French Revolution: Thermidorian Reaction

Today’s Objective

- To understand the moderate reaction to the Reign of Terror
- To understand the formation of the Directory and its role in the French Revolution
• In the aftermath of Robespierre’s execution, a moderation of the revolution begins:
  
  → **Thermidorian Reaction**
  
  - Republic of Virtue & Committee of Public Safety ended
  - Roman Catholicism is restored as the state religion
  - influence of wealthy middle-class & professionals replaces the Sans-Culottes
  - many Jacobin radicals are executed
• A new constitution, the **Constitution of the Year III** (1795) is adopted
  ...placing executive authority in the hands of a committee of five: 
The Directory
  - established two houses of the legislature & an executive branch
  - status was based on civic equality & social status rather than rank & birth
• The effects of the Thermidorian Reaction and the new constitution:
  - end to the political influence of the Sans-Culottes
    ...causing civil unrest in Paris
  - the Convention made peace with Prussia & Spain
    ...but remains at war with Great Britain & Austria
  - fear of radical democrats & royalists led to the Two-Thirds Law
  - Conspiracy of Equals, attempted socialist takeover of France
  - the Directory was weak due to:
    ...continued foreign wars
    ...Catholic royalists revival
    ...focused on staying in power, rather than reform
Guided Reading Question
How did the Reign of Terror guide the revolution to the Thermidorian Reaction?

Target Questions
• Explain the moderation of the Revolution
• Describe the structure of the Directory?
• What was the Two-Thirds Law?