

## **The French Constitution of 1791 – the realisation of the dreams of 1789?**

**The King** is the head of the **executive branch**.

- He appoints the ministers.
- He is the head of the administration.
- He commands the army.
- He can veto the laws of the National Assembly
- He is controlled by the National Assembly.

**The National Assembly** is the **legislative branch**.

- It passes the laws.
- It appoints the judges of the High Court.
- It controls the lower courts.
- It controls the king.
- Its members are elected by the electors (every two years).

**The High Court, the Court of Appeal and the lower courts** are the **judicial branch**.

- They pronounce judgements / deliver verdicts.

**→ *The working of the constitution depends on the cooperation (working together) of the King and the National Assembly.***

**→ The changes in 1789-1792:**

- abolition of feudal rights
- Declaration of the Rights of Man
- introduction of a constitution in 1791 (→ constitutional monarchy)
- centralization of the administration (→ 83 departments)
- Church lands sold by the State
- the clergy had to swear oaths of loyalty to the constitution

Winners	People who lost out
the affluent citizens of the Third Estate (such as business people and wealthy farmers): got political rights and power as active citizens; they bought Church property	the King: he had to share power with the National Assembly  <i>→ He unsuccessfully tried to flee to royalist nobles and their army across the border.</i>
peasants / workers: became free (but only passive) citizens (→ Many peasants did not profit much from the selling of Church lands.)	the nobles: lost their political influence and their titles (→ many went into exile)
	the clergy: they were torn between their loyalty to the pope and the king and to the constitution
<i>→ The main winners were the rich people in the towns who often supported republican ideas.</i>	



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**Tasks:**

- 1) Discuss whether in 1791 the dreams of 1789 had been realized.
- 2) On the basis of your assessment, imagine what might have happened in the years after 1791.