

A.

### The Declaration of the Rights of Man.

The National Assembly passed a law on 4<sup>th</sup> August 1789 which abolished all feudal privileges and unjust taxation. There were to be no more church tithes, no feudal dues and no more private companies keeping part of the taxation. Between the 12 – 26 August, the Assembly issued the 'Declaration of the Rights of Man' (see source D) However, there was nothing in the declaration about the rights of women, the position of slaves in France and the French Empire (some people, such as left winger, Robespierre campaigned for the abolition of slavery but were rejected by the Assembly.) There was also nothing in the declaration about who would impose these new laws. (Today, we have the United Nations or the European Court) By September 1789, the Assembly, with the King's approval appointed new middle class officials, elected by the people, to take charge of local government. They were called intendants, and they replaced the former agents of the King.

B.

### The New Constitution 1789 – 1791.

Over the next two years, the members of the Three Estates, as the Assembly worked together to hammer out a new constitution for France. (see source E.) The main features of this New Constitution were:

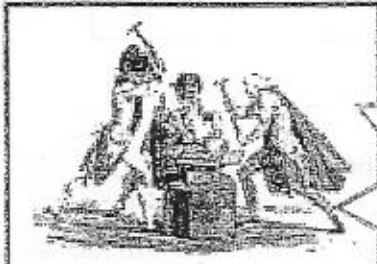
- The Assembly was to be elected every two years, by men who paid a certain level of taxation. About two thirds of the male population gained the vote, they were called 'active citizens'.
- The King was to be called 'King of French', not 'King of France'.
- The King could delay the passing of a law for three years.
- 83 new departments were created to become centres for local government.
- Judges, deputies (MPs), tax-collectors and priests were to be elected by 'active citizens'.
- A new taxation system, based on income, and a new currency, the assignat, was created.
- Church lands were nationalized. Income from their sale would pay off government debt.
- The Church tax (tithe) was abolished.
- Marriages (previously, they only took place in a church) had to be celebrated as civil ceremonies in front of state officials.
- Divorce was introduced.
- Priests had to take an oath of loyalty to the state; some saw this as an attack on the power of the bishops and on the Pope.

### Source D. THE DECLARATION OF THE RIGHTS OF MAN (extract)

Men are born equal and remain free and equal in rights which are liberty, property, security and resistance to oppression. Liberty is being able to do whatever does not harm others.

The law should express the will of the people. All citizens have a right to take part personally, or through their representatives, in the making of the law. Every citizen can talk, write and publish freely, unless the liberty is abused in a way which breaks the law.

August 1789



Source E A Cartoon published in 1789. The members of the three estates working together to hammer out a new constitution for France.

Answer!  
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