Chapter 19: Guide to the Essentials

2. Timeline Skills: About how long did the Reign of Terror last?

1. What changes did radical revolution bring to France?

Review Questions

French government public safety took control of the monarchy. The Reign of Terror was a period of extreme violence and political repression in France. The Committee of Public Safety, led by Maximilien Robespierre, became the most powerful body in the government.

Radical Days of the French Revolution

- September 1792: King Louis XVI is executed.
- August 1792: Massacre of the Girondins.
- October 1792: King Louis XVI is arrested.
- November 1792: National Convention.
- December 1792: France becomes a republic.

The Big Idea

The French Revolution was a radical phase that lasted from 1789 to 1799. It began with the Estates-General meeting and ended with the fall of the monarchy. The revolution brought about significant changes in France, including the abolition of absolute monarchy and the establishment of a republic. The Reign of Terror marked a dark period of the revolution, characterized by mass executions and political repression.
When the French Revolution started, Napoleon Bonaparte began to earn rapid promotions. He led the French army in victories against Britain and Austria. A general by 1799, Napoleon helped overthrow the French government and put himself in charge. Five years later, Napoleon took the title Emperor of France. At each step of his rise to power, the French voted their support.

The policies Napoleon set up were so popular that his reforms remained popular. Napoleon strengthened the French government and restored order. He improved the economy and encouraged new industry. Napoleon also built roads and canals and supported public schools. Some of his reforms continued the spirit of the revolution. Peasants and tradesmen were given more freedom and property rights.

By 1812, Napoleon controlled most of Europe. He defeated the greatest nations of Europe and built an empire. He conquered the Netherlands, Belgium, and parts of Italy and Germany. He ended the Holy Roman Empire and divided Russia. Napoleon replaced the monarchs of the defeated nations with friends and family. Only Britain remained outside Napoleon’s empire.