

American vs french revolution

[History](#), [American History](#)



The French Revolution and American Revolution do share some similarities, yet there are a number of differences between the two revolutions. One of the main differences was the overall context of the revolutions. There is even some debate about whether or not the American Revolution was a revolution at all, as Palmer describes it as only a war of independence against Great Britain. Despite the controversy, both were caused by similar reasons yet were carried out by differing people within each country.

In the American Revolution people from all classes campaigned for change through their upper class politicians whereas the French started within the country's lower classes. An additional difference that can be seen is by looking at who was involved in each revolution; the American Revolution mostly remained the same as it did when it began in 1775 with the Americans opposing the British until the French joined to support the Americans, yet in the French Revolution we see France at war with itself between the lower classes and the government beginning in 1789 then evolving to fighting against the monarchies in Austria and Prussia. In seeking liberty and equality, both were trying to gain freedom from their ruling governments

Although occurring around the same time period, the American Revolution preceded the French by several years; some would argue that the French Revolution was ignited after hearing of the success that the Americans had over a giant military powerhouse like Great Britain. The American victory could be seen as the greatest impact on the French Revolution; they like the French fought for their freedom, their individual rights, and their privacy as well as against the taxation that was considered to be unfair. Palmer would

add that the [French] Revolution was not simply a chaotic upheaval, but a purposeful political movement accentuating certain recognizable if not always very definite concepts, feudalism, aristocracy, constitution, citizen, sovereignty of the people, nation, law, liberty, equality, nature, and natural rights.

The level of violence in each revolution was very different, the American Revolution saw little violence compared to the French. Between the fall of the Bastille and the Reign of Terror, France

The taxation that the British placed on the Americans significantly influenced the Americans to revolt. Following their victory in the Seven Year War, the British had substantially increased their debt, not as drastically as seen in France who was on the verge of bankruptcy.

The Enlightenment may have started in Europe and was known in France but was not until it became the central ideology to the American Revolution, where fighting for the natural rights and equality of all citizens excited the revolution in France. Enlightenment writers such as Voltaire, Rousseau, and John Locke presented philosophies that were the foundations of the revolutions, some writer's ideas more so than others influenced each revolution respectively. Locke's ideas of life, liberty and property' encouraged limiting the power of the government.

It could be argued that the French revolution was sparked by the enlightened ideas that they learned about from the Americans while they fought together against the British in the American Revolution. After returning to France,

they implemented these ideas by creating a new political system, called the National Assembly. The American Declaration of Independence was used as a template, by the National Assembly to write the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen.