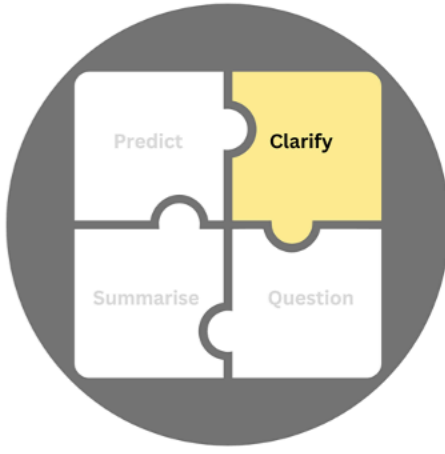


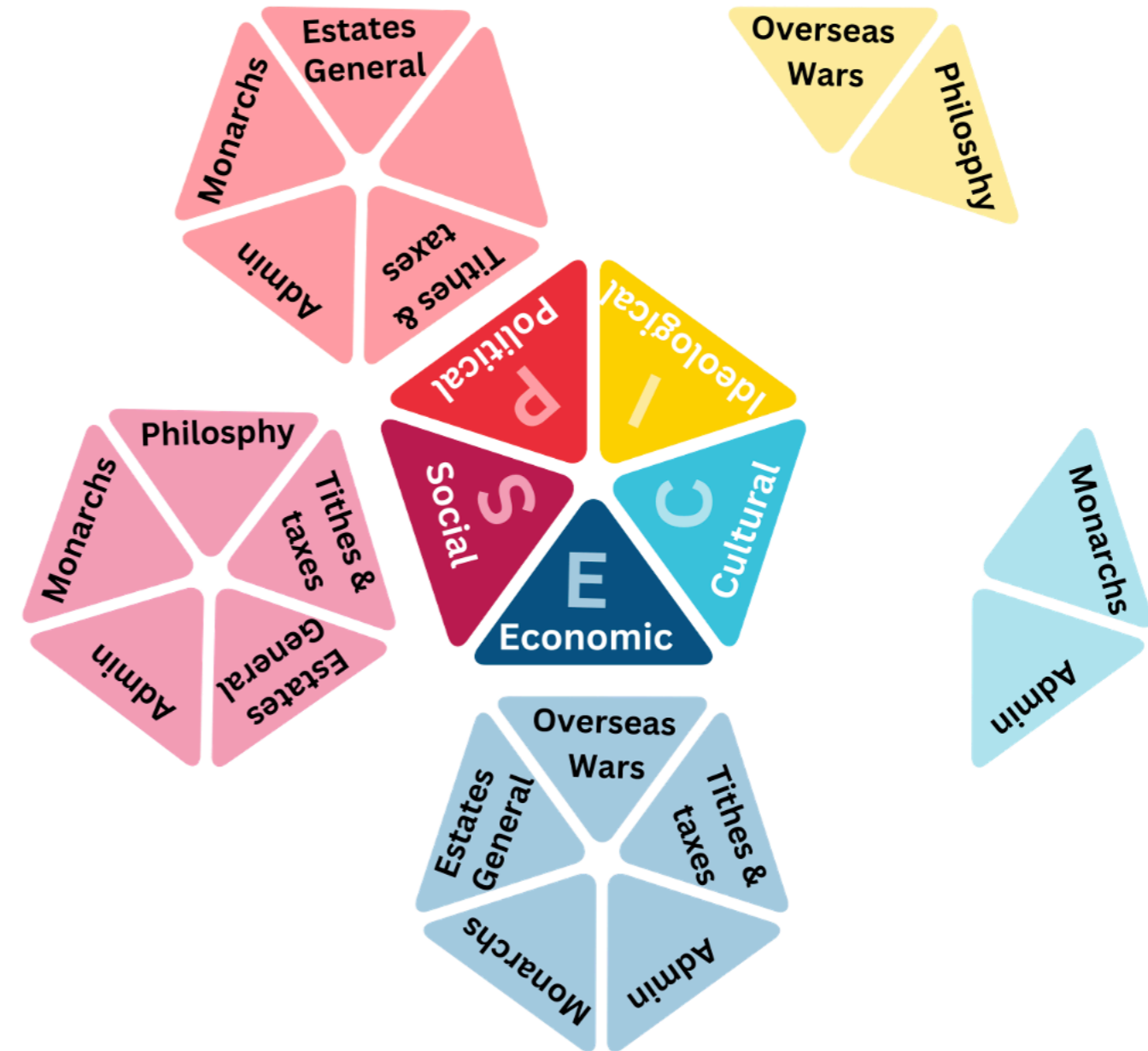
# **Creating the Environment for the French Revolution**

