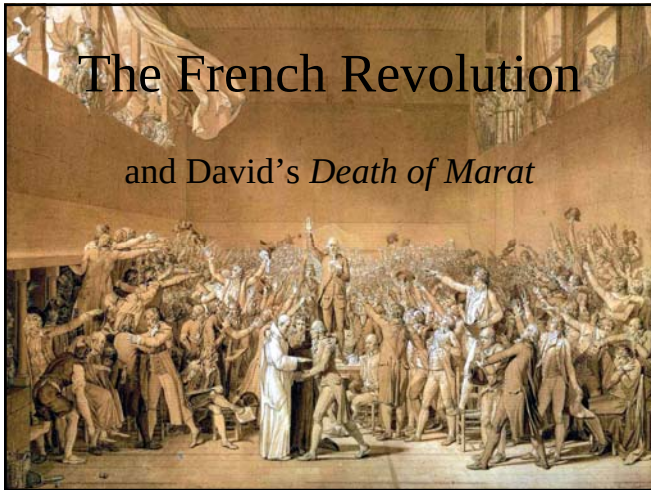
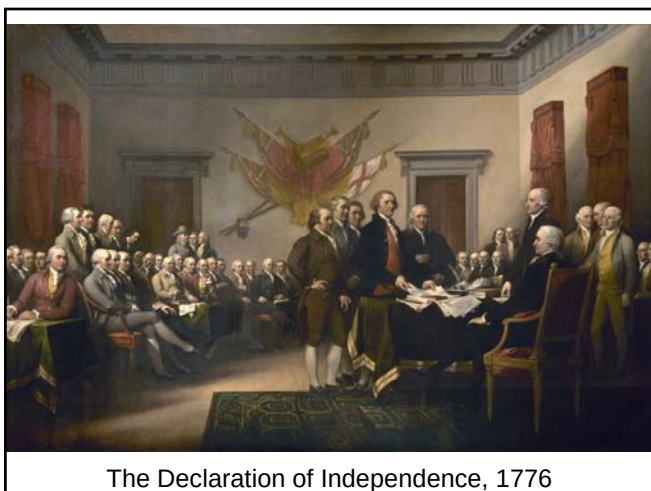
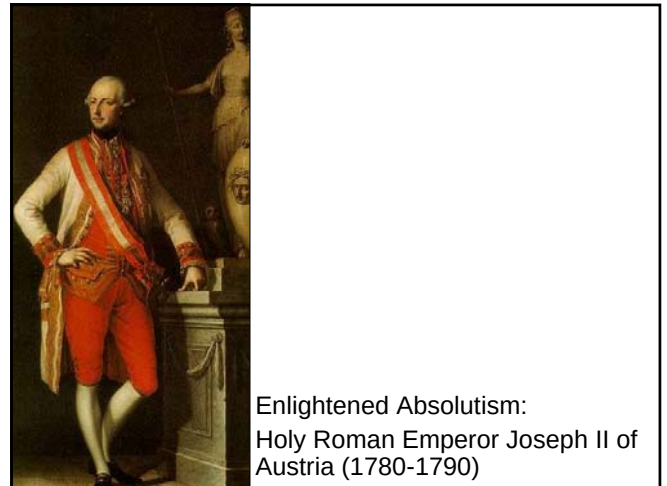
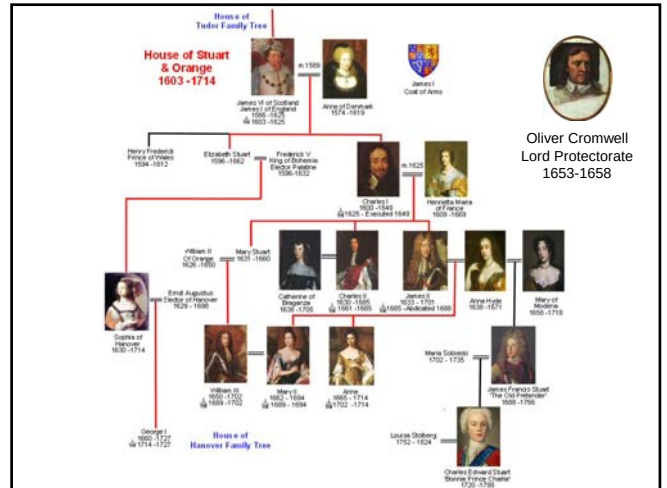




The French Revolution and David's *Death of Marat*





The French Revolution

The French Revolution (1789–1799) was a period of radical social and political upheaval in French and European history. The absolute monarchy that had ruled France for centuries collapsed in just three years. French society underwent an epic transformation as feudal, aristocratic, and religious privileges evaporated under a sustained assault from liberal political groups and the masses on the streets. Old ideas about hierarchy and tradition succumbed to new Enlightenment principles of citizenship and inalienable rights.

