Revolution—which is a sudden or significant change in the old ways of doing things—can occur in many areas, such as government, technology, or art. In Unit 5, you studied political revolutions in Europe and the Americas, in which people rebelled against unjust rulers to gain more rights. Each revolution led to major changes in governmental, social, and economic structures. In these six pages, you will gain a better understanding of those revolutions by examining their similarities and differences.

English Civil War and Glorious Revolution

In 1642, civil war broke out between those who supported Parliament and those who supported the king. Parliament won and set up a commonwealth, led by Oliver Cromwell. In time, he became a dictator. After his death, the monarchy returned, but tensions built anew. In 1688, Parliament ousted King James II, shown at right, in the Glorious Revolution and invited William and Mary to rule.

American Revolution

After 1763, Americans began to resent British rule. Clashes such as the Boston Massacre, shown at left, took place. The colonies declared their independence in 1776. War ensued, and the United States won its freedom by defeating Britain.

French Revolution

Beginning in 1789, the French people rose up to overthrow their king. The uprisings included the march by hungry women shown below. Differing goals soon split the revolutionaries. Several years of terror followed. Napoleon restored order and eventually made himself emperor of France.
Latin American Revolutions
From 1791 to 1824, revolutions took place in Haiti, Mexico, and the huge Spanish empire that spread across Central and South America. By the end of that period, nearly all of Latin America had gained its independence from European control. One of South America’s great liberators was José de San Martín, shown in the painting above.

Model of a Revolution
From his study of the French Revolution, historian Crane Brinton developed a model of the stages that revolutions often go through. The model below is based on his work. Compare it with the revolutions you learned about in this unit.

**Stage 1: Fall of the Old Order**
- Revolutions usually cannot occur until a ruler becomes weak. Often this weakness results in problems such as starvation and unfair taxes. Anger builds until the ruler is overthrown.

**Stage 2: Rule by Moderates**
- The people relax because they think they have achieved their goal. A moderate group rules. But simply overthrowing the old order rarely solves the problems that led to the revolution.

**Stage 3: The Terror**
- When people realize that the old problems still exist, they look for someone to blame. Radicals take control, push for more extreme changes, and execute “enemies of the revolution.”

**Stage 4: Turn from Radical Rule**
- In time, the violence sickens people, and the use of terror ends. The former radicals adopt a more gradual plan for effecting change.

**Stage 5: Military Rule**
- The terror often kills most of a country’s leaders. Then the turn from radicalism makes people doubt revolutionary ideals. A military leader steps into the gap and becomes dictator.

**Stage 6: Restoration**
- When the dictatorship ends, through death or overthrow, a power vacuum results. The order that existed before the revolution is restored.

1. Which of the revolutions on the time line, besides the French Revolution, is most like the model? Explain.
2. Which revolution is least like the model? Explain.
# Causes of the Revolutions

Each of the revolutions you studied in this unit had political, economic, and social causes, as shown in the chart below. Some of the causes mentioned on the chart are the subjects of the primary sources located on the next page. Use the chart and the primary sources together to understand the causes of revolution more fully.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political</th>
<th>Economic</th>
<th>Social</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>England</strong></td>
<td><strong>North America</strong></td>
<td><strong>France</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• King claimed divine right.</td>
<td>• Colonists accused British leaders of tyranny.</td>
<td>• Third Estate wanted greater representation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• King dissolved Parliament.</td>
<td>• Colonists demanded the same rights as English citizens.</td>
<td>• Louis XVI was a weak ruler; his wife was unpopular.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Parliament sought guarantee of freedoms.</td>
<td>• Britain imposed mercantilism.</td>
<td>• American Revolution inspired political ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>France</strong></td>
<td><strong>Latin America</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Third Estate wanted greater representation.</td>
<td>• Peninsulares and creoles controlled wealth.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Colonists accused British leaders of tyranny.</td>
<td>• Lower classes toiled as peasants with little income or as slaves.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Colonists demanded the same rights as English citizens.</td>
<td>• Wars and royal extravagance created debt.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Latin America</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• French Revolution inspired political ideas.</td>
<td>• Peninsulares and creoles controlled wealth.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Royal officials committed injustices and repression.</td>
<td>• Inflation and famine caused problems.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Napoleon’s conquest of Spain triggered revolts.</td>
<td>• Peasants made little money but paid high taxes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting Charts**

1. **Analyzing Causes** What was the most frequent political cause of revolution? economic cause? social cause?
2. **Contrasting** How did the causes of the revolutions in Latin America differ from those of the other three revolutions?

