

# Histories

## Unit 2 of 5

To start off this Unit, we'll learn about some of the great revolutions of history, including the English Revolution of the 1640s, the American Revolution of the 1770s, the French Revolution of the 1790s, and the Russian Revolution of the 1920s.

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### STORIES OF REVOLUTION

The word "revolution" comes from the Latin word "revolvere", meaning to turn over or turn around. It can mean any sudden, momentous change in society, our lives, the government, and pretty much anything else. Sudden changes can be upsetting and disorienting.

- 1. Describe an example of why there might be a revolution
  - (a) on a ship
  - (b) on a farm
  - (c) in a burger joint

The dictionary defines a political revolution as: "The complete overthrow of the established government by those who were previously subject to it and the forcible substitution of a new ruler or form of government." This is a long definition for a huge upheaval in the lives of nations and peoples! Revolutions generate strong opinions, fiery emotions, and infectious enthusiasm just like huge changes in individual lives. Here are some enthusiastic phrases that came out of our four revolutions:

*"Workers of the world unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains."* -- Karl Marx in the *Communist Manifesto*, words which inspired Russian revolutionaries

*"Is life so dear, or peace so sweet as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!"* -- Patrick Henry, American Revolution

*"Some will give their labor, others their wealth, some their counsel, others their strength; all will give the blood that flows in their veins. Thus all Frenchmen, all sexes, all ages, are called by France to defend liberty."* -- Decree of the Estates General, the French Revolutionary Assembly

*"No popery! No bishops! No popish lords!"* -- Puritans in the English Revolutions

- 2. Which quotation do you think is most effective in leading and inspiring people?
- 3. What is another way to express what Marx meant in the first quotation?
- 4. Put Patrick Henry's quotation into your own words.

There are, of course, other ways than by force to make revolutionary changes, such as boycotts, petitions, strikes, and the non-violent marches of our own Civil Rights Movement. The leaders must stir up enthusiasm to enlist others to the cause.

5. Write a letter in which you try to convince someone of an injustice in our society that you think should be ended. To make this a little more challenging, have the injustice be about one of the following: an injustice to the opposite gender, an injustice to animals, or an injustice to the environment.