French Revolution Timeline

- (1649 England - King Charles I tried and executed)
- (1688 England - The Glorious Revolution)
- (1776 – American Declaration of Independence)
- 1789, June: Tennis Court Oath
- 1789, July: Storming of the Bastille
- 1789, August: *Declaration of the Rights of Man*
- 1793: King Louis XVI executed
- 1793-1794: The Reign of Terror
- 1799: Napoleon Bonaparte comes to power.

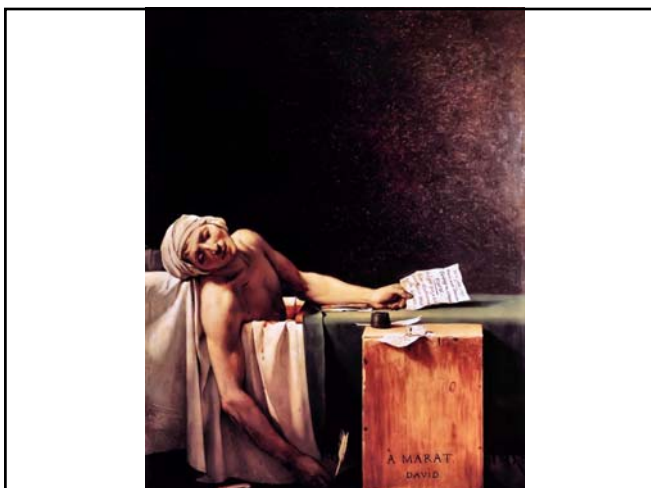


Jacques-Louis David (1748-1825)

David was a highly influential French painter in the Neoclassical style.

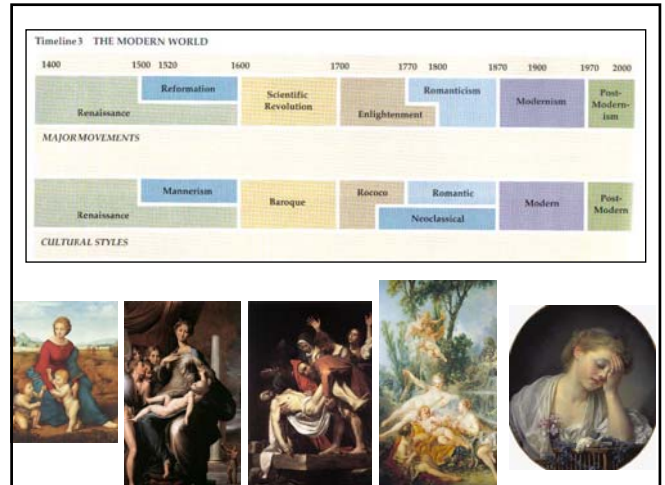
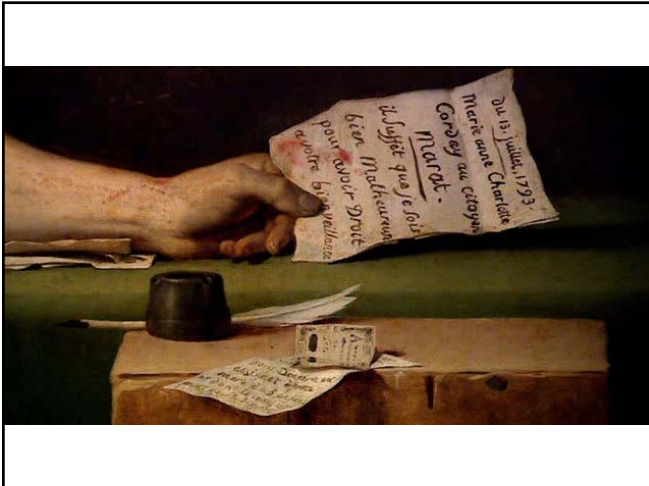
He was also an active supporter of the French Revolution.