In the 1780s, many French peasants could not afford bread to feed their families. At the same time, Marie Antoinette spent so much money on clothes that her enemies called her Madame Deficit. The harsh contrast between starvation and luxury sparked the anger that led to the Revolution.
The English Bill of Rights, 1689

This excerpt from the English Bill of Rights attempted to justify the Glorious Revolution by describing the injustices King James II committed.

The late King James the Second, by the assistance of diverse evil counselors, judges and ministers employed by him, did endeavor to subvert and extirpate [destroy] the Protestant religion and the laws and liberties of this kingdom;

By assuming and exercising a power of dispensing with and suspending of laws and the execution of laws without consent of Parliament; . . .

By levying money for and to the use of the Crown by pretense of prerogative [privilege] for other time and in other manner than the same was granted by Parliament;

By raising and keeping a standing army within this kingdom in time of peace without consent of Parliament; . . .

By violating the freedom of election of members to serve in Parliament; . . .

And excessive bail hath been required of persons committed in criminal cases to elude the benefit of the laws made for the liberty of the subjects;

And excessive fines have been imposed;

And illegal and cruel punishments inflicted.

DOCUMENT-BASED QUESTION
According to this document, how did King James II take away power from Parliament? How did he violate the rights of citizens?
Effects of Revolutions

The chart below shows political, economic, and social effects of the various revolutions. The primary sources on these two pages describe the political outcomes that three different revolutionaries expected to achieve. Use the chart and the primary sources together to understand the effects of revolution more fully.

### Primary Source

**Thomas Paine**

In this excerpt from the pamphlet *Common Sense*, Thomas Paine described the ideal government he wanted to see set up after the American Revolution.

> But where, say some, is the king of America? I’ll tell you, friend, he reigns above, and doth not make havoc of mankind like the Royal Brute of Great Britain. . . . Let a day be solemnly set apart for proclaiming the charter [constitution]; let it be brought forth placed on the divine law, the Word of God; let a crown be placed thereon, by which the world may know, that so far as we approve of monarchy, that in America THE LAW IS KING. For as in absolute governments the king is law, so in free countries the law ought to BE king, and there ought to be no other.

**DOCUMENT-BASED QUESTION**

*What did Paine believe should be the highest power in a new American government?*
Simón Bolívar

“The Jamaica Letter” is one of Simón Bolívar’s most important political documents. In this excerpt, he discussed his political goals for South America after the revolution—and his fear that South Americans were not ready to achieve those goals.

The role of the inhabitants of the American hemisphere has for centuries been purely passive. Politically they were non-existent. . . . We have been harassed by a conduct which has not only deprived us of our rights but has kept us in a sort of permanent infancy with regard to public affairs. . . . Americans today, and perhaps to a greater extent than ever before, who live within the Spanish system occupy a position in society no better than that of serfs destined for labor. . . . Although I seek perfection for the government of my country, I cannot persuade myself that the New World can, at the moment, be organized as a great republic.

**DOCUMENT-BASED QUESTION**

Why did Bolívar believe that South Americans were not ready for a republican form of government?

Maximilien Robespierre

In a speech given on February 5, 1794, Robespierre described his goals for the French Revolution. In this excerpt, he explained his reasons for using terror.

It is necessary to annihilate both the internal and external enemies of the republic or perish with its fall. Now, in this situation your first political maxim should be that one guides the people by reason, and the enemies of the people by terror.

If the driving force of popular government in peacetime is virtue, that of popular government during a revolution is both virtue and terror: virtue, without which terror is destructive; terror, without which virtue is impotent. Terror is only justice that is prompt, severe, and inflexible; it is thus an emanation of virtue; it is less a distinct principle than a consequence of the general principle of democracy applied to the most pressing needs of the patrie [nation].

**DOCUMENT-BASED QUESTION**

Why did Robespierre believe the use of terror against his enemies was necessary?

**Comparing & Contrasting**

1. Judging from the information on the chart, which revolutions resulted in the establishment of representative government, and which resulted in a return to tyrannical rule?
2. How do the political goals of the revolutionary leaders quoted here differ?
3. Compare the types of government set up in the United States, France, and Latin America after their revolutions. Did Paine, Robespierre, and Bolívar achieve the political goals quoted? Explain.

**EXTENSION ACTIVITY**

Revolutionary activity continued after the period covered by this unit. Two major 20th-century revolutions were the Russian Revolution (see Chapter 30) and the Chinese revolution and civil war (see Chapter 30 and Chapter 33). Read about one of these revolutions either in this textbook or in an encyclopedia. Then create a chart comparing that revolution with either the American Revolution or the French Revolution.