

# Example of essay on american revolution compared to french revolution

[Countries](#), [England](#)



## **Introduction**

American Revolution began in 1775 with the battle of Lexington and French revolution started 14 years after in 1789 when the revolutionaries attacked the Bastille prison. The two revolutions happened within almost same historical timeframe but in two different continents and an ocean apart. There are some similarities as well as differences the two revolutions shared in terms of causes and outcomes. It is very easy to find the commonalities between the two revolutions. Both the nations were revolting against a monarchy, both happening almost at the same time and both trying to create an environment for people which would manifest democracy and patriotism. However, if we dig a little deeper then we will be able to see the distinct features and causes of the revolutions which were not as closely similar as we believed them to be. French and American Revolution although occurred in similar time frame but was caused by different socio-political actions and the outcome was also different.

## **Causes**

British Empire was dependent on the colonies for money. Under British regime the colonies were taxed heavily but colonies never opposed the taxation itself, rather they started questioning the basis of taxation. There were no representation of the colonies in Britain and taxes were raised without even consulting the colonies. This baseless taxation burden and lack of representation fuelled the American Revolution. It started as a political battle to detach itself from the monarchy.

On the other hand, in France the common people were suffering from an

extreme poverty for decades which ultimately resulted in the revolution. The country was not doing well as a nation and it was unable to pay its debts. King Louis XVI imposed the whole burden of national debt to the common mass by levying heavy burden of taxes on them. The Nobles in the French court were not obliged to pay taxes to the king. This way the king created a huge social discrepancy between the two classes. This social divide ultimately led to the uprising in France.

France was a nation which was under monarchy for centuries and people were accustomed to monarchy. Taxation also was not a new thing for the French people. However, during the 18th century, France went so deep in debt that it was unable to pay its due. So the easiest way for the king to raise money for the debt was to increase taxes. Even raising taxes was also not an uncommon thing in the 18th century France. The problem surfaced when the wealthy and influential people in the French court also known as Nobles were exempted from paying taxes. Those people were already rich and getting richer whereas the plebeians were getting poorer and poorer. This caused a huge dissatisfaction among the plebeians. Even this dissatisfaction alone didn't trigger the revolution. Around the same time philosophers like Rousseau started talking about class equality and his theory gained huge momentum across the different nations in Europe inspiring the oppressed and poor class of France. This thought of equality ultimately sparked the revolution. First, they demanded their representation in the court and when one of the representatives was barred from the court by the King, the actual revolution started.

Unlike France where the revolutionaries were oppressed and dominated by

the King and the Noble class, America was a British colony and had the independence of working in its own way if they were paying taxes to the British Empire. The only mistake British Empire did was that colonies were not represented in the British court. Several acts like sugar act, currency act, and stamp act were passed and were forced upon American colonies without even consulting them. These factors slowly built the impatience within the colonies. Finally when the new taxation and Tea Act came into picture, the revolution broke out at Boston Harbor in 1775.

The American Revolution started more as a political revolution whereas the French revolution was triggered by social causes. America was in a state of peace and prosperity before the revolution took place whereas France was on the verge of financial collapse.

## **Outcomes**

The American Revolution started at Boston harbor through a protest against the Tea Act. It triggered a long drawn war with England which ended after 8 years with the Treaty of Paris in 1783. As per the treaty, the American colonies got independence from the British Empire and United States of America was born. American colonies were independent bodies in its operation and apart from paying taxes to the empire considered themselves as respectable citizens of England. They were well aware of their rights. The goal was very clear from the very beginning and as a common cause all colonies came together naturally to revolt against the empire. The revolution not being excessively emotionally charged was conducted in a very methodical way and as a result the great nation of the Unites States was

born. The forefathers of revolution were people who were intellectuals and visionaries and they guided the emotion of the people in such a way that the result from the revolution was a positive outcome.

French revolution started in 1789 when the common people attacked and took over the Bastille prison. It triggered a decade long internal war, reign of terror and then back to a rule which was not very different from the monarchy. The revolution started as a mass uprising and unfortunately for France no clear leader with a great vision emerged in that process. The early leaders who reigned France immediately after revolution were emotional tyrants. Their reign also known as reign of terror created more massacre and chaos in France than it was prior to the revolution. Finally when Napoleon took over the French leadership, the country saw some stability for few decades. During his time France saw some real military success but his tenure ended with France losing against the European alliance force very poorly. Napoleon did not help France to recover much from the aftermaths of revolution and it took decades for France to recover after his death. One good thing that happened during the reign of Napoleon or as an after effect of revolution was that the Patrician and Plebian class difference was abolished. Nobles were no longer treated differently from the common men.

## **Conclusion**

Although American and French Revolution both happened at the same time and according to many French revolution was inspired by American war of independence but they were different in their basic character. Political causes drove the American Revolution whereas social causes drove the

French Revolution. The outcome was also very different. Although the Declaration of man and of the Citizen in France in 1789 was inspired by the US Bill of rights but that was probably the only similarity in outcome of the two revolutions. American Revolution saw a new nation emerge as a world power in coming decades and centuries. French revolution saw reign of terror, huge bloodshed and then a military leadership which diluted the actual purpose of the revolution.

## **Reference**

- Global Revolution: America and France ( 2006, 09), Pbs. org , retrieved on 23rd April, 2013 from [http://www.pbs.org/marieantoinette/revolution/america\\_france.html](http://www.pbs.org/marieantoinette/revolution/america_france.html)