# The Revolutionary Environment



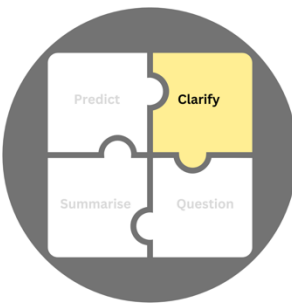
- In the years leading to the French Revolution, there was a build-up of issues that created the **revolutionary environment**:

1. Taxation system
2. Tithes
3. Administration of the land
4. Exploitation of the Third Estate
5. Influence of the Catholic Church
6. Overseas war costs
7. Monarch's spending
8. Lack of rights of citizens
9. Lack of voice of citizens
10. Estate system
11. Philosophers



# **An Attempt at Tax Reform**

# Tax Reform



- In 1787, the King Louis XVI's finance minister, **Jaques Necker**, attempted to implement new financial reforms that included a new land tax.
- This was met by widespread protest – the tax was to be used to pay the debts caused through overseas wars.
- The Third Estate could not afford to carry the burden of the new tax.
- French citizens protested, calling for a meeting of the Estates-General (which had not been held for over 170 years).



**Convening the Estates General,  
Poor Harvest, the National  
Assembly and the Tennis Court  
Oath**

# Convening the Estates General



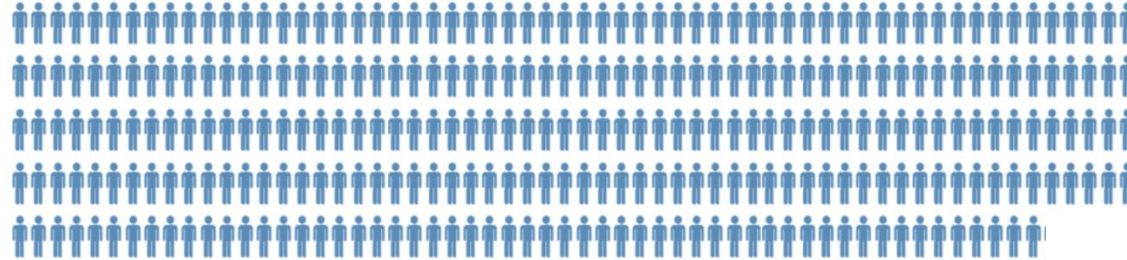
- The Estates-General of 1789 was a meeting of the three Estates.
- Louis XVI convened the meeting in response to the financial and societal crises engulfing France.
- **Delegates** were elected and there was an opportunity for French civilians to raise their grievances with delegates prior to the meeting.
- The Estates General met in Versailles in May, 1789.
- While they were supposed to be discussing the economic situation, delegates were unable to agree on voting distribution.



