

CHAPTER 18
SECTION 2

Section Summary
THE FRENCH REVOLUTION UNFOLDS

READING CHECK

Who were the sans-culottes?

VOCABULARY STRATEGY

What do you think the word *proclaimed* means in the underlined sentence? The words *proclamation*, *declaration*, and *announcement* are all synonyms for *proclaimed*. Use what you know about these synonyms to figure out the meaning of *proclaimed*.

READING SKILL

Identify Supporting Details
 Identify two aspects of the Constitution of 1791 that reflect Enlightenment goals.

In France, the political crisis of 1789 coincided with a terrible famine. Peasants were starving and unemployed. In such desperate times, rumors ran wild. Inflamed by famine and fear, peasants unleashed their fury on the nobles. Meanwhile, a variety of **factions** in Paris competed to gain power. Moderates looked to the **Marquis de Lafayette** for leadership. However, a more radical group, the Paris Commune, replaced the city’s royalist government.

The storming of the Bastille and the peasant uprisings pushed the National Assembly into action. In late August, the Assembly issued the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen. It proclaimed that all male citizens were equal before the law. Upset that women did not have equal rights, journalist **Olympe de Gouges** wrote a declaration that provided for this. The Assembly did not adopt it, however. Nor was King Louis XVI willing to accept reforms. Much anger was directed at the queen, **Marie Antoinette**, who lived a life of great extravagance.

The National Assembly produced the Constitution of 1791. This document reflected Enlightenment goals, set up a limited monarchy, ensured equality before the law for all male citizens, and ended Church interference in government.

Events in France stirred debate all over Europe. Some applauded the reforms of the National Assembly. Rulers of other nations, however, denounced the French Revolution. Horror stories were told by **émigrés** who had fled France. Rulers of neighboring monarchies increased border patrols to stop the spread of the “French plague” of revolution.

In October 1791, the newly elected Legislative Assembly took office, but falling currency values, rising prices, and food shortages renewed turmoil. Working-class men and women, called **sans-culottes**, pushed the revolution in a more radical direction, and demanded a **republic**. The sans-culottes found support among other radicals, especially the **Jacobins**. The radicals soon held the upper hand in the Legislative Assembly. Eager to spread the revolution, they declared war against Austria and other European monarchies.

Review Questions

1. What was the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen? Why were some people dissatisfied with it?

2. How did rulers of European monarchies react to the French Revolution?