Self-portrait, 1794



Subject Matter of *The Death of Marat*

- Jean-Paul Marat (1743-1793), was a radical journalist and politician from the French Revolution.
- He is shown in his bath, shortly after being stabbed by Charlotte Corday on the 13th of July.
- In his hand is a polite note from Corday that she used to get in to see him. It is stained with his blood.
- On the box-table is a letter from a widow of a soldier fallen in battle, along with a donation that Marat is about to send to her.



Baroque and Rococo

Baroque art is often seen as part of the Counter-Reformation, the artistic element of the revival of spiritual life in the Roman Catholic Church.

The emphasis that Baroque art placed on grandeur is seen as Absolutist in nature. Louis XIV said, "I am grandeur incarnate," and many Baroque artists served kings who tried to realize this goal.

The Baroque love for detail is often considered overly-ornate and gaudy, especially as it developed into the even more richly decorated style of Rococo, sometimes known as French Baroque.



Palace of Versailles, 1669-



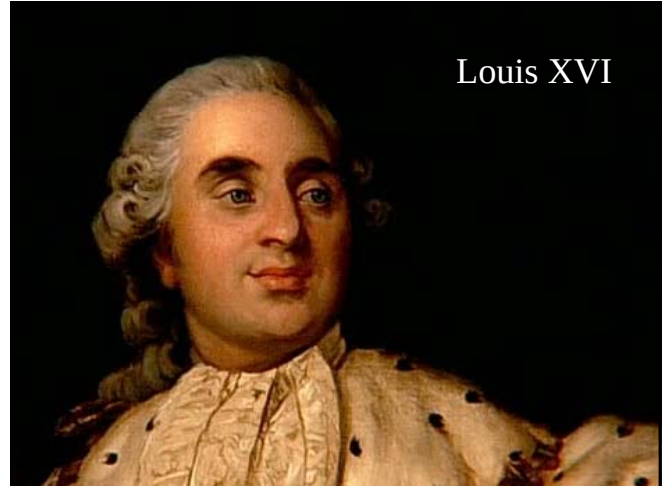
Versailles: The Hall of Mirrors



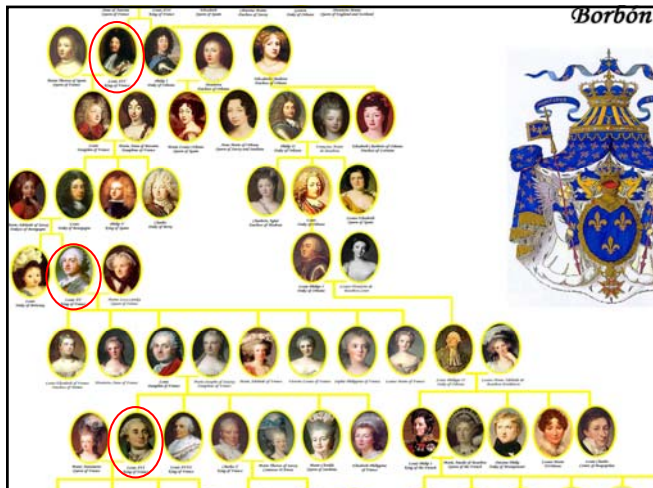
The Rape of Europa, by François Boucher, 1732-34.



Thomas Gainsborough, *Haymaker and Sleeping Girl*, c. 1785



Louis XVI



Hameau de la Reine, The Queen's hamlet, 1783



Girl Weeps over Dead Canary, Greuze, 1765.

Neoclassic Style

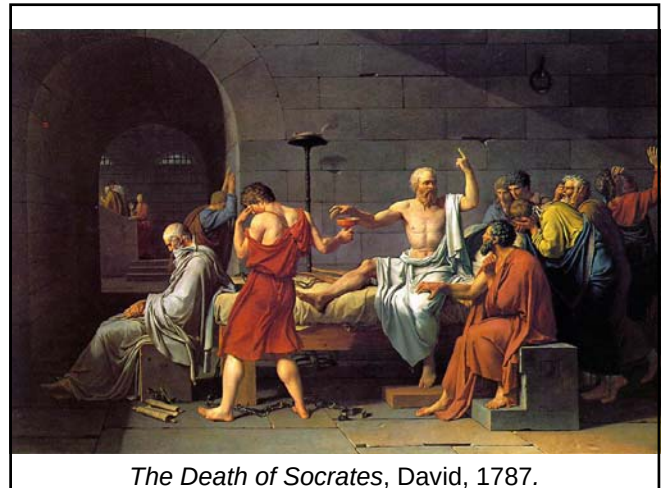
As time passed, many artists were repulsed by the ornate grandeur of the Baroque and Rococo styles and sought to revert to the earlier, simpler art of the Renaissance, creating Neoclassicism.