Auguste Couder (1839), "Opening of the Estates-General, May 5, 1789" Museum of the History of France in the Palace of Versailles in Versailles, France

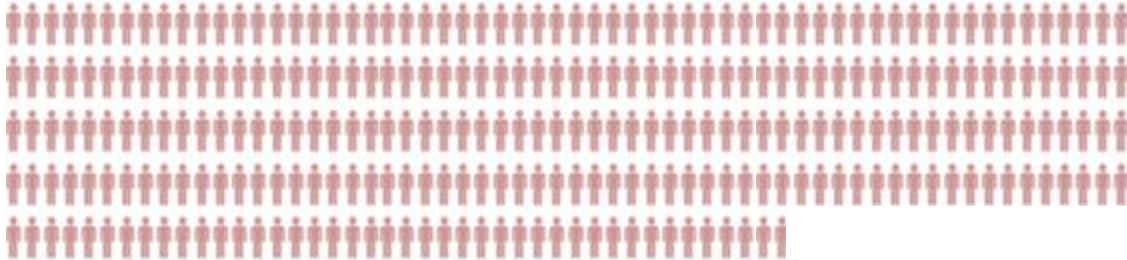
# Remember: Estates-General Voting Powers

First Estate  
296 delegates



1 Vote

Second Estate  
282 delegates



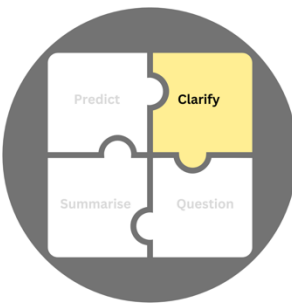
1 Vote

Third Estate  
610 delegates



1 Vote

# Creating the National Assembly

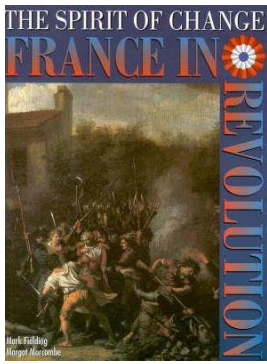


- The **National Assembly** was created on June 17, 1789, when representatives of the Third Estate of the Estates-General met to form a revolutionary assembly.
- The Assembly invited members of both the First and Second Estates to join – some members of the lower clergy did.
- They began assembling in a meeting hall within the Palace of Versailles.
- On June 20, 1789 they were locked out of the hall, and assembled on a tennis court nearby.



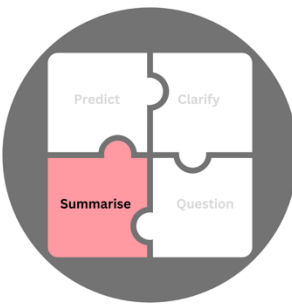
Jacques Louis David (1780-94) "The Ballhaus Oath",  
Musée national du Château de Versailles





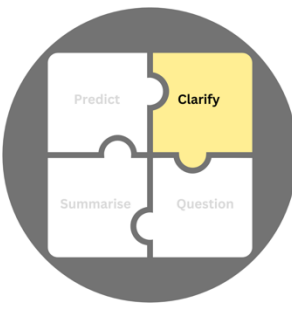
## Source 8.1, Page 75, “The Third Estate Declares itself the National Assembly”