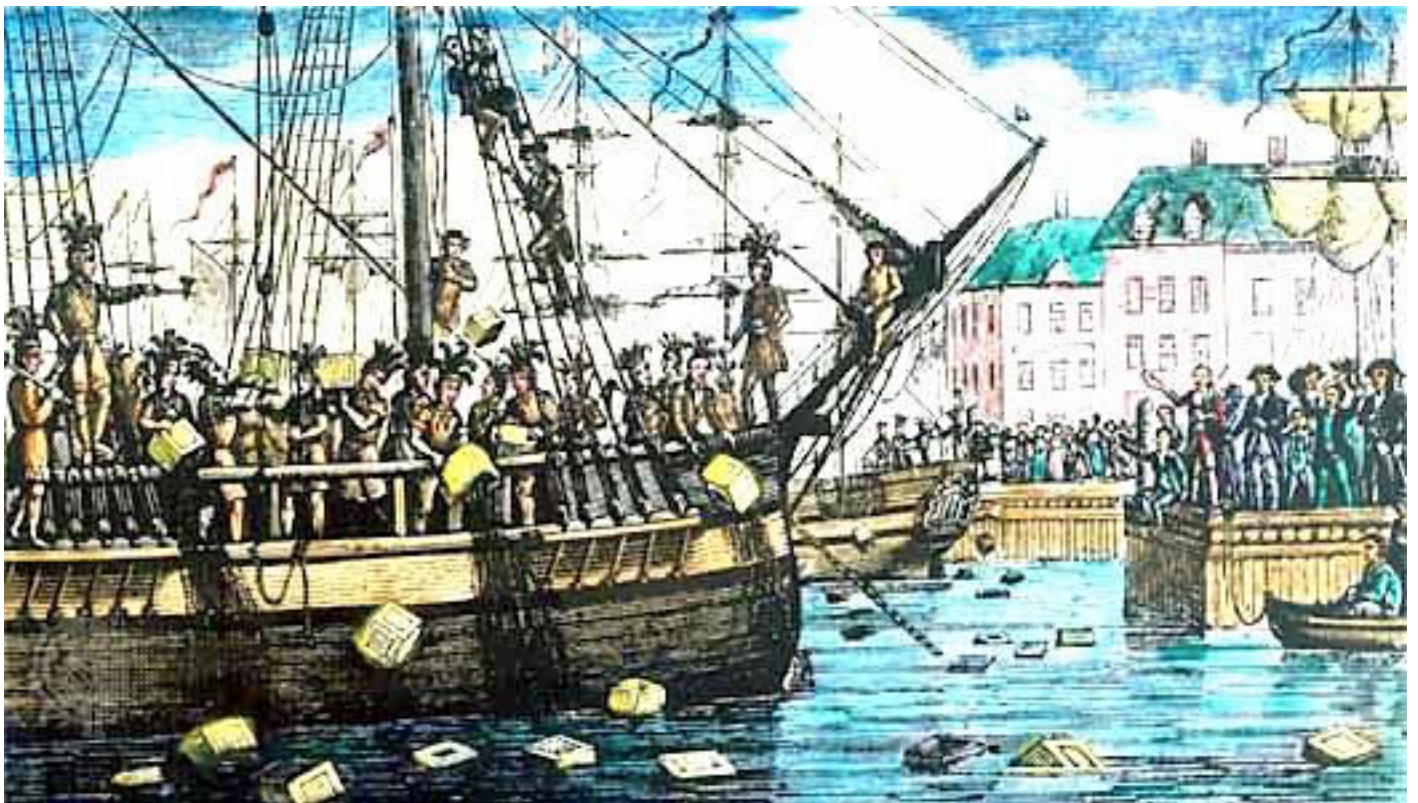
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All revolutions occur because some citizens in a society feel oppressed. The people believe that the only way to achieve justice for themselves is to reform their government. The stories of these revolutions tend to follow a pattern. Historians ever since the ancient Greeks have noticed this pattern. In modern days, a historian named Crane Brinton wrote a book about it.

Revolutions tend to start peacefully with compromise as a goal. In the 1640s, a group of Protestants in England thought that King Charles I was getting a bit too Catholic, autocratic, and bossy for their liking. They took two kinds of action: some of them, our Pilgrims, decided to take the frightening voyage across the sea and create their own churches and their own society in New England. Others decided to stay in England and try to reform the government through changes in the laws.

6. If you had been an Englishman during this time, what would you have done and why?

7. If you had been an American who didn't want to be taxed without being represented in the English legislature, would you have said, "Give me liberty or give me death!", or would you have tried to calmly find a compromise? Why?

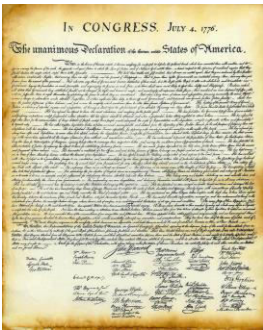


The French and the Russians also tried to compromise, at first by passing new laws in national assemblies and trying to negotiate with their kings. It was hard, though, because all of these kings and most of the citizens believed, as they had for centuries, that Kings were rulers put in charge by God. These monarchs had a "divine right" to be king. To disagree with them was not just treason, it was a sin, and to rebel was double treason and sin! That made compromise nearly impossible.

**8. What are some qualities that a great King should have?**

**9. Write a ten-line dialogue between a King and a pauper (poor person).**

In England, war broke out, a republic was declared, and Charles I was beheaded. In France, too, a republic was declared, and Louis XVI and Queen Marie Antoinette were beheaded. In America, the Declaration of Independence ended the colonial relationship with England, and war began. In Russia, violence forced Czar Nicholas II to abdicate (renounce his throne). A year later, Nicholas, the Czarina, and all their children were murdered by the new Communist government. Civil war broke out in Russia as well as war with England and France who opposed the revolutionary government.



