

How powerful was France in the 18th Century and how was French society structured?



A map showing France's Empire by the 19th Century



What does this suggest to you about the power of France by the 19th Century?

Background to France on the world stage by the 18th Century.



Vs.



- France and Britain (England) have had a long history of fighting each other from 1066, to the hundred years war and in the colonial battles over North America in the 18th Century
- France had been as busy exploring the New World as Britain since the 16th Century
- The first main colonies set up by France in North America were in Canada
- France had concentrated more on its domination of Europe and lost its early colonies in North America to Britain
- France founded Louisiana and modern Arkansas in the early 18th Century, linking to her Canadian colonies
- France was also involved in the Slave Trade, setting up colonies and plantations in the West Indies (Caribbean)
- France had also started colonising Africa in the 18th Century
- The first significant conflict with the growing British Empire was in India when France challenged the East India Trading Company
- France found itself involved in the American Revolution in 1765-1783 against Britain, this was very expensive and devastating for the French economy back home as well as to the French colonies. France lost the '7 Years war' with Britain as well.
- Eventually, France had lost most of North America, Canada especially to Britain

How was French society set up in the 18th Century?

- Before the French Revolution, French society was structured on **feudalism**, in a system known as the **Estates System**. The king was the top of this **Ancien Regime** system as an **absolute monarch**, meaning the king ruled alone.
- Under The King was the estates system; where a person belonged was very important because it determined that person's rights and status in society. Usually a person remained in one estate for his or her lifetime, and any movement upwards in the estate system could take many generations.



Using this image, describe, in your own words, how the Estate System worked in France. What was the population of France in the 18th Century?

How similar was this system to England from the Middle Ages through to the Renaissance Period (Tudors / Stuarts)? Particularly focusing on Absolute Monarchy...

So, what was the Ancien Regime?

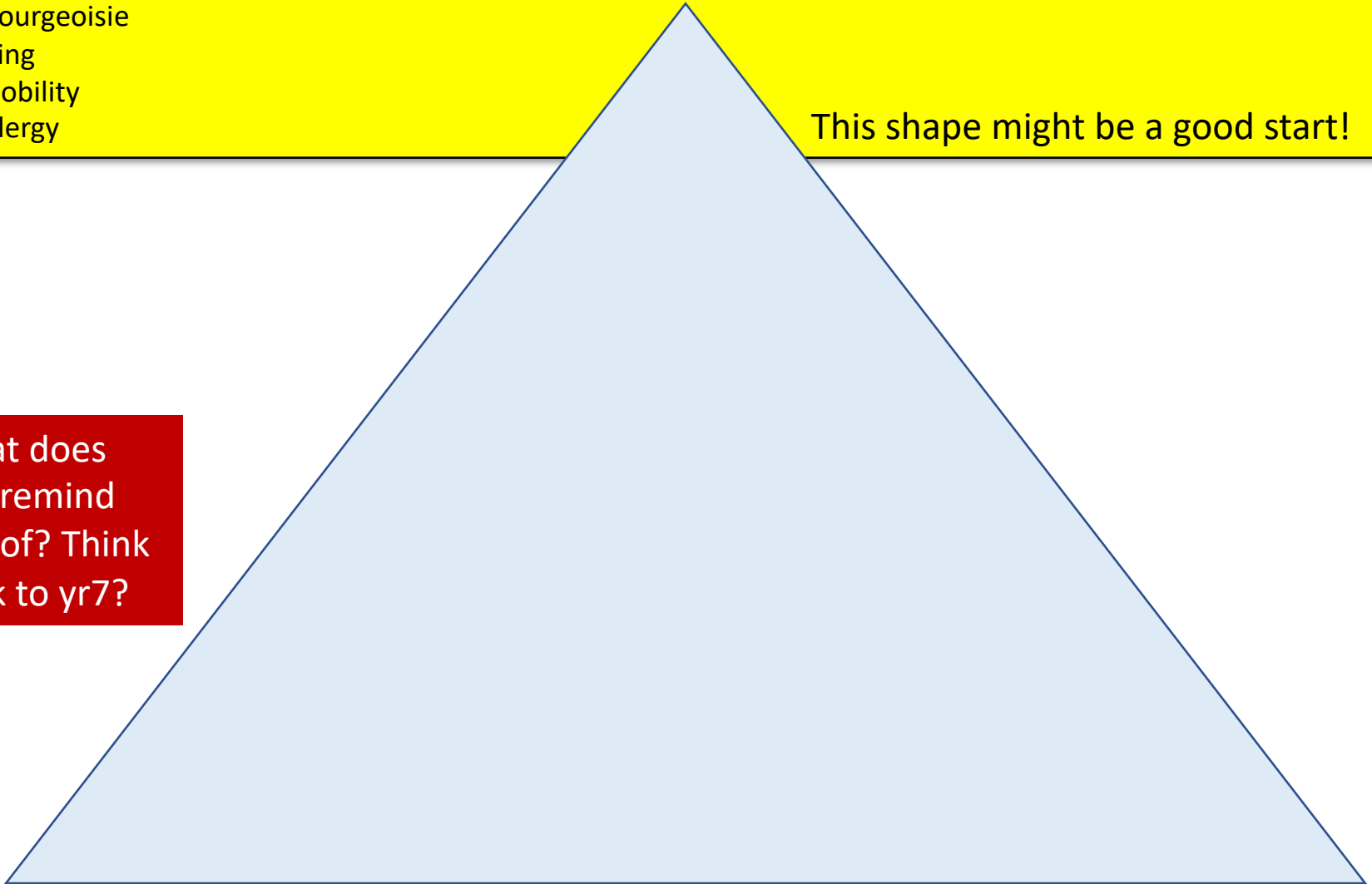
On a clean page, draw a diagram showing your understanding of the Ancien Regime

You should include (in the correct order) the following:

- Peasants
- Bourgeoisie
- King
- Nobility
- Clergy

This shape might be a good start!

What does
this remind
you of? Think
back to yr7?



Add the following information to your diagram:

Nobility:

- Owned $\frac{1}{4}$ of all the land in France
- Almost all army officers and government ministers came from the Nobility
- Could tax local peasants
- Run their own courts
- Demand unpaid labour on their lands

Peasants:

- Expected to pay the most taxes, up to $\frac{1}{2}$ of a peasants annual income would be spent on Feudal dues (payments to the landlord), tithes and other taxes to the French government

Clergy:

- Most of France's clergy came from the Aristocracy (nobility)



The French Revolution in a nutshell

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VEZqarUnVpo>



Start making a list of **causes** and **events** from this clip, we'll add more shortly...

Ancien Regime

What do you think the message of this painting is – linking to the Estates system?





<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zBTKGf1nFIA>

Liberté! Egalité! Fraternité!

The French Revolution

1789 – 1794