

## Revolution on Trial: French Revolution

Prosecution Group Member Names & Roles: Dan Pineapple, Cooper K, Makenna C, Carter C, Cole D.P. and Theryn S

- Cooper as Prosecution Lawyer 1
- Carter as Prosecution Lawyer 2
- Makenna as Prosecution Lawyer 3
- Cole as Prosecution Lawyer 4
- Theryn as Prosecution Lawyer 5
- Dana as Witness

- Zach as Defence Lawyer 1
- Clare as Defence Lawyer 2
- Ben as Defence Lawyer 3
- Brooke as Defence Lawyer
- Landon as Defence Lawyer 4
- Dylan as Witness

Defence Group Member Names & Roles: Zach V, Ben Y, Dylan S, Clare G-L, Landon G, and Brooke W

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Clerk: Order in court, all rise. The Honourable Judge X presides.

(Judge enters and takes seat)

Clerk: We would like to respectfully acknowledge that this court resides on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the Coast Salish peoples. Specifically, the Squamish, Musqueam and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations. We respect the land and honour this tradition of land acknowledgment that dates back centuries for Indigenous people. With this acknowledgment, and as we come together to determine the effectiveness of this revolution, we thank those Indigenous people who still live on and care for these lands. You may be seated.

Judge: Are defence and prosecution ready to proceed?

Prosecution lawyer 1: We are, your honour. My name is Carter Chong

-Defence: We are, your honour. My name is Zachary Veitch.

Judge: Will the Court Clerk please read the information?

Clerk: The French Revolution is being charged with being ineffectiveness in creating a fair and functional society. As established by the PLP 9 court, an effective revolution contains six criteria. It must include the reformation of political systems aligning with the voice of the people, an increase of rights and freedoms for the people, a removal of a dictator with sweeping power, the achievement of financial stability, an improvement in standard of living, and the removal of internal conflict.

Judge: The prosecution may now make an opening statements if they desire.

Lawyer 2 prosecution:

Your Honour, we are here on behalf of the French Revolution to tell you how ineffective it was and how many lives were lost during one of the most bloody and brutal events in history. I bring forth today a witness who was there during this time of crisis. We bring her up to ask her about her experiences and what life was like during these trying times. During the revolution, thousands of lives were lost to the guillotine, as well as many due to starvation and poor living conditions. All of these inhumane actions occurred during the rule and under the command of the Radical Revolutionaries and all of these acts were witnessed by Helen Maria Williams. We will be presenting evidence from letters written by Ms. Williams as well as headlines from the London Gazette, and some modern textbooks that accurately captured these historic events.

Judge: The defence may now make an opening statement if they desire.

Lawyer 1 defence: Thank you your honour. The prosecution will argue that the French Revolution was in fact not effective. Their arguments are wrong. We as the defence think that one, if not the most, important part of an effective revolution is getting rid of the dictator or unfit ruler. In executing King Louis the XVI, we did that. King Louis was an unfit ruler because he was spending France's taxes not only on himself but he was also funding the American revolution. At the same time, he wasn't doing anything to help all the social and economic issues going on in his country. France's citizens were living with poverty and famine while King Louis and his wife Marie Antoinette were living in luxury and partying every night. The French Revolution removed the corrupt King Louis the 16th from power. If this isn't reason enough to prove that the French Revolution was successful, what is?

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Judge: The prosecution may now call their first witness.

Lawyer 2 Prosecution: The prosecution calls Helen Maria Williams to the stand.

Court Clerk: Take the PLP 9 norms in your right hand. Raise your left hand. Do you affirm that the evidence you shall give shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?  
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Prosecution Witness: I do.

Court Clerk: Please state name and spell your last name for the record.

Prosecution Witness: Helen Maria Williamse

Prosecution Lawyer 3 and 4:

Prosecution Lawyer 3: Hello my names Makenna Crawford and this is my co-council Cole Douglas-Pluff.

1. Q: In your first letter to a friend in England, what did you mean by "by recalling the images of that consternation and horror which prevailed **IN** Paris on the 13th of July" ?
2. A: When I wrote that, I was thinking about the horrors that were occurring before the storming of the Bastille. People were so riled up and angry. The crowd was surging with rage and were ready to attack and kill anyone that stood in their way. And that's exactly what they did. All of the guards at the Bastille, as it was a political prison at the time were slaughtered on spot as if their lives were expendable. A particularly sad moment was when

Governor de Launay was butchered and his head marched around on a pike. It was truly a horror to witness