Declaration of Independence



Charles I



Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette



Czar Nicholas II

**10. Think of two advantages for the civilian population when war is waged on their soil.**

In spite of the bloodshed, the leaders of these new nations were idealistic and purposeful people. The rebellion in England was called the "Revolution of the Saints", because Oliver Cromwell and other leaders were religious and very strict. Americans were thrilled by the high ideals of their declaration of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." In France, one of the leaders, Maximilien Robespierre, was called "The Incorruptible," the perfect symbol of a Republic of Virtue. In Russia, Vladimir Lenin, the first Communist ruler, led an austere private life without luxury and focused all his energy and passion on trying to achieve economic equality for Russia and, he hoped, eventually for the world.

**11. Write a brief speech for a rebellion leader inspiring the citizens to overthrow the government.**

**12. Now write a brief speech for someone in the government convincing the citizens to not rebel.**

Once these idealists were in power, they had a hard time actually governing according to their ideals. One reason for the difficulty was that they disagreed among themselves about who should share in the blessings of liberty. The former rulers of the country? Farmers and city workers? Only people with property? They argued in their assemblies and, except in the case of America, they turned back to violence. In England, France, and Russia, in order to "preserve the Revolution" a small group of radical idealists led by a dynamic figure established a virtual dictatorship. In England, it was Oliver Cromwell; in France, it was Robespierre and later Napoleon Bonaparte; and in Russia, it was Lenin and later, Joseph Stalin. Liberty slipped away in the effort to preserve it.

**13. Write a poem in the voice of a Frenchman or Russian during the Revolution.**

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Was all this idealism, all this planning, all this bloodshed worth it? Was anything accomplished? Were any wrongs righted? Were the lives of people permanently changed for the better? The answer is both yes and no.

*First, some areas in which constructive change was accomplished...*

### Efficiency and Organization:

In all of our countries except Russia, a gradual settling and return to a more free society took place. The new governments in all cases were more efficient and better organized than the ones they replaced which had been based on centuries of accumulated traditions. In France, for example, the laws were simplified and made uniform throughout the country. The metric system was established as the only system for weighing and measuring. In America, the Constitution set out the form of a new government based on clear rights and responsibilities. In Russia (called the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics after the Revolution), perhaps they were too efficient -- the Communist dictatorship continued more or less unchanged until 1991.



**14. Are efficiency and firm organization good things for government or are there dangers to freedom that come from efficiency? Explain.**

### Change in Leadership and Economic Power:

In all cases, the old leaders were replaced with new ones. Business and industrial leaders began to flourish and to share power with some of the old leaders who had been large landholders descended from the feudal times of Lords and Knights. As these changes occurred, representative government in national assemblies became more stable. Again, the exception was Russia, which remained a Communist dictatorship.

### Social Changes:

There weren't many in the life of the average Joe. But a more humane, tolerant atmosphere did grow. In France, mental illness began to be treated with kindness instead of incarceration. Even the guillotine was supposed to be a more humane method of execution - kinder than hanging! Divorce laws were liberalized and freedom of worship began to be accepted.

*Now the things that did not change...*

### The Powerlessness of the Poorest

**15. Write your own quotation about poverty.**

### Equal Representation

After the revolutions -- in England, the new United States, and France -- only white male property holders could vote. In Russia, farmers and industrial workers could vote, but only if they were members of the Communist Party. It seems "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity" and "All men are created equal" were forgotten.

**16. Why do you think women were left out, even in the thinking of the most liberal-minded revolutionaries, for so long?**

## JAZZ

Music, like all forms of art, is part of history. It can even change history. We'll be taking a look at American popular music and how it relates to our history as well as to our lives. First, because they are distinctly American art forms, we will learn about jazz and blues, and explore some of their beginnings.

