

# Chapter 3: Development of Nationalism (The French Revolution)

Social Studies 20-1

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# The French Revolution

- During the French Revolution, a series of events and conditions prompted the French people to unite and revolt against the king and form a new nation based on early ideas of democracy.
- Prior to 1789, France was an absolute monarchy and a feudal society that favored the aristocracy and the Catholic clergy. A shift began when the middle class began to question their loyalty to the king, Louis XVI.
- As we explore the French Revolution, consider the following questions: **Why did the French people unite as a nation? How did feelings of nationalism build among these people? How did they express their feelings of nationalism?**

# Important Vocabulary

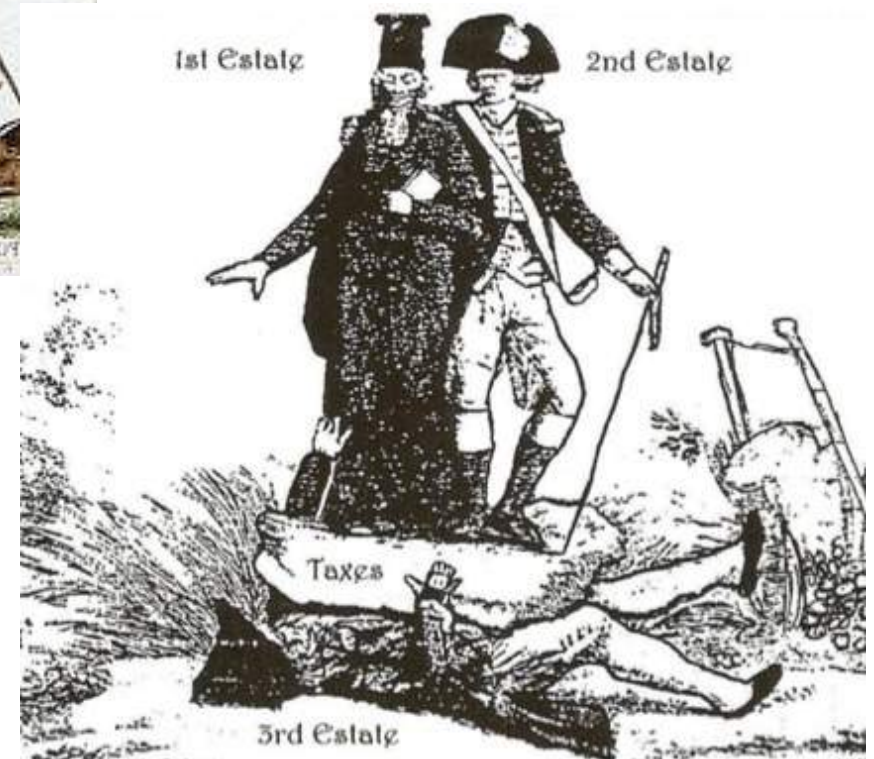
- **Absolutism:** a system where the absolute monarch is given the power to rule the land and the people by the divine right of kings. In his actions, the monarch is answerable only to God.
- **Bourgeoisie:** the middle class
- **Coup D'état:** a sudden, forcible seizure of power
- **Monarchy:** a form of government in which a group, generally a family representing a dynasty, embodies the country's national identity and its head, the monarch, exercises the role of sovereignty.
- **Philosophes:** French philosophers of the 18<sup>th</sup> century—such as Voltaire, Montesquieu, and Rousseau—who advocated the supremacy of human reason and dedicated themselves to the advancement of science and secular thought

# What caused the French Revolution?

- Economic causes
- Social causes
- Political causes

# Economic Causes

- Prior to the Revolution, France had a struggling economy for many years...
- Something to think about: Why would a poor economy lead to a rebellion?