J. H. Stewart, *A Documentary Survey of the French Revolution*, p. 87



**Summarise**

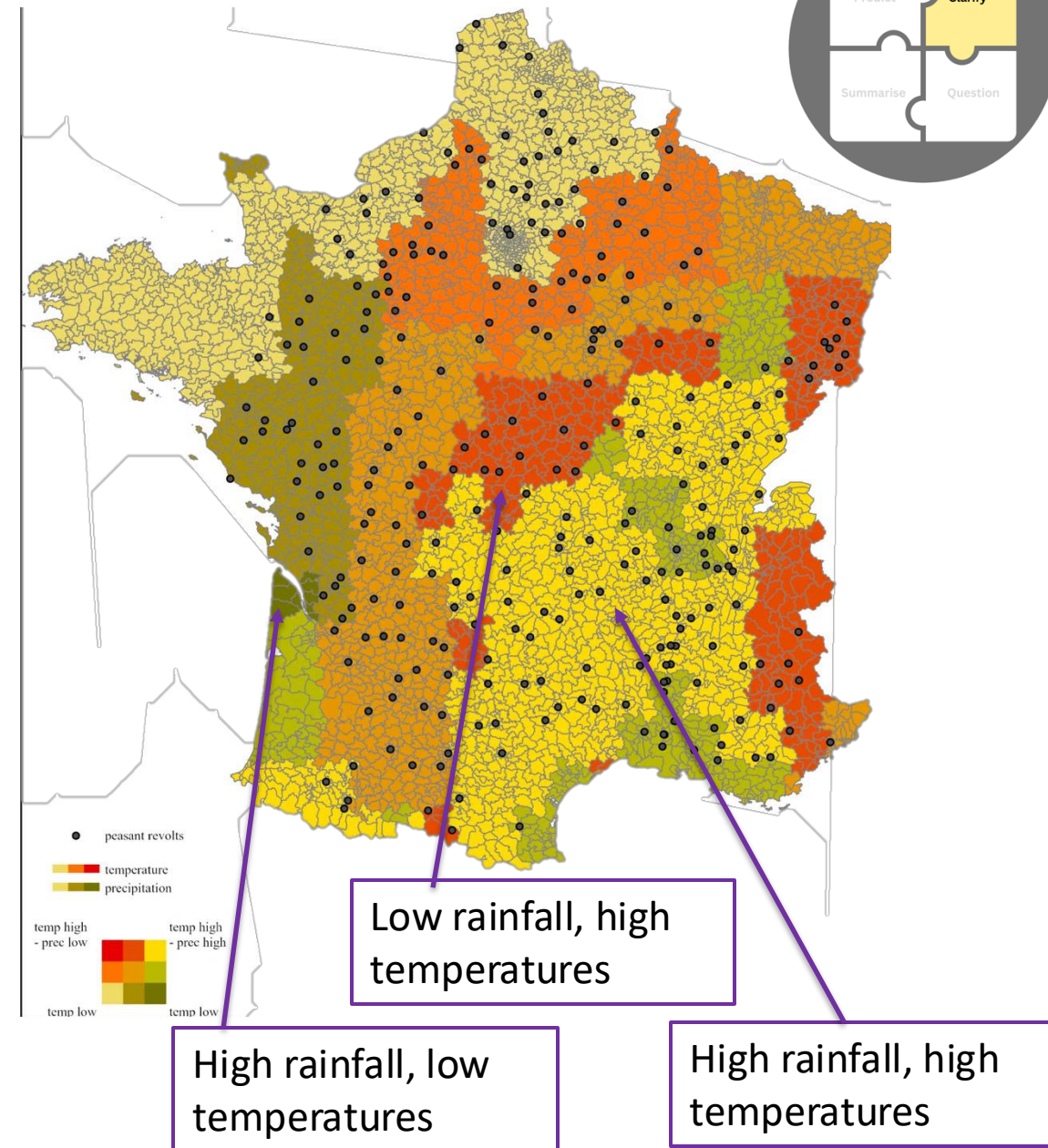
# The Tennis Court Oath



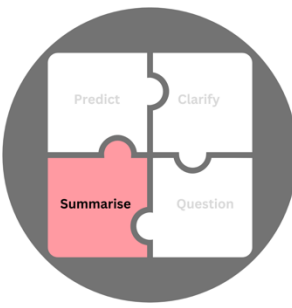
*The National Assembly, considering that it has been summoned to establish the constitution of the kingdom, to effect the regeneration of public order, and to maintain the true principles of monarchy; that nothing can prevent it from continuing its deliberations in whatever place it may be forced to establish itself; and, finally, that wheresoever its members are assembled, there is the National Assembly... It decrees that all members of this Assembly shall immediately take a solemn oath not to separate, and to reassemble wherever circumstances require, until the constitution of the kingdom is established and consolidated upon firm foundations; and that, the said oath taken, all members and each one individually shall ratify this steadfast resolution by signature.”*

# Poor Harvest of 1789

- France's economy was primarily **agrarian**.
- the average 18th-century worker spent half his daily wage on bread.
- In 1788-1789 grain crops failed two years in a row.
- In 1789, the price of bread shot up to 85%.