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What is jazz? Over the years, lots of people have tried to come up with an answer to this question. There seems to be no one clear and definitive answer. But singers, instrumental artists, and listeners have given us many deeply-felt comments about it. Here are some of their ideas:

*The music is so free that...people say that it is the only unhampered, unhindered expression of complete freedom yet produced in this country.*" -- Duke Ellington

Jazz is "a story about race relations and prejudice, about Jim Crow, lynchings, and civil rights." -- Ken Burns

"Jazz washes away the dust of everyday life." -- Art Blakey

**17. What is something else that metaphorically "washes away the dust of everyday life"?**

Where did jazz come from? Most people who have studied the subject agree that it is an African and American creation. Most likely, the tradition brought here by slaves from West Africa was the most basic ingredient in the mixture that developed. One student says that, "Jazz sprang from an enslaved minority which produced a major art form and powerfully shaped the majority's culture."

**18. Think of another example of a minority changing culture.**

The rhythmic drumming tradition and its variations came from Africa. There is the strong, steady beat that we associate with jazz. There is the dragging, uneven beat or syncopation that makes us swing. There is the beat that seems to echo questions and answers. From Africans in America came work songs and religious songs. European folk songs and folk dance tunes, hymnal tunes, and even opera songs got added to the mixture which came to a boil in New Orleans in the early 1800s. Below is part of a poem that expresses the freedom and creative spirit that blossomed in that city at that time.

*Have you ever been in New Orleans?  
If not, you'd better go.  
It's day and night a show!*

*Frenchmen, Spaniards, West Indians,  
Creoles, Mustees,*

*Clergymen, priests, friars, nuns,  
womens of all stains;*

*Negroes in purple and fine linen, and  
slaves in rags and chains,*

*Sailors, soldiers, pretty girls, and ugly  
fortune tellers;*

*Pimps,imps, shrimps, and all sorts of  
dirty fellows,*

*White men with black wives, et vise-  
versa too.*

*A progeny of all colors -- an infernal  
motley crew.*

**19. Write another verse for this song.**

Out of the surprising freedom and creativity of New Orleans came the first jazz combos, the marching bands, and the dancing that went with them. Also out of New Orleans, and spreading north, was the blues tradition. Blues was a separate stream weaving in and out of jazz from the beginning. And like the drumming of jazz, it came out of Africa. Melodies there were accompanied by a banjo-like instrument. Musical phrases were repeated over and over. Lyrics expressed happiness, sadness, and sometimes humor. Blues celebrated life while at the same time expressing pain. Below is an example:

*If your house catches fire and there ain't no water 'round,  
If your house catches fire and there ain't no water 'round,  
Throw your suitcase out the window and let that shack burn down.*

**20. Do these lyrics seem funny or sad? Write a fourth line to change its effect.**

Here is another blues lyric which was a famous Louis Armstrong song called "What did I do to be so Black and Blue?"

*Old empty bed springs hard as lead  
feel like "Ol, Ned," wish I were dead.  
All my life through I been so black and blue.*

*Even a mouse, ran from my house,  
they laugh at you and scorn you too.  
What did I do to be so black and blue?*

*Oh, I'm white inside, but that don't help my case,  
'Cause I can't hide what is on my face.*

*How will it end, ain't got a friend,  
My only sin is my skin.  
What did I do to be so black and blue?*

**21. Explain all the meanings of Louis Armstrong's "What did I do to be so Black and Blue?"**

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In the early years of the 20th century, jazz and blues filled the popular music halls and squares north and south. But those traditions were fluid from the beginning, always moving on. It was a fertile atmosphere in which radical new forms and sounds and rhythms developed through the rest of the century and into the beginning of the 21st. Music is always changing, part of our larger, overall changing history as a people.

We will only touch on some of these developments and then finish off with two styles that grew out of the modern mix and dominate the pop scene today. Following the more traditional jazz came bebop jazz (the more free wheeling jazz of the 1940's) and the big band swing that moved through it. Then came some radical shifts.

Rhythm and Blues (known nor as "R & B") combined jazz, blues, and gospel.

