“It has been said that terror is the principle of despotic government. Does your government therefore resemble despotism? Yes, as the sword that gleams in the hands of the heroes of liberty resembles that with which the henchmen of tyranny are armed. Let the despot govern by terror his brutalized subjects; he is right, as a despot. Subdue by terror the enemies of liberty, and you will be right, as founders of the Republic. The government of the revolution is liberty's despotism against tyranny. Is force made only to protect crime? And is the thunderbolt not destined to strike the heads of the proud?

“…Indulgence for the royalists, cry certain men, mercy for the villains! No! Mercy for the innocent, mercy for the weak, mercy for the unfortunate, mercy for humanity.

“Society owes protection only to peaceable citizens; the only citizens in the Republic are the republicans. For it, the royalists, the conspirators are only strangers or, rather, enemies. This terrible war waged by liberty against tyranny- is it not indivisible? Are the enemies within not the allies of the enemies without? The assassins who tear our country apart, the intriguers who buy the consciences that hold the people's mandate; the traitors who sell them; the mercenary pamphleteers hired to dishonor the people's cause, to kill public virtue, to stir up the fire of civil discord, and to prepare political counterrevolution by moral counterrevolution-are all those men less guilty or less dangerous than the tyrants whom they serve?”

Maximilien Robespierre, February 1794
**Context:**

As the French Revolution approached its fifth year and under threat of foreign invasion and counter-revolutionary forces within France, the Jacobin-led Committee on Public Safety had superseded the National Convention as the ruling force in France. Maximilien Robespierre became the dominant force on the committee. Robespierre advocated and saw to the institution of a “Reign of Terror” to eliminate enemies of the Revolution.

Source: http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/robespierre-terror.html

**Questions:**

1. Was the use of “Terror” justified in defense of the changes brought about by the French Revolution?
2. In a revolutionary situation, do citizens of a republic have to be republicans? Why or why not?

**Assignment:**

Organize the “Trial of Citizen Louis Capet (King Louis XVI).” Using the historical record, while expanding on it to make Marie Antoinette a co-defendant, have students take on the positions of judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, jury, and witnesses to determine whether the former monarchs were guilty of treason and if so found, should he be sentenced to death?

**Bibliography:**


