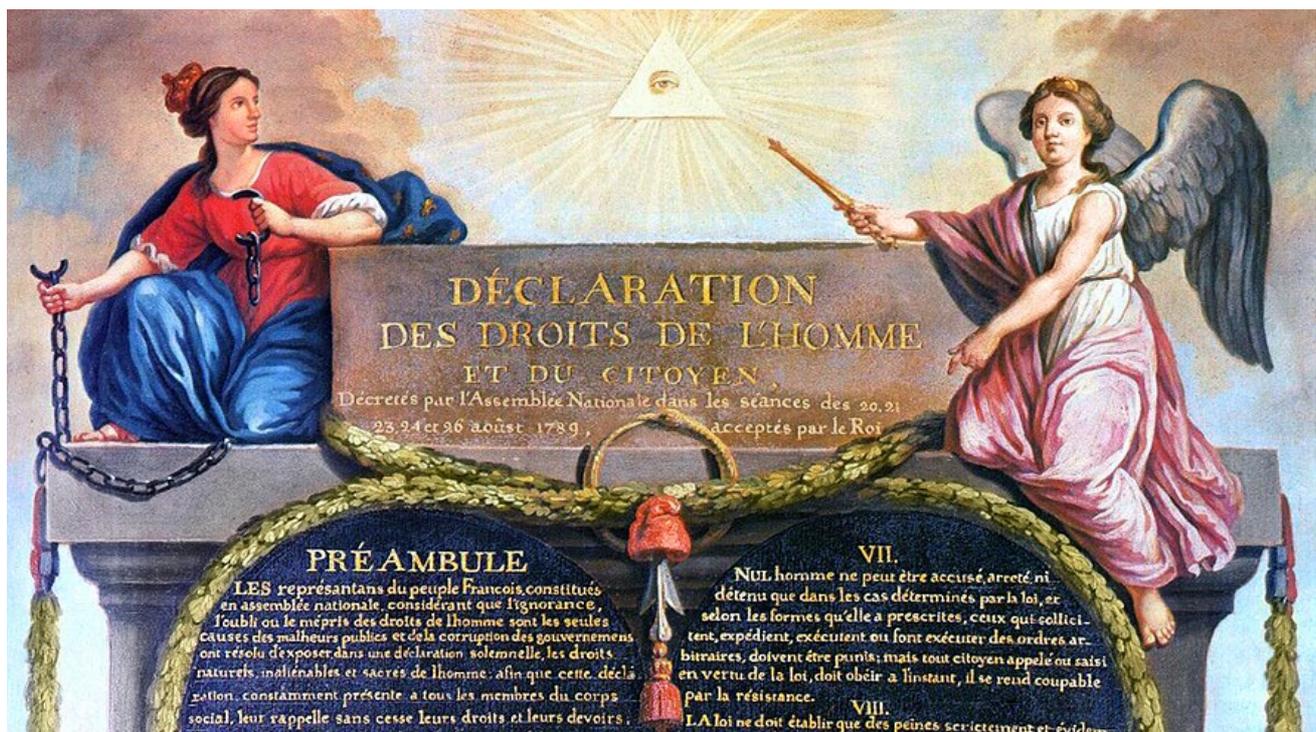


Primary Sources: Declaration of the Rights of Man

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This representation of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, painted in 1789, includes the "eye of providence" symbol (an eye in triangle). Jean-Jacques-François Le Barbier

Editor's Note: After fighting in two wars, the French government had run out of money. It tried to raise money by passing unpopular taxes. At the time, however, the French people did not have enough to eat. They grew angry.

People started to demand a new government. They started a revolution to overthrow the king. The Declaration of the Rights of Man was written by French revolutionaries. It was the first step toward writing a constitution for France. It was passed by the National Constituent Assembly, a group leading the revolution, on August 26, 1789.

Injustice results whenever the rights of man are ignored. The National Assembly has therefore decided to set forth a declaration of the natural rights of man.

It is hoped that this declaration shall remind the people of their rights and duties. It may also be used to help judge whether the acts of lawmakers and government leaders are fair.

