



French Revolution Historical Simulation Background Guide

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

Committee Type: Revolutionary Convention

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.

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?

Character Roster: Revolutionary Delegates

1. Maximilien Robespierre – Jacobin leader and "The Incorruptible"

- Advocates for a republic based on virtue, universal male suffrage, and Rousseau's ideals
- Believes revolutionary justice is essential to safeguard liberty
- Opposes monarchy and supports the use of the Terror as a necessary tool

2. Georges Danton – Leader of the Cordeliers Club

- Charismatic populist who champions mass mobilization and swift action

- Supports a democratic republic but favors practical compromises
- Believes in rallying the people to defend the Revolution from its enemies

3. Jean-Paul Marat – Radical journalist and voice of the sans-culottes

- Uses *L'Ami du Peuple* to call for the purging of counter-revolutionaries
- Advocates for direct action and revolutionary violence
- Seen as a martyr by radicals after his assassination

4. Camille Desmoulins – Revolutionary orator and journalist

- Early instigator of the Revolution at the storming of the Bastille
- Advocates for liberty and press freedom, but opposes excesses of the Terror
- Torn between loyalty to Robespierre and growing disillusionment

5. Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès (Abbé Sieyès) – Political theorist and cleric

- Author of *What is the Third Estate?*, championing popular sovereignty
- Supports a constitutional republic and legal reform
- Skilled strategist with ambiguous loyalties during key transitions

6. Madame Jeanne Roland – Girondin salonnière and political advisor

- Influential strategist who supports civic virtue and republicanism
- Opposes the radicalization of the Revolution and Robespierre's rise
- Believes in women's moral authority but not full political participation

7. Pierre Vergniaud – Orator and Girondin statesman

- Defends legalism, moderation, and national representation
- Opposes violent populism and revolutionary tribunals
- Seeks to protect the Revolution from descending into tyranny

8. Jacques Pierre Brissot – Leader of the Girondins

- Supports spreading revolutionary ideals through war abroad
- Believes in economic liberalism and civil liberties
- Wary of Jacobin extremism and centralized power

9. Philippe-François-Joseph Le Bas – Montagnard and Robespierre ally

- Loyal supporter of the Jacobin vision of revolutionary virtue
- Advocates for centralized authority and military discipline
- Played a role in maintaining internal unity during the Terror

10. Louis Antoine de Saint-Just – Young Jacobin theorist and ideologue

- Believes in the moral purity of the Republic and revolutionary justice
- Architect of the Reign of Terror alongside Robespierre
- Sees violence as necessary to build a virtuous society

11. Jean-Baptiste Carrier – Jacobin enforcer in western France

- Known for brutal suppression of royalist uprisings in the Vendée
- Defends violent measures to crush counter-revolution
- Later disavowed by some Jacobins for excessive cruelty

12. Antoine Barnave – Moderate constitutional monarchist

- Supports Enlightenment-inspired legal reform and limited monarchy
- Advocates for reconciliation and gradual change
- Opposed the radical turn of the Revolution

13. François-Noël “Gracchus” Babeuf – Proto-socialist revolutionary

- Argues for economic equality and agrarian redistribution
- Sees private property as the root of social injustice
- Later plots the “Conspiracy of Equals” to continue radical revolution

14. Claire Lacombe – Militant feminist and leader of revolutionary women

- Co-founded the *Society of Revolutionary Republican Women*
- Demands equal participation in revolutionary politics and armed resistance
- Represents working-class women’s direct political action

15. Théroigne de Méricourt – Feminist orator and activist

- Demands full republican liberty and gender equality
- Known for her bold presence at revolutionary debates and clubs
- Targeted and silenced by anti-feminist backlash despite her influence

16. Jacques-René Hébert – Radical journalist and leader of the Hébertists

- Represents sans-culottes and working-class radicalism
- Promotes dechristianization and direct democracy
- Advocates for social equality and price controls

17. Antoine Quentin Fouquier-Tinville – Prosecutor of the Revolutionary Tribunal

- Chief enforcer of revolutionary justice during the Terror
- Justifies mass executions as necessary to preserve the Republic
- Later scapegoated after Robespierre’s fall

18. Olympe de Gouges – Feminist writer and political thinker

- Authored *Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen*
- Advocates for gender equality, abolition of slavery, and civic reform
- Executed for opposing the Jacobin regime and defending Girondin ideals

19. Jacques Roux – Radical priest and leader of the Enragés

- Demands economic justice, food rights, and wealth redistribution

- Represents the radical demands of the urban poor
- Criticizes both Girondins and Jacobins for failing the working class

20. Jean-Lambert Tallien – Former Jacobin turned Thermidorian

- Helped orchestrate the fall of Robespierre
- Supports revolutionary moderation and return to civil liberties
- Embodies shifting loyalties during revolutionary upheaval

21. Charlotte Corday – Assassin of Marat and Girondin sympathizer

- Believes Marat's violence endangered the Republic
- Acts out of conscience to prevent further bloodshed
- Becomes a controversial symbol of moral resistance

22. Jean-Baptiste Drouet – Revolutionary deputy and national hero

- Arrested Louis XVI during his attempted escape at Varennes
- Supports republicanism and vigilance against monarchy
- Embodies the Revolution's reach into everyday civic life

23. Jean-Nicolas Billaud-Varenne – Radical Jacobin and Committee of Public Safety member

- Advocates for centralization and relentless pursuit of enemies
- Helped expand the Terror alongside Robespierre and Saint-Just
- Exiled after Robespierre's downfall, seen as too extreme

24. Pauline Léon – Feminist militant and citizen activist

- Co-founded *Society of Revolutionary Republican Women*
- Called for an armed women's militia to defend the Revolution
- Demanded political and civic equality for women and the poor

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.