

ANSWER KEY & MARKING SCHEME · CBSE CLASS 9**The French Revolution (History)**

Social Science · Chapter 1 · Use this with the Board Paper · Companion to Quick Drill

HOW TO USE

Attempt the Board Paper first (closed-book, full time). Then come here. For 2-mark+ questions, compare your answer to the model. For 3-4 mark questions, also consult the **Topper Templates** below — these show the exact step-by-step structure that scores full marks per CBSE marking-scheme conventions.

MODEL ANSWERS · BOARD PAPER**Section A — Very Short Answer (1 mark each, 4 Qs)****Q1. On what date was the Bastille stormed? [1 mark]****Ans:** 14 July 1789.**Q2. Name the direct tax paid by the Third Estate to the state. [1 mark]****Ans:** The taille.**Q3. Who wrote 'The Spirit of the Laws'? [1 mark]****Ans:** Montesquieu.**Q4. In which year did France become a republic? [1 mark]****Ans:** 1792 (the monarchy was abolished on 21 September 1792).**Section B — Short Answer I (2 marks each, 3 Qs)****Q5. What was a 'subsistence crisis'? Why did it occur in eighteenth-century France? [2 marks]****Ans:** A subsistence crisis is an extreme situation in which the basic means of livelihood are endangered. In France the population rose faster than grain production, so the price of bread (the staple food) kept rising; when a bad harvest struck, bread prices shot up and the poor could no longer afford to feed themselves.**Q6. How did the National Assembly come into being? [2 marks]****Ans:** When the Third Estate's demand for voting by head was refused at the Estates-General of May 1789, its representatives walked out and on 17 June 1789 declared themselves a National Assembly representing the whole nation; on 20 June they took the Tennis Court Oath, vowing to draft a constitution limiting the king's powers.**Q7. Why is the storming of the Bastille remembered as a turning point even though it held only seven prisoners? [2 marks]****Ans:** The Bastille was a hated symbol of the king's despotic power, so its fall on 14 July 1789 marked the collapse of royal authority and the people's open defiance of the monarchy. The crowd also seized arms and gunpowder stored there. Its importance was symbolic, not the number of prisoners freed.**Section C — Short Answer II (3 marks each, 3 Qs)****Q8. Describe the system of the three estates in eighteenth-century France. [3 marks]****Ans:** French society was divided into three estates. The First Estate was the clergy and the Second Estate the nobility — both held privileges by birth and were exempt from taxes; the nobles also collected feudal dues from peasants. The Third Estate contained everyone else — peasants, artisans, workers and the middle class — who did all the productive work AND paid all the taxes (the taille to the state, the tithe to the Church and feudal dues to nobles). The inequality between the privileged top two estates and the burdened Third Estate was the central social cause of the Revolution.**Q9. What was the importance of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen (1789)? [3 marks]****Ans:** Passed by the National Assembly in August 1789, the Declaration proclaimed natural and inalienable rights — the right to life, freedom of speech and opinion, and equality before the law — as belonging to every person by birth. It declared that authority now lay in the nation, not in the king, and ended privilege by

birth. It became a charter of human rights that inspired struggles for freedom across the world, though in practice its rights were at first extended only to men.

Q10. Describe the role of women in the French Revolution and explain who Olympe de Gouges was. [3 marks]

Ans: Women of the Third Estate worked hard for low wages and, hit by rising bread prices, marched to Versailles in October 1789 to confront the king. They started political clubs and newspapers, demanding the vote, the right to hold office and entry to all professions — but the Constitution of 1791 made them 'passive' citizens without the vote. Olympe de Gouges was the boldest campaigner: in 1791 she wrote the Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen demanding equal rights, and she was executed during the Reign of Terror in 1793.