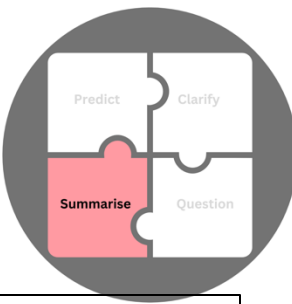
# France's Poor Harvest



In spring 1788 a drought struck France and led to a poor grain harvest and subsequent famine. In July of the same year an intense hailstorm caused additional damage in parts of the country, and the relatively harsh 1788–89 winter gave rise to further hardships. The poorer classes, 95% of whose diet consisted of bread and cereals and which before the drought had to spend about 55% of their earnings on bread, were forced by the famine conditions of the first half of 1789 to spend now 85% and over of their income on this staple food. The severity of the conditions in France will be appreciated if it is borne in mind that the poorer classes constituted nearly 90% of the population. The famine, that is, the drought, aggravated the situation of the country that was in any case in the throes of a 10-year economic slump and unemployment. Moreover, the drought came at a time when the nobility and the bourgeoisie were in a state of revolt or near revolt. While the famine was not the primary cause of the revolution, it contributed to its timing and to the widespread violence that broke out even *before* July 1789 as well as to the violent actions marking the summer of 1789 in France.

Neumann, J., 1977: Great Historical Events That Were Significantly Affected by the Weather: 2, The Year Leading to the Revolution of 1789 in France. *Bull. Amer. Meteor. Soc.*, **58**, 163–168, [https://doi.org/10.1175/1520-0477\(1977\)058<0163:GHETWS>2.0.CO;2](https://doi.org/10.1175/1520-0477(1977)058<0163:GHETWS>2.0.CO;2).

# France's Poor Harvest



*The nearer July 14th came, the greater became the shortage of food. The crowd, besieging every baker's shop, received a parsimonious distribution of bread, always with warnings about possible shortages next day. Fears were redoubled by the complaints of people who had spent the whole day waiting at the baker's door without receiving anything.*

*There was frequent bloodshed; food was snatched from the hand as people came to blows; workshops were deserted; workmen and craftsmen wasted their time in quarreling, in trying to get hold of even small amounts of food and, by losing working time in queuing, found themselves unable to pay for the next day's supply.*

*This bread, moreover, seized with such effort, was far from being of good quality. It was generally blackish, earthy and sour. Swallowing it scratched the throat, and digesting it caused stomach pains. At the Ecole Militaire and other grain stores I saw flour of terrible quality, disgusting smelling yellow mounds which produced such rock-hard lumps of bread that it could only be divided up with the use of an axe.*

*As for myself, discouraged by my lack of success in obtaining this unappetising bread, and disgusted at the bread available even in hostelryes, I completely gave up this item of food. In the evening I went to the Caveau cafe, where fortunately they had thought to keep for me two of the small bread rolls known as flutes. This was the only bread I had eaten for a whole week.*

*As I was forced at the height of the shortage to go to Versailles for a short visit, I was curious to see what sort of bread was being eaten at court, or served at the ministers' and deputies' tables. Nowhere could I find even rye bread. Everywhere I saw only beautiful bread, of the finest and most delicate quality. It was served in great abundance and delivered by the bakers themselves.*

July 1789 article from conservative newspaper L'Ami du Roi ["Friend of the King"] on how bread shortages precipitated the unrest on July 14th, 1789

