France 1788-1794: an illustrated timeline
Source: Hetherton, G - Revolutionary France CUP 1992

1 Summer 1788
King Louis is desperate
He is unpopular and very short of money. His advisers cannot help him.

2 June 1789
Louis is forced to call parliament
He hopes to raise money through a new tax. Many of the representatives refuse to accept the unfair way that parliament is run. They storm out and hold their own meeting in the indoor tennis court in Versailles. Louis backs down.

3 July 1789
The Bastille is stormed
After weeks of panic, fear and discontent, the people of Paris storm the Bastille, a prison in the heart of Paris. They completely destroy it. After this, Louis gives away more of his power to the parliament.

4 October 1789
The march to Versailles
There are serious food shortages. The women of Paris march to the Palace of Versailles to protest to Louis. The King and his family are forced to leave Versailles. They go to live in the Tuileries Palace in Paris.

5 June 1791
The royal family escape
Louis, Marie-Antoinette and their children decide the time is right to escape from France. The escape attempt fails. They are captured. After this, they are treated as prisoners.

6 January 1793
The King is executed
Louis is sentenced and put to death. He is regarded as a traitor to France by the people who are now in power. Marie-Antoinette is executed nine months later.

7 Spring 1793 to summer 1794
The Reign of Terror
Against a background of foreign war, civil war, food shortages and great fear, the Committee of Public Safety – 12 men – organises a “Reign of Terror”. The guillotine is used against anyone who is considered to be an “enemy” of the Revolution.

8 July 1794
The end of the Terror
Finally, Robespierre, the leader of the Committee, is himself guillotined. This brings an end to the Terror. But the cost has been high. Many lives have been lost or ruined. France is still at war and the country is in chaos.