Neoclassicism was the artistic component of the intellectual movement known as the *Enlightenment*, which was similarly idealistic.

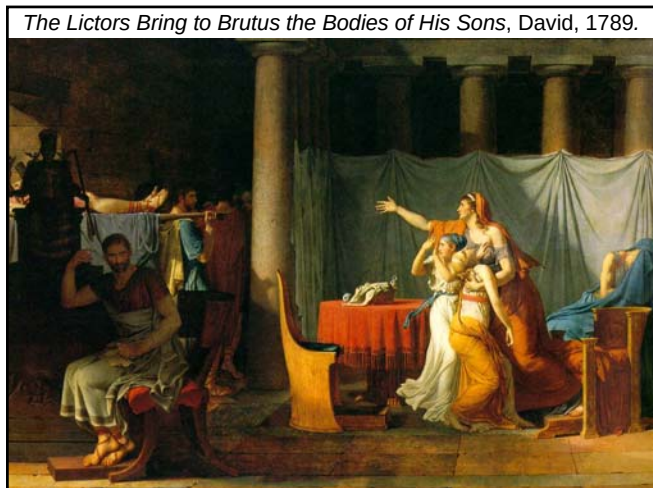
David was the most famous Neoclassical painter. He incorporated revolutionary themes of republicanism and personal sacrifice into his art.



Oath of the Horatii, David, 1784.



The Death of Socrates, David, 1787.



The Lictors Bring to Brutus the Bodies of His Sons, David, 1789.

Neoclassical Architecture

Neoclassical architecture was an architectural style produced by the neoclassical movement that began in the mid-18th century.

It is a style principally derived from the architecture of Classical Greece and Rome.



Thomas Jefferson, The Rotunda at the University of Virginia, 1822-1826

France's Financial Situation

- France had financed its participation in the American Revolution with high interest loans. By early 1789, the French Crown was in financial crisis.
- The peasants and middling orders were expected to solve the crisis by paying more taxes.
- The richest groups, the aristocrats and clergy, paid less taxes than the poor.
- People demanded a meeting of the Estates General.

The Estates General

- The three traditional Estates of France
 - The First Estate was the clergy
 - The Second Estate was the aristocracy
 - The Third Estate was everybody else
 - Represented by lawyers, bankers, and merchants of the middling orders
- Any legislation required the approval of two of the estates.
- But one thing they had in common, many had been reading the *philosophes*.

The Tennis Court Oath

- Some 'enlightened' members of the First and Second Estates joined the Third and they proclaimed themselves the National Assembly.
- After being locked out of their normal meeting place, they went across the street to an indoor tennis court.
- They vowed to remain there until France had a new constitution.



Storming of the Bastille

- July 14, 1789, the *sans-culottes* (without breeches) stormed the Bastille looking for arms to protect the National Assembly. They soon took over the government of Paris. Aristocrats fled the country.
- August 26, 1789, the National Assembly ratified the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, a summary of Enlightenment thought on the state.

Jean-Paul Marat

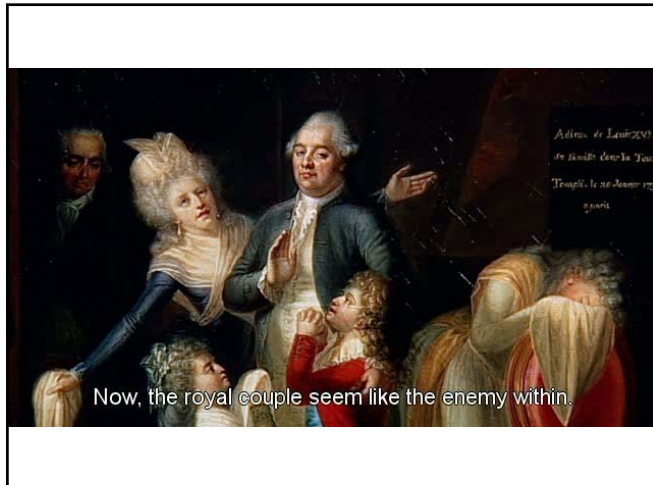
Best known as a radical journalist and politician during the French Revolution, he played a leading role during the Reign of Terror.