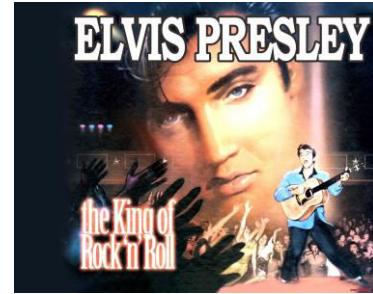
Rock and Roll was another combination of jazz, blues, country music, folk, and gospel.

Soul was especially close to gospel as well as R & B. It came out of the inner city black experience and featured hand clapping, catchy rhythms, and vocal exchanges.

Funk was also a black, inner city style. Harmonies were simple, often based on one chord. It was slow and danceable with varied rhythms.

The Motown Record Company was the first record label founded and owned by an African American. It brought black productions of R & B, soul, and funk to white audiences and was hugely successful.

There were many stars that came out of this lively, creative time. The Beatles, for one, were much influenced by Motown. Elvis Presley was another influenced by rock and R & B. There was Chuck Berry of whom John Lennon said, "If you tried to give rock and roll another name, you might call it 'Chuck Berry.'" James Brown, sometimes called the Godfather of Soul, was a singer, songwriter, dancer, and band leader who became the central artist in the development of Funk. A heavy downbeat was his trademark.



**22. Pick one of these styles or artists or one of their songs and write a short essay explaining why you like it/him/her, or don't like it/him/her.**

Now to two styles that are vibrant, strong, and dominant today: Hip-Hop and Heavy Metal.

Hip-Hop is not just a musical style, it is a culture which came out of the South Bronx, New York in the 70s. Sometimes, the term is used interchangeably with rap because rapping is such an important ingredient. Rap goes back hundreds of years to West African storytellers called griots who spoke or chanted in verse over rhythmic percussion. But hip-hop includes more innovations such as scratching, beat boxing, etc.

**23. Draw an image for the cover of a Hip-Hop CD.**

One of hip-hop's most famous leaders and performers was Afrika Bambaataa Aasim (Bam), often called the Godfather of hip-hop culture. In his youth, he was the founder of a violent street gang called the Black Spades, the biggest gang in New York City. But over time, Bam changed his focus radically from violence to "peace, unity, love, and having fun." After a trip to Africa, he founded a second group called the Zulu Nation, which was dedicated to inspiring angry city kids to work to improve their lives through political and social change. These values along with the musical style became the hip-hop culture. The fire and energy of Bam himself propelled the movement. He said, "The body is a temple, and it's the Feeling that you get from the music that makes you come alive. When the beats hit your body, it takes over."



Afrika Bambaataa Aasim



Led Zeppelin



Jimi Hendrix

**24. Do Bam's words ring true for you? Does hip-hop, or any other music hit you, body and soul? Has music made changes in your life? Explain.**

Now for the onslaught of Heavy Metal, another mainstream pop music of today. Out of the relatively gentle rock of artists like The Beatles, Elvis, and Chuck Berry emerged hard rock, with a heavier sound, featuring the electric guitar. Jimmy Hendrix was its first big star. And then Heavy Metal caught on with the Rock and Roll fans and attracted new converts. The music comes out of dense bass and drum sounds, amplified electric guitars, stressed rhythms, reverberating and hollow harmonies, and vocalists whose voices rise to screams. One student says heavy metal is the "sensory equivalent of war." Led Zeppelin led the way, followed by many other bands such as PSI Kill, Pacer, and Pact of Solitude. New bands are still being formed as well as new forms of the genre, including Christian heavy metal. The music is now worldwide.

**25. Music has become an industry, producing great wealth and stardom for its headliners. Why or why don't they deserve all this fame and money?**

**26. What kind of music is most likely to promote anger and violence and why? What kind of music promotes happiness and peace and why?**

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*Remember: First names only & please let us know if your address changes*

**Appendix  
Histories: Unit 2 of 5**

Citations

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