

# IN THE TENNIS COURT

By Miss Surawy  
www.SchoolHistory.co.uk

In a desperate attempt to collect even more taxes, King Louis called a meeting of the *ESTATES GENERAL* in 1788. However the people from the Third Estate used the meeting as a chance to tell the King what they thought was wrong with France and their lives and demand improvements. When the King refused to listen, members of the Third Estate went to a nearby Tennis Court and made an *OATH* saying they would not move until the King had made improvements. In the Tennis Court several people made speeches.

Below are 'bits' of those speeches. In one colour show what 'bits' the peasants would have said. In another show what 'bits' the urban workers would have said and in a third colour show what the businessmen would have said. Use a fourth colour if all three could have said it.

## Colour Key

- |               |                          |
|---------------|--------------------------|
| Peasants      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Urban Workers | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Businessmen   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| All three     | <input type="checkbox"/> |

I deserve better treatment than this. I have just written a letter to my local newspaper about how hard I work and how much money my factory makes, yet I have no say in how this country is run. Down with the King.

Conditions in the factory where I work are terrible. It would be something to have a warm home to go back to but I don't even have that. I don't even know if I will have a job tomorrow. Why doesn't the King pass laws to improve working conditions?

The King does nothing to stop the local aristocrat's animals wandering all over my land, ruining my crops. I am fed up.

Our lives are hard enough without having to work on the local aristocrat's land at harvest time for nothing. France needs to change.

This latest poor harvest has been the ruin of me. How can I survive now that I have lost my job in the textile factory? My family and me will starve.

Marie Antoinette is a disgrace. She spends money as if it were going out of fashion. The King just sits back and lets her. He is a disgrace too.

The system of taxes in France is criminal. It should have been changed years ago. I find them difficult enough to pay and I have some wealth. I can't imagine how the others in the Third Estate cope. What makes it worse is how those nobles and clergymen get away with it.

**TASK: CHOOSE TO BE ONE OF THE PEOPLE FROM THE THIRD ESTATE. WRITE THEIR TENNIS COURT SPEECH.**