**A Weak Leader**

Strong leadership might have prevented the coming crisis, but Louis XVI was indecisive and allowed matters to drift. He paid little attention to his government advisers, preferring to spend his time hunting or tinkering with locks rather than attending to the details of governing. Louis had married his wife, Marie Antoinette, when he was 15 and she was 14. Because Marie was a member of the royal family of Austria, France’s long-time enemy, she became unpopular as soon as she set foot in France. As queen, Marie spent so much money on gowns, jewels, and gifts that she became known as Madame Deficit. Rather than cutting expenses and increasing taxes, Louis put off dealing with the emergency until France faced bankruptcy. Then, when he tried to tax aristocrats, the Second Estate forced him to call

a meeting of the Estates-General—an assembly of representatives from all three estates—to get approval for the tax reform. He had the meeting—the first in 175 years—on May 5, 1789, at Versailles.

8. Why was Marie Antoinette so unpopular?

a.

b.

9. What was Marie Antoinette’s nickname?

a.

10. Who did Louis try to tax in order to pull France out of their deficit?

a.

11. What was the Estates General?

a.