"It is by violence that one must establish liberty and the moment has come where we must temporarily organize a despotism of liberty to crush the despotism of kings."

Constitution of 1791

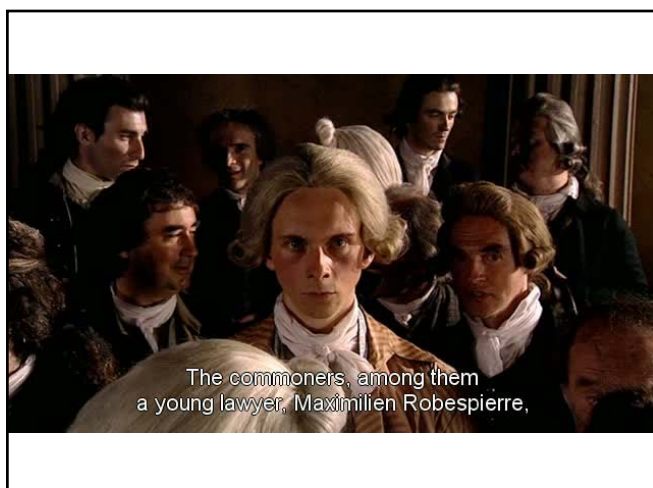
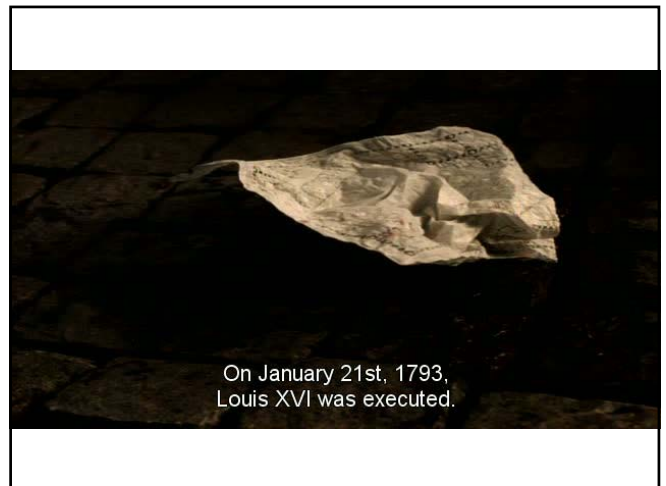
- France remained a monarchy, but one governed by a constitution.
- It attempted to expand civil liberties, empower the middling orders, and base the state on reason, not faith.
- But nobody was satisfied; the King, the ruling class, the people of France, and the royalty of Europe all had problems with it.
- In 1772, most of Europe went to war with France to restore the monarchy.



French Nationalism

- The events of 1791-1792 convinced the French people that they were no longer the subjects of a king, but the citizens of a nation.
- Rouget de Lisle penned *La Marseillaise*.
- The French people rallied to the revolution, formed a citizen army, and defeated the smaller professional armies opposing them.

La Marseillaise	
Allons enfants de la Patrie,	Come, children of the Fatherland (Homeland),
Le jour de gloire est arrivé !	The day of glory has arrived!
Contre nous de la tyrannie,	Against us, tyranny
L'étendard sanglant est levé, (bis)	Has raised the bloodied banner, (repeat)
Entendez-vous dans les campagnes	Do you hear, in the countryside,
Mugir ces féroces soldats ?	The howling of those ferocious soldiers?
Ils viennent jusque dans vos bras	They are coming right into your arms
Égorger vos fils et vos compagnes !	To slit the throats of your sons and consorts!
Aux armes, citoyens,	To arms, citizens,
Formez vos bataillons,	Form your <i>battalions</i> ,
Marchons, marchons !	Let's march, let's march!
Qu'un sang impur	That impure blood
Abreuve nos sillons !	May water our furrows!

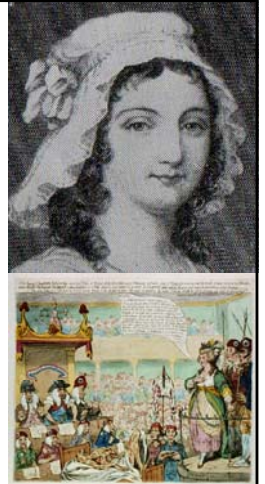


The Reign of Terror (1793-1794)

- Beset by enemies on all sides, France turned to radical solutions. The government created a Committee of Public Safety to eliminate its enemies with show trials and executions.
- It initially targeted nobles and other conspirators against the revolution, but eventually anyone that opposed the Committee was not safe.
- Overall, 250,000 were arrested, 17,000 were tried and executed, 12,000 were guillotined without trial, and many more died in jail.
- Marat sent many of those people to their deaths by signing their death warrants.

