



The Montagnards sat on the highest benches of the Assembly ('The Mountain'). They had lots of different opinions. The main thing that united them was their dislike for the Girondists. They thought the Girondists spent too much time talking about their ideas. The Montagnards want to take action. Famous Montagnards included Robespierre (pictured left) and Marat. Later, the Montagnards split into those who wanted to work with ordinary people, and those that want to use TERROR (mass executions of and violence towards anyone that disagreed with them) to keep them under control.

The Girondists were opposed to having a king, and wanted to keep France together as one country. However, they were frightened by the violence of the ordinary people and they tried to slow down the changes that were taking place. They were accused of not being strict enough with the King when he was put on trial by their opponents, and many of them were executed in the Terror.

The Sans-culottes were poor, working-class people who supported extreme action in order to achieve equality amongst all people in France. They were so-called because they wore long trousers instead of fashionable knee-length 'culottes'. They were angry about bread shortages and supported the Terror.



Jean-Paul Marat was a Swiss-born doctor and journalist. He claimed to have eaten nothing and drunk only black coffee for three months while writing his first book, *Chains of Slavery*. During the Revolution he often attacked those in power as being "enemies of the people". At one point he was forced to hide in a sewer from those he had criticised – this may have helped give him the bad skin condition that forced him to spend much of his time in the bath for relief. He thought the King should be executed, but was a supporter of the lawyer that defended him. He was put on trial by the Girondists but found not guilty and carried on people's shoulders back to the Convention.

Charlotte Corday was born into a minor aristocratic family. She hated Marat because of the September Massacres, where over a thousand people including priests and nobles were killed. She thought Marat had encouraged the people of Paris to commit these acts of rape and murder. She also thought it was wrong that the King had been executed. She wanted France to be a peaceful republic, not dominated by Paris. She thought that Marat and people like him were making France too violent.



Letter worksheet

(You can use the start given below, or cross it out and write one of your own)

My fellow citizens,

I am writing this letter to explain my reasons for committing the crime of which I stand accused. I hope you can find it in your hearts to forgive me.

I acted as I did because