# A Few Specific Economic Reasons...

1. **Revoking the Edict of Nantes:** wealthy, well educated Protestants left France after Protestant was made illegal in France
2. **War of the Spanish Succession:** this war was expensive for France, not just in the money that was spent in terms of equipment necessary however land was lost which can result in an economic blow (example: France lost Newfoundland and Acadia)
3. **The American War of Independence:** France committed a huge amount of money to send to the United States and a huge number of soldiers were sent to America to fight – **Why would they have done this?**
4. **Irresponsible spending by the monarchs:** Louis and Marie were notorious for spending when there wasn't money to be spent; Louis had poor financial advisors – many of the advisors borrowed money from other nations which resulted in high interest payments



# Political Causes

- **Louis XVI** was a weak leader – he was very young and had little experience. He was easily manipulated by his advisors, so he would basically do whatever his advisors told him. – **Self Interest?**



# Political Causes

- Marie Antoinette's disregard for the peasants, or at least a complete lack of understanding that the absence of basic necessities and understanding that food staples was due to poverty rather than a lack of supply - **self interest?**

*“Let them eat Cake”*





# Social Causes - Religion

- France is traditionally a Catholic nation. While France was predominantly Catholic, in the past some French rulers allowed Protestantism to exist
- Protestantism was allowed to be practiced in France because of the Edict of Nantes which was made law in 1598. The Edict of Nantes was revoked in 1685...which made practicing Protestantism illegal in France
- As the Edict of Nantes was revoked many educated Protestants left France to live elsewhere in Europe where religious freedom existed
- This resulted in a weaker French economy because many of the Protestants were involved in commerce, industry or were professionals

# Social Causes - The Divine Right of Kings

- The idea that the power of rule, comes directly from God
- Kings and Queens were God's representatives on earth
- As a result, this meant that the monarchs were "higher" in status than the average person – **how can someone's belief that they are better than someone shape their attitude?**



# Social Causes – Social Conditions

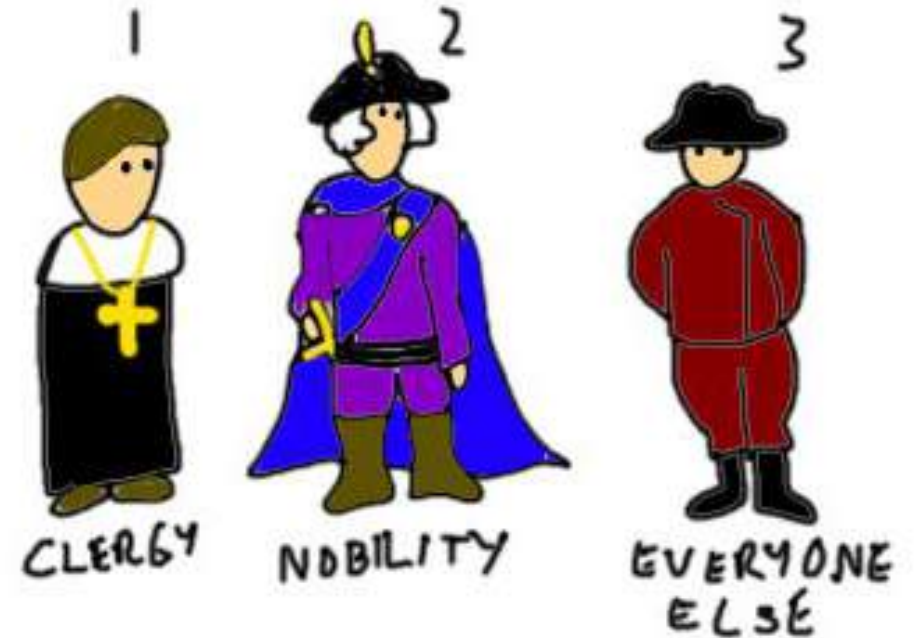
- France's population grew dramatically in the years leading up to the French Revolution
- The population grew from 18 million to 26 million between 1715-1789 –  
**Why could this dramatic increase of people lead to problems?**



# Social Causes – The Three Estates

- France was broken into estates or social groups
  - Clergy: Church
  - Nobility: Royalty
  - Everyone Else

It was impossible for someone to change what estate they were in – unless a poor person joined the church/became a member of clergy



# The Three Estates – The First Estate

- The Clergy
  - Was 0.5% of the population in France
  - Owned more than 10% of the land and were able to collect income and feudal taxes on that property
  - The total income of the church amounted to  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the government
  - The church didn't pay any taxes to the government
  - The main role of the clergy was to provide spiritual care to the community, education, relief for the poor and hospital care

