

Source 1



“Tailles, Imports et Corvees” (Tailles, taxes and corvees), anonymous, circa 1789.

Source 2

“Having devoted all my time and my strength in the service of Your Majesty since you appointed me to this position, it is important for me to give you some public explanations concerning ... the actual state of the Finances. I would have renounced to the satisfaction of ... explaining my behaviour, if I had not thought that by doing so, all this [information] could have been very useful to Your Majesty’s affairs. Such an institution [the publication of the annual budget], if it became permanent, would be the source of the most important advantages because the obligation to publicly show his administration would influence a Finance Minister from the first steps in his career. Darkness and obscurity favour nonchalance ... This report would also allow each of the people – who are part of Your Majesty’s Councils – to study and follow the situation of the Finances ... Such an institution [the publication of the annual budget] could have the greatest influence on public confidence. In fact, if one fixes his attention on the huge credit England enjoys ... where each year this state [of the finances] is presented to the Parliament, and then it is printed. And all the lenders who regularly know the proportion that is maintained between incomes and expenses are not troubled by suspicions and fanciful fears, which are always part of darkness. In France, the state of Finances has always been a mystery.

Compte rendu au Roi, Jacques Necker, 1781.

Source 3

"If the causes of the French Revolution are complex, the causes of the downfall of the monarchy are not. The two phenomena are not identical, since the absolutism in France did not itself entail a revolution of such transformative power as actually came to pass in France. But the end of the old regime was the necessary condition of the beginning of a new, and that was brought about, in the first instance, by a cash-flow crisis. It was the politicization of the money crisis* that dictated the calling of the Estates-General."

Citizens: A Chronicle of the French Revolution, Simon Schama, 1989

* refers to the aristocratic rebellion through the Assembly of Notables and Paris Parlement

Question 1

- a. Identify two privileges enjoyed by the Second Estate, as depicted in Source 1. (2 marks)

- b. Describe how either the First or Third Estate is represented in Source 1. (2 marks)

- c. Using Source 1 and 2 and your own knowledge, explain how taxation contributed to the development of revolutionary sentiment in France. (5 marks)

d. Using Source 3 and your own knowledge, analyse the role of the nobility in the development of revolutionary sentiment. (6 marks)

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- e. Evaluate the causes of the French Revolution by July 1789. Use source 1 and 3 and other evidence to support your response. (10 marks)

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