Section D — Source-Based + Long Answer (5 + 6 = 11 marks)

Q11. Read the source and answer the sub-questions: 'In the eighteenth century, French society was divided into three estates. The members of the first two estates — the clergy and the nobility — enjoyed certain privileges by birth. The most important of these was exemption from paying taxes to the state. The Third Estate alone bore the burden of taxation, paying not only the taille to the state but also the tithe to the Church.' (a) Name the three estates mentioned or implied. (b) What was the most important privilege of the first two estates? (c) Name the two taxes the Third Estate had to pay. (d) Why did this arrangement create deep resentment? [5 marks]

Ans: (a) The First Estate (clergy), the Second Estate (nobility) and the Third Estate (peasants, artisans, workers and the middle class). (b) Exemption from paying taxes to the state — privilege held by birth. (c) The taille (a direct tax to the state) and the tithe (a religious tax of about one-tenth of produce, paid to the Church). (d) It was deeply resented because those who did all the productive work — the Third Estate — carried the entire tax burden, while those who held land and power by birth paid nothing; this unequal system made privilege depend on birth rather than effort, which became the central social cause of the Revolution. (v) One additional inference mark: the passage shows how social inequality of the Old Regime — the privileged First and Second Estates paying no taxes while the Third Estate bore the entire burden — created the resentment that fuelled the Revolution.

Q12. Explain the causes that led to the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789. [6 marks]

Ans: Several causes acted together. (1) SOCIAL: French society was split into three estates; the privileged clergy and nobility paid no taxes while the Third Estate bore the whole burden — an inequality based on birth. (2) ECONOMIC: the Third Estate paid the taille, the tithe and feudal dues, and at the same time a rising population, poor harvests and soaring bread prices produced a subsistence crisis in which the poor could barely eat. (3) POLITICAL / FINANCIAL: the state was bankrupt from costly wars, help to the American colonies and the lavish spending of the court at Versailles, forcing Louis XVI to summon the Estates-General in May 1789. (4) INTELLECTUAL: philosophers — Locke (against the divine right of kings), Rousseau ('The Social Contract') and Montesquieu ('The Spirit of the Laws') — spread ideas of liberty, equality and government by consent through books, salons and coffee-houses. A prosperous but unprivileged middle class, armed with these ideas, demanded change; when the king refused voting by head at the Estates-General, the Third Estate formed the National Assembly and the people stormed the Bastille on 14 July 1789, beginning the Revolution. A sixth developed point — the immediate trigger: Louis XVI's calling of the Estates-General (5 May 1789) over the financial crisis, and the Third Estate's resentment at voting by order rather than by head, precipitated the formation of the National Assembly and the storming of the Bastille on 14 July 1789.

★ **TOPPER TEMPLATE — 5-mark question: 'Explain the causes that led to the outbreak of the French Revolution.' OR 'Describe the conditions in French society before 1789.'**

Almost every term paper — the single most common long answer

Step 1 [1 mark]	Social cause — the three estates	Open with the structure of society: France was divided into three estates. The First (clergy) and Second (nobility) estates enjoyed privileges by birth and were exempt from taxes; the Third Estate — peasants, artisans, workers and the middle class — did all the work and paid all the taxes. State the inequality crisply.
Step 2 [1 mark]	Economic cause — taxes + subsistence crisis	The Third Estate alone paid the taille and other taxes, the tithe to the Church and feudal dues to nobles. Add the subsistence crisis: a rising population, bad harvests and soaring bread prices meant the poor could not afford bread. Name BOTH the tax burden and the food crisis.
Step 3 [1 mark]	Political / financial cause — an empty treasury	The state was bankrupt — long wars, the cost of helping the American colonies against Britain, and the lavish spending of the royal court at Versailles had drained the treasury. To raise money Louis XVI was forced to summon the Estates-General in 1789, which set events in motion.
Step 4 [1 mark]	Intellectual cause — the philosophers	Name the thinkers and their works: John Locke (against the divine right of kings), Jean-Jacques Rousseau ('The Social Contract' — government by the consent of the people) and Montesquieu ('The Spirit of the Laws' — division of power). Their ideas, spread through books, salons and coffee-houses, gave the middle class a new vocabulary of liberty and equality.
Step 5 [1 mark]	Conclusion — the trigger and the rising middle class	Conclude by linking causes to outbreak: a prosperous but unprivileged middle class, armed with these ideas, demanded change; the summoning of the Estates-General in May 1789 and the king's refusal of voting by head triggered the formation of the National Assembly and the storming of the Bastille on 14 July 1789.