Therefore the National Assembly declares the following rights of man:

Articles:

1. Men are born free and equal. They remain free and equal for the rest of their lives.
2. The aim of government is to protect the natural rights of man. These rights include liberty, property and safety.
3. Just rule comes only from the nation, and the power to make laws belongs to the people's government.
4. Liberty is the freedom to do everything that does not hurt other people. Therefore, a person's freedom should only be limited in order to protect the rights of others. These limits can only be determined by the law.
5. Nothing may be prevented that is not forbidden by the law. No one may be forced to do anything unless it is required by the law.
6. The law shall be based on the desires of the people. Every citizen has a right to take part in the making of the law, either through a representative or by being part of the government himself. The law must be the same for all, whether it protects or punishes.
7. No person shall be accused, arrested or imprisoned outside of the law. However, anyone arrested according to the law shall give in without delay.
8. The law shall only allow for punishments that are strictly necessary.
9. All persons are held innocent until they are declared guilty. If an arrest is necessary, it shall be carried out in a way that avoids any unnecessary harshness.
10. No one shall be mistreated because of his opinions. These include his religious opinions, provided that they do not disturb the public order.
11. The free exchange of ideas and opinions is one of the most precious of the rights of man. Every citizen may speak, write and print freely, within the limits of the law.
12. The protection of the rights of man and of the citizen requires military forces. These forces are established for the good of all and not for the advantage of those in charge.
13. Taxes are necessary to pay for military forces and government. Taxes should be fairly spread among all the citizens according to their ability to pay.
14. These taxes shall be determined by the people. They shall decide how taxes are collected and shall be allowed to know how their taxes are spent.
15. Society has the right to ask every government worker for records that show how his department is spending money.
16. In a just society, the rule of the law must be assured and the separation of powers must be defined.

17. Property is a basic right. Therefore, the government shall not take anyone's property except when it is necessary or legally called for. In such cases, the owner must be fairly paid for the property in advance.

Approved by the National Assembly of France on August 26, 1789.

Quiz

- 1 Which paragraph from the introduction [paragraphs 1-5] explains why the French people decided to start a revolution?

- 2 Which selection from the declaration BEST supports the idea that the laws of a nation should be made by the people?
 - (A) Therefore, a person's freedom should only be limited in order to protect the rights of others. These limits can only be determined by the law.
 - (B) Nothing may be prevented that is not forbidden by the law. No one may be forced to do anything unless it is required by the law.
 - (C) Every citizen has a right to take part in the making of the law, either through a representative or by being part of the government himself.
 - (D) No person shall be accused, arrested or imprisoned outside of the law. However, anyone arrested according to the law shall give in without delay.

- 3 Which detail BEST reflects the main idea of the Articles?
 - (A) The main goal of government should be to protect people's individual rights.
 - (B) No one should be arrested without the government giving a legal reason.
 - (C) Taxes necessary to run the military and government must be collected fairly.
 - (D) People have a basic right to keep their property unless they are paid fairly for it.

- 4 What are two MAIN ideas from the document?
 - (A) Liberty is a right that cannot be taken away. If the government tries to take away its people's liberty, the people should rebel.
 - (B) People should be free to work, speak and live the way they want. The government can only limit these rights to protect the rights of others.
 - (C) The people have the right to know what the government is doing with their money. The government must keep records of its spending.
 - (D) A basic right of every individual is freedom of speech and religion. A person cannot be arrested for expressing their opinion.

Answer Key

- 1 Which paragraph from the introduction [paragraphs 1-5] explains why the French people decided to start a revolution?

Paragraph 0:

Editor's Note: After fighting in two wars, the French government had run out of money. It tried to raise money by passing unpopular taxes. At the time, however, the French people did not have enough to eat. They grew angry.

- 2 Which selection from the declaration BEST supports the idea that the laws of a nation should be made by the people?

- (A) Therefore, a person's freedom should only be limited in order to protect the rights of others. These limits can only be determined by the law.
- (B) Nothing may be prevented that is not forbidden by the law. No one may be forced to do anything unless it is required by the law.
- (C) Every citizen has a right to take part in the making of the law, either through a representative or by being part of the government himself.**
- (D) No person shall be accused, arrested or imprisoned outside of the law. However, anyone arrested according to the law shall give in without delay.

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