French Revolution Reading Notes

I. French Monarchy faces a crisis
   a. Old Regime has three estates
      i. First Estate
         1. Roman Catholic church and the clergy, making up 10%
         2. did not pay taxes, although incredibly wealthy
      ii. Second Estate
         1. they held the highest positions in government, courts, army
         2. nobles owning 20% of land, made up less than 2% of population
         3. paid no taxes and refused to pay them
      iii. Third Estate- 98% of population
         1. Bourgeoisie
            a. city dwelling middle class, many educated, but treated like peasants
            b. called the culottes for the types of clothes
         2. urban lower classes
            a. workers of cities (butchers, tailors, weavers, etc)
            b. called the sans-culottes
         3. peasant farmers
            a. largest group, made up 4/5 of population
            b. lost 1/2 of income to taxes and had to pay taxes in the form of work

II. Louis XVI was a weak ruler
   a. married to the hated Marie Antoinette
   b. in debt because of involvement in the Seven Years War (French and Indian War)
   c. tried to tax nobles, but nobles required a call of the Estates General

III. National Assembly takes power
    a. National Assembly was actually the 3rd Estate
    b. 3rd estate clamors for power, the 1st and 2nd estate always overruled them
    c. They decide to end the monarchy, first act of revolution

IV. Storming of the Bastille (which was a prison)
    a. the National Assembly wanted to get inside Bastille because of the supply of gunpowder
    b. needed it to defend themselves against Swiss troops marching in to break-up riots
    c. the storming was important because reduced the king's power and saved the National Assembly
d. the day is now similar to July 4th over here

V. Great Fear sweeps France
   a. the group of Parisian women eventually stormed the queen's apartment
   b. this caused King Louis XVI to go to Paris
   c. Revolution leads to reform August 4, 1789; people continue to speak about revolution

VI. Assembly adopted many reforms
   a. the new slogan of the revolution becomes "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity"
   b. Rights of Man - "men are born and remain free and equal in rights."
   c. A Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen written
   d. Limited Monarchy- form government similar to Britain
   e. Departments - 83 districts each with elected local ruler
   f. State-controlled church

**Eventually caused a split between the peasants and bourgeoisie, leading the peasants to resist revolution

**King Louis XVI tried to escape, but was found on the Netherlands's border, he lost all credibility

VII. Factions split France
   a. the three factions included the radicals who advocated change (left side of the hall)
   b. the conservatives sat on the right side of the hall (believed that King was the way to go)
   c. middle ground (centrists) sat in the middle

VIII. France went to war with Austria
   a. the ruler of Austria was Maria Antoinette's brother
   b. in 1792, the Austrian army was winning until he threatened war if the royal family was harmed
   c. the new governing body was named national Convention

IX. The radicals executed Louis XVI
   a. radicals are people that that continually want more and more change
   b. the radicals abolished the monarchy and allowed France to become a republic
   c. eventually, Louis was found to be a common citizen, condemned to death, and beheaded by the guillotine

X. France creates a citizen-army
   a. the First Coalition included Britain, Spain, Portugal, Prussia and Austria
   b. although outnumbered, the dedicated French patriots were victorious

XI. Robespierre began the Terror (nicknamed the "Incorruptible")
   a. although the Jacobins had friends, many peasants were afraid of the constant beheadings of church and governmental leaders
i. Maximilien Robespierre eventually came to power
b. two changes to the calendar include making every month have 30 days and changing the name to make more sense
   i. Robespierre formed the Committee of Public Safety in 1793
c. many leaders and radicals were eventually beheaded because they were judged to be an enemy of the republic
d. many historians believe over 40,000 were killed, nearly 80% were of the 3rd estate, supposedly who the revolution was supposed to help

XII. Robespierre falls from power
   a. he fell from power because of the paranoia surrounding him

XIII. Moderates rule in the Directory
   a. new government switches to the right (less radical)
   b. they find a conservative general named Napoleon making his headways