# The Three Estates – The Second Estate

- The Second Estate included all nobles – were of royal birth
- 1.5% of the population in France were nobles
- There are different types of nobles:
  1. Nobles of the sword – won during medieval times for service to the state
  2. Nobles of the robe – held royal, judicial or administrative office
  3. Nobles of the bell – held municipal office
- Nobles were characterized by their superior social status, social prestige, special rights and tax exemptions
- Just because you were a noble doesn't automatically make you wealthy... many nobles were as poor as the peasants



# The Three Estates – The Third Estate

- Included 98% of the population of France
- The Third Estate is divided into 3 main sections

## 1. Bourgeoisie

- were often wealthy
- had jobs as financiers, shop keepers, artisans, lawyers, bureaucrats

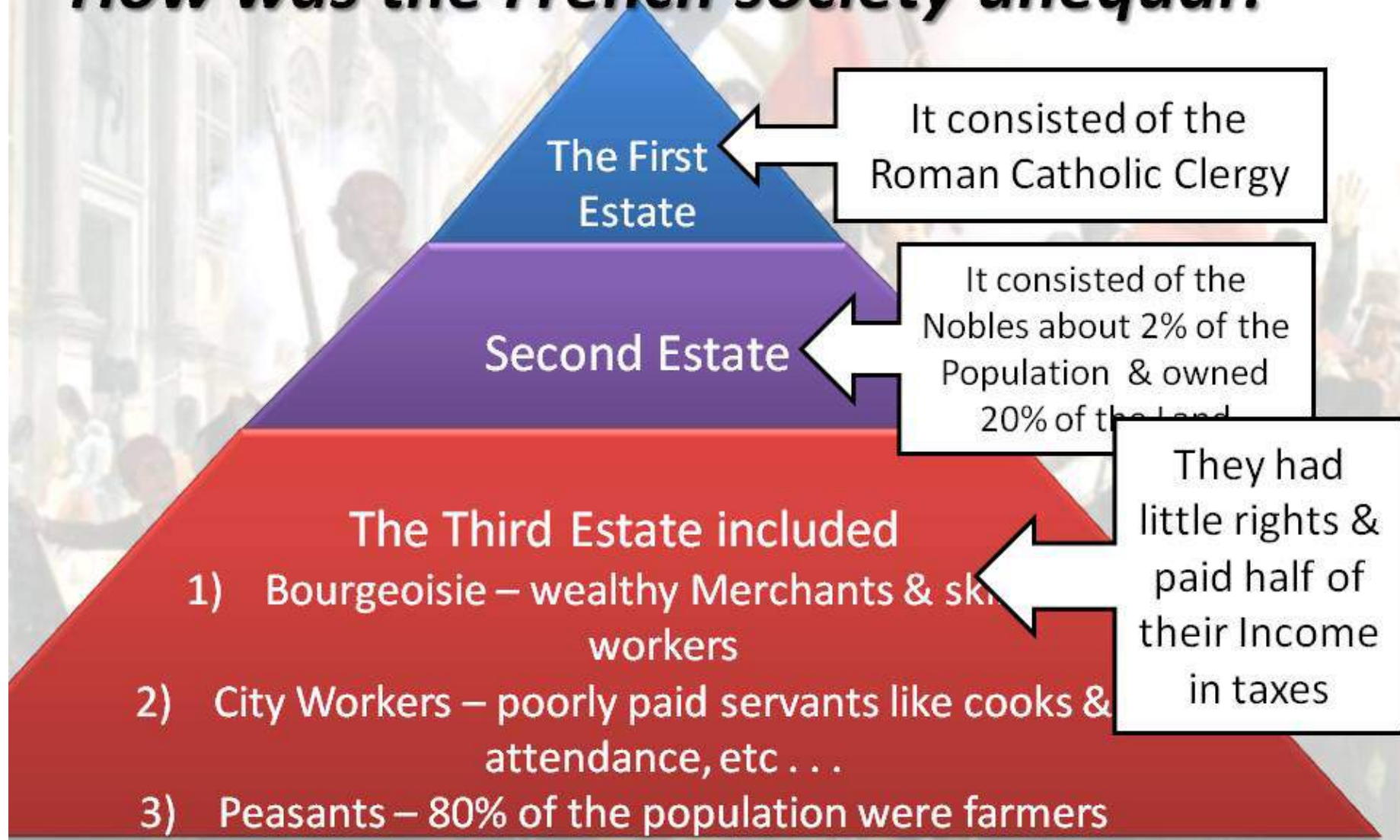
## 2. Urban Workers

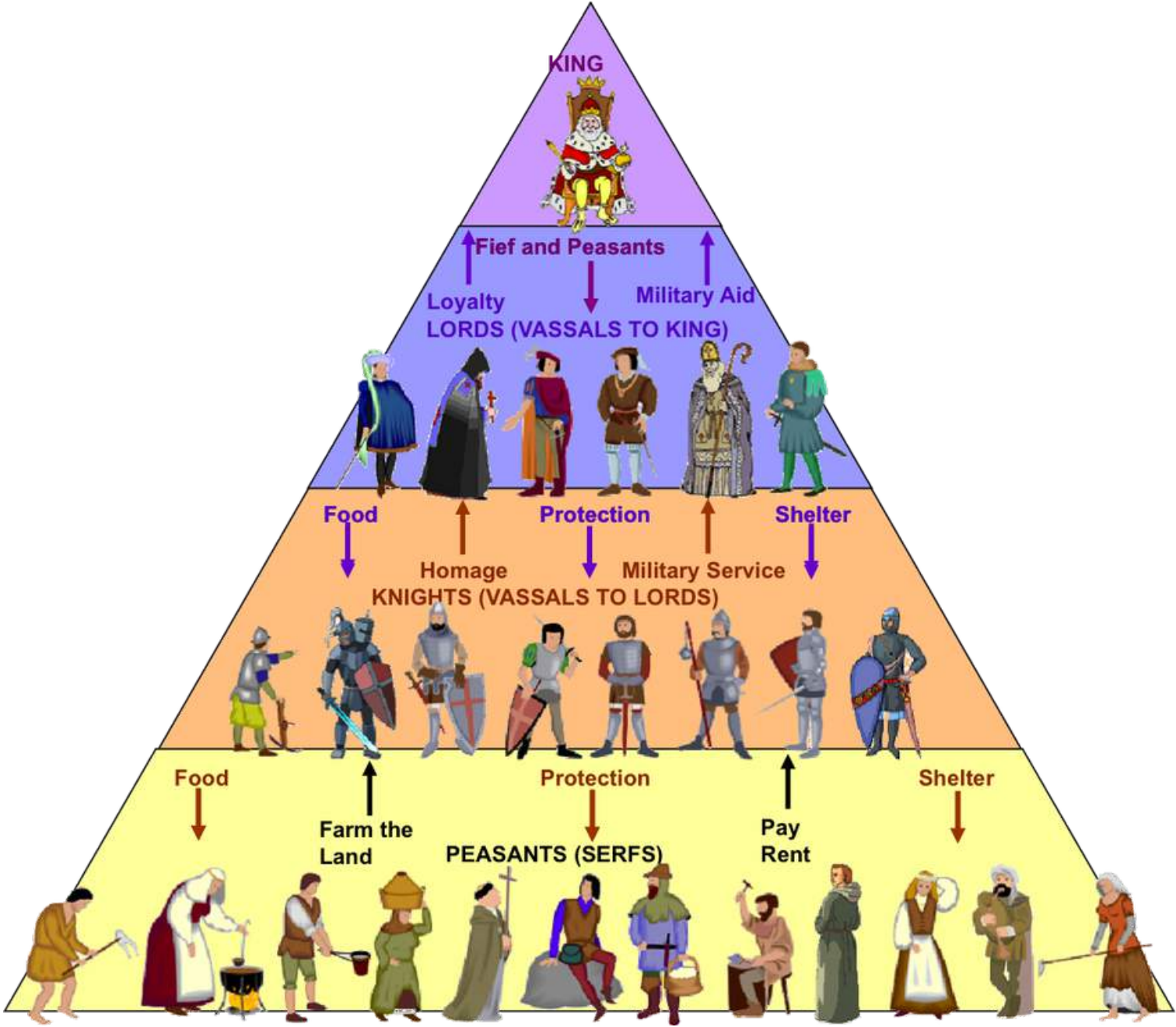
- many workers didn't become masters of their craft
- many workers were unskilled ... left the countryside to work in the city