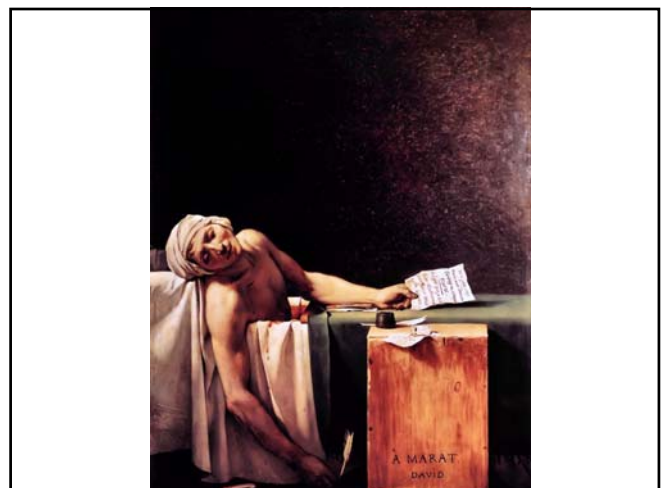
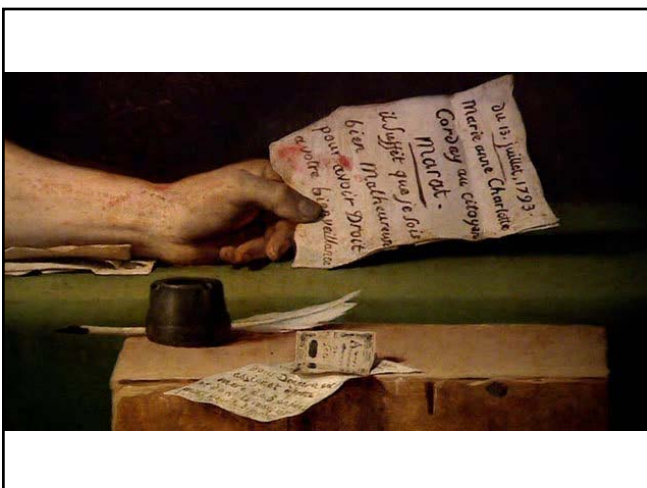
Charlotte Corday

- She supported the revolution, but believed that Marat would lead France to civil war.
- She claimed to have killed one man to save the lives of 100,000.
- She was executed by guillotine four days after she killed Marat.



“... it's a lie.”

- Marat had a bad skin condition and was not a handsome man.
- Corday did not give him a polite note, she gave him a list of 'traitors'; he responded that they would be guillotined within a week.
- His wound is bloodless, the knife is on the floor instead of in his chest.
- Corday is not shown being wrestled to the ground by his men. Marat lies alone and in peace.



Ode on a Grecian Urn

. . . is a poem by John Keats written in 1819.
The final lines of the poem:

*“Beauty is truth, truth beauty,”
-that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye
need to know.*

Do you agree?

Practice Questions

- Is *The Death of Marat* good art?
- What makes art “good”?
 - What do you like?
 - What don’t you like?
 - Why do you like what you like?
- Describe your aesthetic of good art.

Aesthetic: a principle or set of principles relating to the appreciation of art and beauty [Greek *aisthanomai* to perceive, feel]

David After the Reign of Terror

- As a politician, David signed death warrants during the Reign of Terror.
- Because of his association with Marat and Robespierre, he was forced into exile after the Reign of Terror ended.
- He continued to paint, and returned to France temporarily under Napoleon’s patronage.
- But when Marat died, he died in exile; France would not even allow his body entry into the country for burial.



Self portrait of Jacques-Louis David, 1794.

France After the Reign of Terror

- The Reign of Terror ended July 1794 with the death of Robespierre.
- As in the English Civil War, the Revolution now took a turn towards conservatism.
- By 1799, the country was sick of revolution, war, high taxes, high prices, new constitutions, and politicians.
- The result, the rise of Napoleon, and eventually, the return of monarchy.



David, *Napoleon Crossing through the St. Bernard Pass*, 1801