COMMON LOSS OF MARKS:

- Listing only ONE cause (usually 'the philosophers') instead of social + economic + political + intellectual — caps the answer at 2 marks.
- Vague phrasing like 'the king was bad' instead of naming the specific tax (taille), the specific crisis (subsistence/bread) and the specific thinkers.
- No concluding sentence linking the causes to the actual outbreak in 1789.

★ **TOPPER TEMPLATE — 3-mark question: 'What was the significance / importance of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen?'**

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Step 1 [1 mark]	What it was + when	State the fact: in August 1789 the National Assembly passed the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen. It proclaimed natural and inalienable rights — the right to life, freedom of speech, freedom of opinion and equality before the law — as belonging to every human being by birth.
Step 2 [1 mark]	What it changed	Explain its effect: it declared that the source of all authority lay in the nation (the people), not in the king. It ended the system of privilege by birth and made all citizens equal before the law, striking at the foundations of the old order.
Step 3 [1 mark]	Its wider significance / limits	Assess it: the Declaration became a charter of human rights that inspired struggles for liberty across the world. But note its limit honestly — in practice these rights were extended to men; women and 'passive' citizens were excluded, which is why Olympe de Gouges demanded equal rights for women in 1791. This balanced point earns the third mark.

COMMON LOSS OF MARKS:

- Reciting only a list of rights without saying what the Declaration CHANGED (shifting authority from king to nation).
- Wrong year — it is 1789, not 1791 (the Constitution is 1791).
- Missing the honest limitation (rights in practice for men, not women) that shows higher-order understanding.

★ **TOPPER TEMPLATE — 4-mark source/extract-based question: a short passage on French society, the estates, or the Declaration, followed by 3 sub-questions.**

Annual in the case-study section

Step 1 [1 mark]	Read twice; underline the dated facts and named terms	On first read, underline every date, proper noun and term in the passage (e.g. 'Third Estate', '1789', 'taille'). The answers to sub-questions are almost always lifted directly from these underlined anchors. Do not write yet.
Step 2 [2 marks]	Answer each sub-question in 1-2 lines, quoting the passage	For a 'identify / state' sub-question, answer in one line straight from the text. For an 'explain' sub-question, add ONE line of your own chapter knowledge to the passage's fact — e.g. the passage says the Third Estate paid taxes; you add that the first two estates were exempt. Keep each answer tight; do not over-write.
Step 3 [1 mark]	The evaluate / 'in your view' sub-question	The last sub-question usually asks for your reasoning ('Why was this unfair?' / 'What did this lead to?'). Give a one-line judgement supported by a fact from the chapter — e.g. 'This inequality was the key social cause of the Revolution because it placed the whole tax burden on those who could least afford it.'

COMMON LOSS OF MARKS:

- Copying the whole passage instead of answering the specific sub-question asked.
- Ignoring the marks in brackets — writing a paragraph for a 1-mark 'identify' sub-question and one line for a 2-mark 'explain'.
- Skipping the evaluate sub-question or answering it with opinion alone, unsupported by a chapter fact.

MARKING SCHEME — GENERAL NOTES

- In History the correct YEAR/date is itself worth marks — an undated event in a dated question loses half a mark.
- The 5-mark causes answer must give at least FOUR distinct causes (social, economic, political, intellectual); fewer caps the score at 2-3 marks.
- For source-based sub-questions, award marks for answers drawn from BOTH the passage and chapter knowledge; pure copying of the passage without the asked-for point gets half marks.
- Naming the specific terms (taille, tithe, Estates-General, National Assembly) is rewarded; vague phrasing ('many taxes', 'an assembly') is not.
- Distinguishing 1791 (constitutional monarchy), 1792 (republic) and 1793 (execution of the king) correctly is required for full marks on any sequencing question.