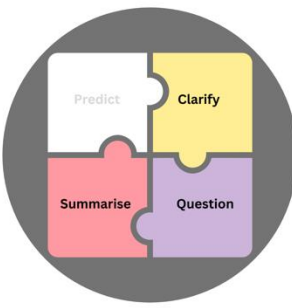


# The Dismissal of Necker

- Jaques Necker (the Finance Minister) was highly regarded by members of the Third Estate – he proposed significant tax and financial reform, asking for all members of society to be treated equally in regards to financial burden.
- Throughout the grain crisis and food shortage, Necker introduced a series of protectionist measures: cereal exports were banned and it was made illegal to buy grain anywhere other than at market.
- Necker declined to attend the king's address to the Estates General (named the **Royal Session**) on 23 June 1789.
- Necker was dismissed from his position by Louis XVI on July 11, 1789.



# Cornell Notes: The French Revolution, Explained



Heimler's History(2023) "The French Revolution, Explained", *YouTube*. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nkfUZeBiGtl> Accessed: 12 January 2025). 00:00:15-3:45:00

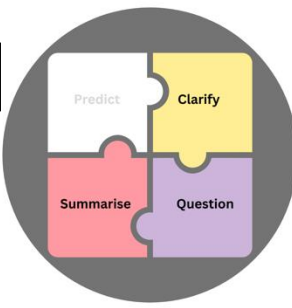
## Key Ideas / People

## Key Points

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## Questions

# Cornell Notes: The French Revolution, Explained

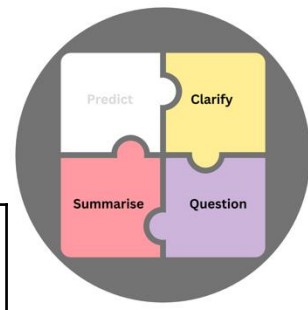


Heimler's History(2023) "The French Revolution, Explained", *YouTube*. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nkfUZeBiGtI> Accessed: 12 January 2025). 00:00:15-3:45:00



# **The Catalyst of the French Revolution**

# Cornell Notes: Storming of the Bastille



HistoryPod (2015) "14th July 1789: Storming of the Bastille, HistoryPod", *YouTube*. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tiTXftPAB8g> (Accessed: 12 January 2025).