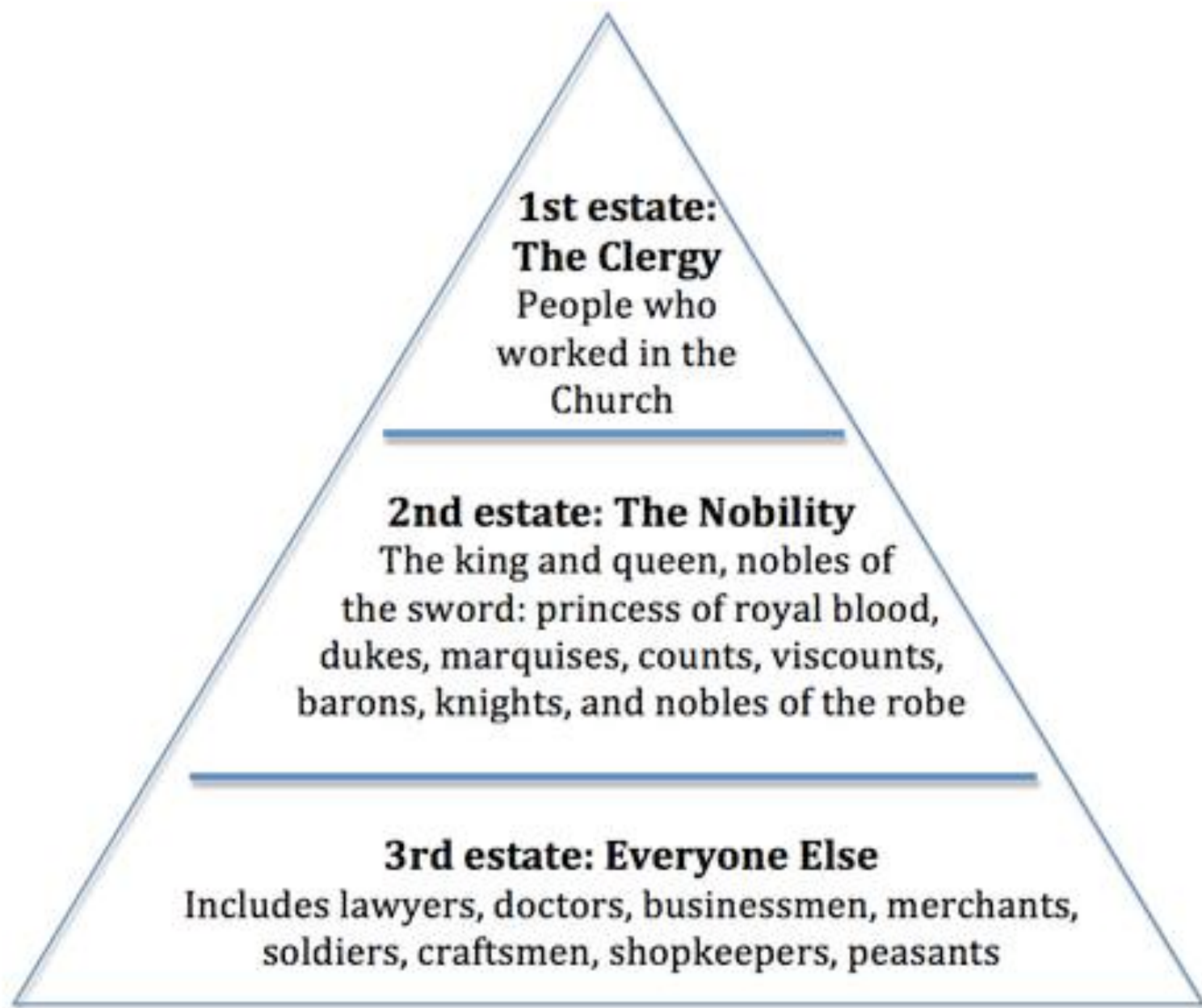
## 3. Peasants

- 86% of the population were a diverse group: a few wealthy peasant farmers, many small landowners, sharecroppers or renters, landless peasants who worked as laborers
- taxes took up to 70% of their income

# *How was the French society unequal?*







# Chapter 3 Review

- What caused the French Revolution?
  - What were the economic, social, and political causes
  - Be able to identify and explain the various causes
- Define the following concepts:
  - Absolutism
  - Bourgeoisie
  - Coup D'état
  - Divine Right of Kings
  - Monarchy
  - Philosophes
  - Three Estates