3. Q: In your twenty sixth letter to your friend in England, you say “every town is the scene of a massacre, every street is blackened with a gallows, and every highway deluged with blood”. **To you**, what does this mean?
4. A: In that letter, I was talking about how many people were massacred. During that time, anyone who spoke ill of the revolution or people who were anti-revolutionaries were put on what I would call a very unfair trial. If they were found guilty, which they always were, they were sentenced to death by guillotine. Their blood flooded the streets and their cries could be heard all over the city of Paris.
5. **Do u think the bloodshed during the French Revolution was worth the outcome**
6. A: While I support the ideals that the French Revolution was based upon, I don’t think that the amount of bloodshed during the Revolution was worth the lacklustre outcome. 40,000 people lost their lives to various causes, and all the French people were left with was a unfit leader who led them into even more wars where they were killed.
7. Q: **Would you agree that the destruction of the bastille was quite scary and devastating to the ones who lost their lives?**
8. A: I think that the destruction of the bastille definitely **made** the French people realize how brutal their government could be when their power was threatened. I also think that the people reacted a little extremely to the situation and I don’t think that parading Governor de Launay’s head on a pike was necessary.
9. Q: **In your opinion, would you say the French Revolution, overall was effective or ineffective and Why?**
10. A: I would say overall the French Revolution was ineffective. So many people were killed. One absolute leader was replaced with another one. Napoleon, who was the new ruler, led France to lose even more money and power through more wars. While the revolution did give some groups more rights, ultimately almost everything after was the same.

### No further questions

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☞ Judge: Does the Defence wish to cross-examine the witness?

Defence Lawyer 2: Yes, your honour

My name is Clare Grafton-Levitt and I’ll be cross examining the witness

1. Q: Can you describe what the lives of the lower classes were like while King Louis 16 was ruler over France?
2. A: I would say that the third estate lived in poverty. They didn’t have enough food and were not treated with the same respect as others
3. Q: Why did the women march to Versailles [ver-si]? What did they want?

4. A: Maybe they were angry with the king and queen. They didn't have enough bread and enough food. Perhaps this is what caused it?
5. Q: You say in your letter that the storming of the bastille was horrifying because of the blood shed during the Reign of Terror, but the first people to fire were the people protecting the bastille. How did they know we meant any harm? Do you really think that was a very necessary reaction?
6. A: Well, maybe that's true however they were trying to protect the goods that were inside. There were guns and ammunition for an army! And I'm sure they knew if the wrong people got inside, it could be misused which is why they shot first, trying to protect the nation from a horrific battle.
7. Q: Do you think that you could accurately describe the emotions felt around the events that were taking place at this time in the revolution?
8. A: I think that the horrifying events during this point in time led the French people to feel many emotions. These emotions include anger, hopelessness, and terror. I think that these events made the people feel as though their country was falling apart.
9. Q: Do you believe that every one deserves to be equal? Then don't you believe a fight for equality was necessary at the time?
10. A: I believe in and that equality is very important. However, I feel like there could have been a less escalated way to go about it. As in not slaughtering over 17,000 people.

No further questions.

You may be dismissed.

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Judge: The defence may now call their first witness.

Lawyer 3 Defence: The defence calls Maximilian Robespierre to the stand.

Court Clerk: Take the PLP 9 norms in your right hand. Raise your left hand. Do you affirm that the evidence you shall give shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

Defence Witness: I do.

Court Clerk: Please state name and spell your last name for the record.

Defence Witness: Maximilien Robespierre

Defence Lawyer 3:

- Is it true you were a part of the writing process for the first draft of the right of man?

- Yes, I was.

- Could you please tell us how many rights the third estate had before the revolution happened?

- Absolutely none.

- Could you please read for us the first article of the rights of man?
- The first article in The Rights of Man is: (quote) “Human beings are born and remain free and equal in rights. Social distinctions can be founded only on the common good.” (End quote)
- Is it true that you helped stage one of the most important and famous revolutions in history?
- Yes, I did. With, of course, the help of the Jacobin Club.
- Please tell us what King Louis the 16th was like?
- King Lois the 16th was immature and lacked motivation. He was an unfit and corrupt ruler and was making France a worse place. The only option was to get rid of him and the rest of the unfair monarchy.
- Is it true that the 3rd estate made up 96% of the population and payed the majority of the taxes wile the second and first estate, the ones that make all the money, payed little to none?
- Yes. I, as someone who was part of the third estate, can confirm that we were forced to pay extreme and unfair amounts of taxes while the more wealthy parts of the population payed taxes that barely affected them whatsoever.

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Judge: Does the Prosecution wish to cross-examine?