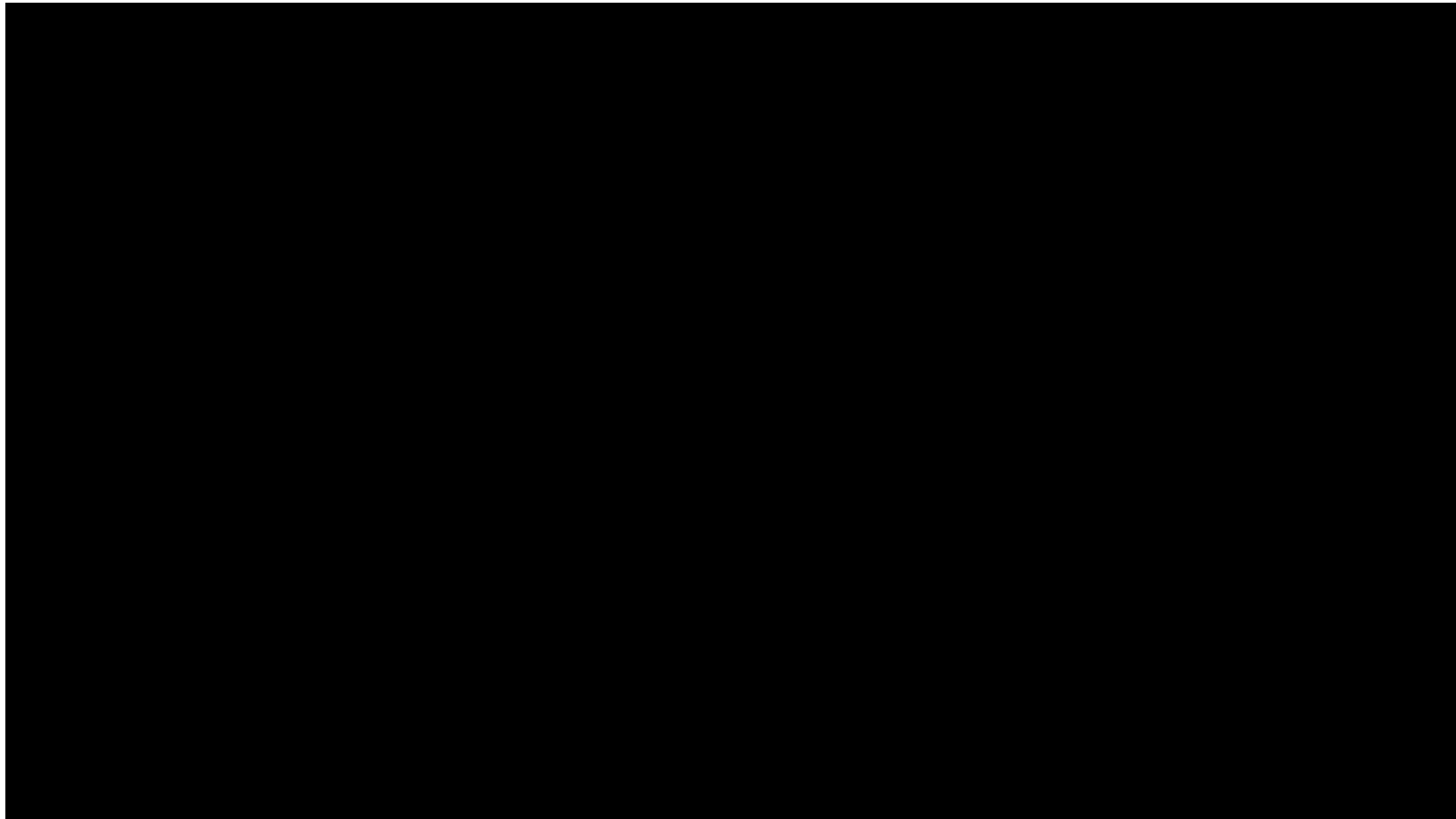
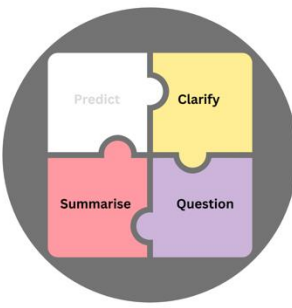
## Key Ideas / People

## Key Points

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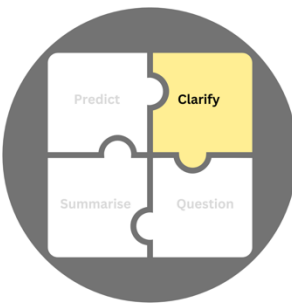
## Questions

# The Storming of the Bastille



HistoryPod (2015) *14th July 1789: Storming of the Bastille*, HistoryPod, YouTube. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tiTXftPAB8g> (Accessed: 12 January 2025).

# The importance of the Storming of the Bastille



- **The Bastille** was a medieval armoury, fortress and political prison, representing royal authority in the centre of Paris.
- By 15 July, 1789 the Estates General, National Assembly and King Louis XVI that this could end in a **coup d'état**.
- Response:
  1. Royal troops surrounding Paris returned to their garrisons.
  2. **la Fayette** took up command of the National Guard at Paris.
  3. Jean-Sylvain Bailly (leader of the Third Estate and instigator of the Tennis Court Oath) became the mayor of Paris .
  4. Jaques Necker was recalled as Finance Minister.
  5. Louis XVI returned to Paris from Versailles on 17 July and entered the Hôtel de Ville to cries of "Long live the King" and "Long live the Nation".
- In France, 14 July is still celebrated as the *Fête nationale française* (aka Bastille Day).



Cholat, Claude (1789) "The storming of the Bastille, 14<sup>th</sup> July 1789", The Museums of the City of Paris