ideological movement, a large number of thinkers and philosophers emerged. The Enlightenment was significant especially in France and produced many famous thinkers who influenced the later society and inspired people to pursue freedom. Among all of the thinkers, Voltaire, Rousseau and Montesquieu were three preeminent figures, and many of their ideas illuminated the path to and were reflected by the French Revolution.

Both the Enlightenment and the French Revolution had far-reaching impacts on humanity and inspired people later to fight for “equality, fraternity and liberty”, which were the core concepts of both movements. The Enlightenment and French Revolution supplemented each other: the thinkers during the Enlightenment period guided the revolutionaries ideologically and spiritually while the revolutionaries brought the thinker’s concepts and ideas into practice.

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Inductive and deductive

Inductive

In research, inductive reasoning alludes to the logical process, in which specific instances or situations are observed or analysed to establish general principles. In this process, the multiple propositions are believed to provide strong evidence, for the truth of the conclusion. It is used to develop an understanding, on the basis of observing regularities, to ascertain how something works. These are uncertain arguments; that describes the extent to which the conclusions drawn on the basis of premises, are credible. In inductive reasoning, there are certain possibilities that the conclusion drawn can be false, even if the all the assumptions are true. The reasoning vests on experience and observations that support the apparent truth of the conclusion. Further, the argument can be strong or weak, as it only describes the likelihood of the inference, to be true.

Deductive

Deductive Reasoning means a form of logic in which specific inferences are drawn from multiple premises (general statements). It establishes the relationship between the proposition and conclusion. When all the proposed statements are true, then the rules of deduction are applied and the result obtained is inevitably true. Deductive logic is based on the fundamental law of reasoning, i.e. if X then Y. It implies the direct application of available information or facts, to come up with new information or facts. In this, the researcher takes into account a theory and generates a hypothesis, which can be tested, after that the observation are recorded, which leads to particular data, which is nothing but the confirmation of validity.

Key Differences Between Inductive and Deductive Reasoning

The points provided below, clarifies the difference between inductive and deductive reasoning in detail:

1. The argument in which the premises give reasons in support of the probable truth of the conjecture is inductive reasoning. The elementary form of valid reasoning, wherein the proposition provide the guarantee of the truth of conjecture, is deductive reasoning.

2. While inductive reasoning uses the bottom-up approach, deductive reasoning uses a top-down approach.
3. The initial point of inductive reasoning is the conclusion. On the other hand, deductive reasoning starts with premises.
4. The basis of inductive reasoning is behaviour or pattern. Conversely, deductive reasoning depends on facts and rules.
5. Inductive reasoning begins with a small observation, that determines the pattern and develops a theory by working on related issues and establish the hypothesis. In contrast, deductive reasoning begins with a general statement, i.e. theory which is turned to the hypothesis, and then some evidence or observations are examined to reach the final conclusion.
6. In inductive reasoning, the argument supporting the conclusion, may or may not be strong. On the contrary, in deductive reasoning, the argument can be proved valid or invalid.
7. Inductive reasoning moves from specific to general. Unlike, deductive reasoning moves from general to particular.
8. In inductive reasoning, the inferences drawn are probabilistic. As opposed, in deductive reasoning, the generalisation made are necessarily true, if the premises are correct.

Conclusion

To sum up, inductive and deductive reasoning are the two kinds of logic, which are used in the field of research to develop the hypothesis, so as to arrive at a conclusion, on the basis of information, which is believed to be true. Inductive reasoning considers events for making the generalization. In contrast, deductive reasoning takes general statements as a base to arrive at an particular conclusion.