My name is Cooper King and I'll be cross examining the defences witness

Prosecution Lawyer 1: Yes, your honour

1. Q: What lead you to believe that leading the Reign of Terror was an effective way for democracy?
2. A: It was our way of eliminating the people delaying the effectiveness of our revolution.
3. Q: Do you have any proof that the the people you killed(17,000) were actually delaying the revolution?
4. A: Actually, approximately half the people who were sent to the trials in Paris were found not guilty and were not executed. Everyone who was accused had a fair trial.
5. Q: Was killing over 17,000 people to reach the goal of the revolution effective?
6. A: Yes, after the execution of King Louis there were a lot of people against the revolution and we wanted to keep going towards our goal of everyone being equal.
7. Q: what does being equal have to do with killing 17,000 people?
8. A. We needed the citizens of France to have a collective vision for the revolution if we were ever to be successful in changing the status quo.
9. So you just killed the people who didn't share your same vision for the revolution?
10. We have already addressed that.

11. Q: Why did you feel the need to silence others with ideas unlike your own?
12. A: At the time, my main focus was getting the revolution to a place where it could be successful and effective. There needed to be a clear consensus to the order of the revolution and I did not want there to be confusion amongst my fellow revolutionaries.
13. Q: So are you saying that you never considered any other point of view or any other ways to lead the revolution
14. A: The Reign of Terror was not the only way the revolution was fought. It was just part of it. We also led the revolution in other ways. For example, we created the National Assembly and the Declaration of the Rights of Man.
15. Q: Was putting people on un-fair trials and sentencing them to death furthering the ideals that the revolution was built upon?
16. A: It was used to reinforce citizens' commitment to the revolution.
17. Q: Why did you feel the need to go to war with Europe when your own country was not stable in both economics and food?
18. A: We thought that if we won the wars we would gain the resources from the other nations.
19. Q: But you did not have enough resources to successfully win your wars, and you knew that. So why did you think it was a good idea?
20. A: We thought Napoleon was competent enough to lead us through the battle.

Prosecution lawyer 1: No further questions your honour. You may be dismissed

21. \_\_\_\_\_  
Judge: prosecution Council, are you prepared to make your Closing statement to the Jury?

Prosecution Lawyer 5: Yes, your honour. People of the jury, the point of an effective revolution as stated by the court clerk is political stability, achievement of financial stability, and the removal of internal conflict. These key ideas were not presented in the defence's statement, as after the revolution had happened, war still occurred, and the people still suffered under the reign Napoleon Bonaparte. I hope that everyone listening in today does not support the tragedies that occurred during this time period. I hope everyone listening in can see that this revolution did not meet all of the required criteria for an effective revolution. So no, I do not believe that the French Revolution was effective at all. I rest my case.

Judge: Thank you. Defence, please proceed with your closing statement.

My name is Landon Gonzalez and I'll be saying the closing statements

Defence Lawyer 4: Yes, your honour. With all of the evidence presented today, we hope you find the French Revolution not guilty to represent that the revolution was in fact effective. We successfully dismantled the last monarchy, an act which the PLP 9 court has decided to be an important marker of an effective revolution. Feudalism in France was also abolished, with the nobility no longer owning the land that the lower classes lived and worked on. The power of the Catholic Church was greatly reduced, the church land now belonging to the nation. Monarchy

could now be held accountable by parliament for their actions and crimes because of the eradication of the Divine Right of Kings. The French Revolution united the people of France both during the time of the revolution and in present day. The writings of Jean-Paul Marat in "The Friend of The People" gave citizens of France a collective voice, where they could find hope and strength in the power of their revolution. In turn creating a society with political reform aligning with the voice of the people, yet another successful completion of the criteria for an effective revolution. So yes, I believe that the French Revolution was effective in many ways. I rest my case.

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Judge: It is now my turn to charge the Jury. Members of the Jury please consider all evidence that has been presented. Please offer a verdict of GUILTY to represent the revolution was ineffective, or NOT GUILTY to represent the revolution was effective. May I now remind you of the six criteria of an effective revolution established by the PLP 9 court.

A revolution to be effective must include the reformation political systems aligning with the voice of the people, an increase of rights and freedoms for the people, a removal of a dictator with sweeping power, the achievement of financial stability, an improvement in standard of living, and the removal of internal conflict.

You will now have 2 minutes to decide. Please indicate your decision has been made by holding up your verdict ballot. The court clerk will be present to answer any questions. Your 2 minutes starts now.

Judge: Court Clerk, have the Members of the Jury reached a verdict?

Court Clerk: They have, your honour.

Judge: What is your verdict?

Court Clerk: On behalf of the jury, we find the accused revolution "Guilty / Not Guilty"

Judge: Thank you for your participation in our trial this audience. Case closed. The jury may be dismissed.

(Audience claps, Greeters turn on house lights and lead jury members to the door, revolution in Green Room gets set up, Greeters swap)

