

# [What century, king louis xiv’s wars began](https://assignbuster.com/what-century-king-louis-xivs-wars-began/)

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What were the causes and the effects of the French Revolution? The major cause of the FrenchRevolution was the disputes between the different types of social classes in French society. TheFrench Revolution of 1789-1799 was one of the most important events in the history of theworld.

The Revolution led to many changes in France, which at the time of the Revolution, wasthe most powerful state in Europe. The Revolution led to the development of new political forces such as democracy and nationalism. It questioned the authority of kings, priests, and nobles. TheRevolution also gave new meanings and new ideas to the political ideas of the people. The French Revolution was spread over the ten year period between 1789 and 1799.

Theprimary cause of the revolution was the disputes over the peoples’ differing ideas of reform. Before the beginning of the Revolution, only moderate reforms were wanted by the people. Anexample of why they wanted this was because of king Louis XIV’s actions. At the end of theseventeenth century, King Louis XIV’s wars began decreasing the royal finances dramatically. This worsened during the eighteenth century. The use of the money by Louis XIV angered thepeople and they wanted a new system of government.

Thewritings of the philosophes such asVoltaire and Diderot, were critical of the government. They said that not one official in power was corrupt, but that the whole system of government needed some change. Eventually, when theroyal finances were expended in the 1780’s, there began a time of greater criticism. This sparkedthe peasants notion of wanting change. Under the Old Regime in France, the king was the absolute monarch. Louis XIV hadcentralized power in the royal bureaucracy, the government departments which administered hispolicies. Together, Louis XIV and the bureaucracy worked to preserve royal authority and to maintain the social structure of the Old Regime.

At this time in French history, the social classes played an important role in the lives of thepeople. The social structure ofFrance was divided among three groups: the First Estate, theSecond Estate, and the Third Estate. Each social group had a varied type of people within theirstructure, which presented the different views of the people. The First Estate was the Church.

During the ancien regime, the church was equal in termsof its social, economic, and spiritualpower. The First Estate owned nearly 10 per cent of all landin France. It paid no taxes but, to support church activities such asschool running and caring forthe poor, they collected a tithe, or a tax on income.

About one-third of the entire clergy in Franceserved as parish priests. Also included in this estate were the nobles. Some of the nobles lived inluxury in major cities in France, such as Versailles or Paris. Parish priests usually lived ahardworking life. This Estate was the minority of the people in France, having approximately 1 to2 per cent of the population. The Second Estate in French life was the nobility. They enjoyed extensive rights andprivileges. They made up less than 2 percent of the population.

They, like the First Estate, paidhardly any taxes. Economically, the nobility was characterized by great land wealth. Nobles weregenerally the richest members of the society.

Typical sources of income were rents and dues forthe use of their farms or estates. The First and Second Estates were grouped together because they had similar political beliefs. The Third Estate consisted of the commoners. It included the bourgeoisie, peasants andcity workers.

The bourgeoisie, or themiddle class, were by far, the wealthiest. In the bourgeoisie, there were the merchants and manufacturers, lawyers, doctors and others similar to those types ofprofessions. Peasants made up the largest group within the Third Estate. They were forced to payhefty taxes, tithes to the church, and rents to their landlords for the land that they lived on. Thelast group within the Third Estate were the city workers. They were servants, apprentices, andhousehold maids.

The major cause of the Revolution were the differences these three groups had. However, there was another important factor during these times. France suffered from harsh economicproblems. Poor farm harvests by farmers hurt the economy, and trade rules from the Middle Ages still survived, making trade difficult. However, the most serious problem was the problemfacing the government during this time.

The French