

## Model United Nations Background Guide

### Historical Crisis Committee: The French Revolution

**Date:** July 14, 1789 – The Storming of the Bastille

**Committee Type:** Revolutionary Convention

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#### Committee Overview

Paris burns with revolution. The Bastille, long a symbol of royal tyranny, has just fallen to an armed and furious mob. King Louis XVI's regime teeters on the brink. In the streets, citizens shout for liberty; in salons and backrooms, plans are forming to reshape France itself.

This committee is a **gathering of revolutionary leaders**—radicals, moderates, thinkers, journalists, and agitators. Their goals: abolish feudal injustices, replace absolute monarchy, and craft a new system rooted in Enlightenment principles.

The road ahead is perilous. Factions are emerging, from constitutional moderates to uncompromising republicans. Foreign monarchies are watching. France's fate—monarchy, republic, or anarchy—rests in your hands.

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#### Major Issues for Debate

##### 1. The Fate of the Monarchy

- Should Louis XVI be kept under constitutional restraint, tried, or immediately deposed?
- Is reform from within possible, or is revolution the only path?

##### 2. The Economic Crisis and Redistribution of Wealth

- Bread prices soar; starvation is rampant.
- Delegates must propose revolutionary taxation, Church property seizure, or radical redistribution.

##### 3. Representation and Sovereignty

- Should power rest in the National Assembly, in a new Convention, or in the people directly?
- Who has the right to vote and participate in government?

#### 4. Peasant Revolt and the "Great Fear"

- Peasants across rural France are rising against nobles, burning manors and destroying feudal records.
- Should this violence be encouraged, organized, or curbed?

#### 5. Freedom of the Press and Political Propaganda

- Revolutionary ideas spread through pamphlets, newspapers, and speeches.
- Should all views be tolerated, or must counter-revolutionary voices be silenced?

#### 6. Religion and the Church

- The Catholic Church is wealthy, politically powerful, and closely aligned with the monarchy.
- Should the Church's property be nationalized? Should religion be separated from government?

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#### Character Roster: Revolutionary Delegates

##### 1. Maximilien Robespierre

*A rising figure in the Jacobin Club, known for his incorruptibility and dedication to Rousseau's ideals. Advocates for universal male suffrage, secular government, and the abolition of the monarchy.*

##### 2. Georges Danton

*A thunderous orator and leader among the Cordeliers Club. Charismatic, pragmatic, and populist—he supports bold, immediate action to win the masses.*

##### 3. Jean-Paul Marat

*A radical journalist whose inflammatory writings in L'Ami du Peuple call for revolutionary justice. Believes counter-revolutionaries must be rooted out with violence if necessary.*

##### 4. Camille Desmoulins

*Young lawyer and passionate pamphleteer who helped incite the storming of the Bastille. Seeks liberty, but increasingly torn between radicalism and compassion.*

##### 5. Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès (Abbé Sieyès)

*Clergyman and political thinker, author of What is the Third Estate? Believes power should rest with the people and supports a constitutional reordering of France.*

**6. Madame Jeanne Roland**

*A salonnière and political strategist among the Girondins. Influential behind the scenes and an advocate for republicanism, civic virtue, and women's moral authority.*

**7. Pierre Vergniaud**

*A brilliant orator of the Girondin faction. Seeks to preserve revolutionary ideals through legalism and national representation, but wary of mob violence.*

**8. Jacques Pierre Brissot**

*Leader of the Girondins, supports spreading the revolution beyond France's borders. Believes in liberal economics and civil liberties, but is cautious of extremism.*

**9. Philippe-François-Joseph Le Bas**

*A devoted Montagnard ally of Robespierre and Saint-Just. Advocates for discipline, national unity, and centralized revolutionary governance.*

**10. Louis Antoine de Saint-Just**

*Young and zealous Jacobin thinker known for his purity of ideals. Believes a virtuous republic must be born through revolutionary justice.*

**11. Jean-Baptiste Carrier**

*A fierce enforcer of revolutionary policies in the west of France. Known for ruthless suppression of counter-revolutionaries. A controversial and feared figure.*

**12. Antoine Barnave**

*A moderate revolutionary who initially supported constitutional monarchy. Believes in legal reform and compromise but remains loyal to Enlightenment ideals.*

**13. François-Noël "Gracchus" Babeuf**

*Proto-socialist and early advocate of radical economic equality. Sees private property as the root of inequality and supports agrarian redistribution.*

**14. Claire Lacombe**

*Actress turned revolutionary leader who founded the Society of Revolutionary Republican Women. Advocates for the inclusion of women in political life and revolutionary militancy.*

**15. Théroigne de Méricourt**

*A radical orator and activist known for her bold appearances at the Assembly. Demands equality and justice for women alongside full republican liberty.*

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## **Committee Objectives**

Delegates must:

- Debate and draft legislation.
- Respond to uprisings, assassinations, bread riots, and foreign threats in real time.
- Navigate ideological divisions between moderates (Girondins), radicals (Jacobins), and popular agitators (Cordeliers, Enragés).
- Determine the fate of France's monarchy, aristocracy, Church, and legal system.

**Note:** This is a crisis-style committee. New events will unfold rapidly. You will respond through communiqués, directives, and speeches. Coalitions will shift, and revolutions can eat their own.