

The Three Estates Information sheet

Before the revolution in France, a time known as the *Ancien Regime*, society was divided into three distinct classes, known as the Three Estates.





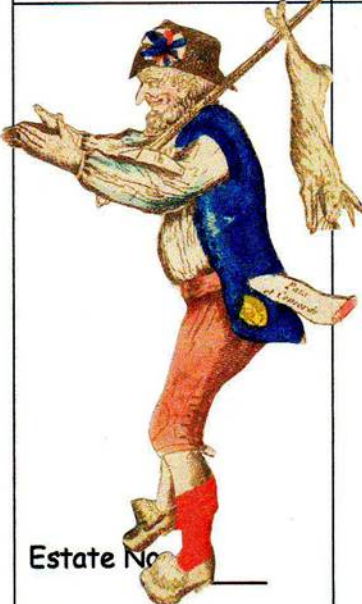
The **First Estate** was the clergy, who were people, including priests, who ran both the Catholic church and some aspects of the country. In addition to keeping registers of births, deaths and marriages, the clergy also had the power to levy a 10% tax known as the *tithe*.

The **Second Estate** consisted of the nobility of France, including members of the royal family, except for the King. Members of the Second Estate did not have to pay any taxes. They were also awarded special privileges, such as the wearing a sword and hunting. Like the clergy, they also collected taxes from the Third Estate.

The **Third Estate** was made up of everyone else, from peasant farmers to the bourgeoisie – the wealthy business class. While the Second Estate was only 1% of the total population of France, the Third Estate was 96%, and had none of the rights and privileges of the other two estates.

Historians believe that one of the reasons the French Revolution came about was the dissatisfaction of members of the Third Estate, who wanted a more equal distribution of wealth and power.

Three Estates Worksheet

Estate	Who am I?	What do I wear?	What do I want?
 <p>Estate No. _____</p>			
 <p>Estate No. _____</p>			
 <p>Estate No. _____</p>			