

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen

During the 10 years of revolution, the French would adopt 5 different constitutions. Read the following excerpt from the first, ***Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen*** adopted by the National Assembly in 1789. Then answer the questions that follow.

Approved by the National Assembly of France, 26 August 1789

The representatives of the French people, organized as a national assembly, believing that the ignorance, neglect, or contempt of the rights of man are the sole causes of public misfortunes and the corruption of governments, have determined to set forth in a solemn declaration, the natural, inalienable and sacred rights of man. . . .

The aim of all political association is the preservation of the natural . . . rights of man. These rights are liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression.

Liberty consists in the freedom to do everything which injures no one else. . . .

Law is the expression of the general will. Every citizen has a right to participate personally, or through his representative, in its formation.

No person shall be accused, arrested, or imprisoned except in the cases and according to the forms prescribed by law.

1. When was this document written? _____
2. What is the purpose of this document? _____

3. On the document, underline the evidence that supports your answer.
4. What does the document say are the natural rights of man? _____

5. Based on this excerpt, how do you think King Louis XVI viewed the French people before the revolution? _____

6. How does this document redefine the relationship between the French people and their government? _____
