

ancient regime

the social and political
order in France before the
revolution

assignat

paper money issued by
governments of the
revolution

bourgeois, bourgeoisie

the urban middle classes,
for example merchants,
professionals

committee of general
security

government committee of
Year II, responsible for
police and internal
security

committee of public safety

the most important and
powerful of the committees
of Year II, responsible for
internal and external affairs

cordeliers club

the more radical of the two major clubs of the revolution; leaders include Danton, Marat, Hebert

cult of the supreme being

religious cult founded by Robespierre in 1794; it was a deist cult, based on the belief in some form of creator; Robespierre regarded it as an alternative to Christianity and to the more extreme Cult of Reason

emigres

nobles and others who fled France during the revolution

enrages

the most extreme revolutionary party, which had much influence among the Parisian sans-culottes

feuillants

constitutional monarchists who wanted to keep the monarchy but limit its powers

girondins

the main group of deputies opposed to the Jacobins in the national convention

guillotine

the new and official instrument of execution in France during and after the revolution; its heavy, sharp blade mounted on a strong frame caused death by decapitation (cutting off the head); compared with methods of execution used in France before the revolution, and in other countries long afterwards, it was considered a human device as it caused instant death

hebertists, exaggeres

followers of Jacques-Rene Hebert

indulgents

group around Danton who called for an end to the Terror from late 1793

jacobobins, jacobin club

name assumed by the middle-class radical group that met at the former Jacobin Convent in Paris from October 1789; Robespierre became its president in 1790; at first the club included the Feuillants (constitutional monarchists) who left it in June 1791. and the Girondians; after several purges, it consisted mainly of the loyal supporters of Robespierre

levee en masse

conscription, following the law of 23 August 1793, which mobilised the French nation of war

maximum

the laws of May and September 1793, limiting prices of necessities

mountain

the main group of Jacobin deputies in the national convention

noblesse

French aristocracy or nobility

Paris commune

the Paris local government during revolution

plain

the large, non-committed group of deputies in the national convention

revolutionary tribunal

the law court set up in March 1793 to try and sentence suspected enemies of the revolution

sans-culottes

literally, those who wore trousers instead of knee-breeches; the term was used to refer to urban workers, small shopkeepers and the city poor; between 1792-95 it also became a political term for more extreme revolutionaries

sections

the local government wards of Paris, 1790-95

states-general

the assembly of the three estates convened in May 1789

the terror

the period of Jacobin
power, September 1793-
July 1794

year II

under the revolutionary
calendar adopted by the French
republic, the second year of the
republic and the period of
Jacobin power and the Terror