

# Levée en Masse

The Wars of the French Revolution: 1789 to 1802  
c. John Welch and Victory Point Games Inc.

## Plan 4: Understanding the Design Process for Historical Games

### Introduction:

**Levée en Masse** is a game that simulates the struggles that gripped France beginning with the Storming of the Bastille in 1789 to Napoleon's seizure of power in 1802. The game was designed to be played solo but can easily be adapted for use in a single classroom or with smaller groups of students using multiple copies of the game. In this lesson, students will focus on the design process for historical games and the concept of abstraction.

### Subject Areas:

World Studies, Military History, and Government classes

Grade Level: 9 – 12

### Lesson Objectives:

Students will:

1. Be able to define the use of abstraction in a historical simulation.
2. Identify design elements that simplify complex historical events.
3. Effectively share findings with classmates.
4. Critique design choices and offer modifications with a justification for why the changes are improvements over the original.

### National Standards:

World History Standard 32: Understand the causes and consequences of the political revolutions in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Working with Others Standard 1: Contributes to the overall effort of a group; Standard 4: Displays effective interpersonal communication skills.

California State Standards: 10.2.4 Explain how the ideology of the French Revolution led France to develop from constitutional monarchy to democratic despotism to the Napoleonic Empire.

### Materials Needed:

- Levee en Masse Game

### Procedures:

1. Historical simulations/games abstract events, trends, and people to create a design that captures the essential elements of the time period and is fun to play. This lesson encourages your students to try their hand at game design. Begin with a brief explanation of the use of abstraction in **Levée en Masse** – students should note the basics of how and why it is done so they have a template for the rest of the lesson.

2. Take the following game elements and have a student (or students) explain how those elements abstract historical events, trends, or people:

- The 3 political tracks

- The French Army Die Roll Modifier (DRM) table

- The relative strength value for the 5 attacking armies

- The political effect of the 'Bread Riot'/Journée

- The option to try and occupy 'circle' non-French territory

- The use of three separate decks

- Having a fixed beginning and ending card for each deck

- The relative difficulty to win a Naval Action die roll

- The use of a 6-sided dice to determine outcomes

- The Vendee track when all other tracks represent foreign armies

3. Then have each student (or groups of students) present his or her findings. Again, it's a good idea to have other students collect the results of their classmates work and to see their classmates as sources of good information.

4. Finally, have your students pick one or more design elements and explain a change or changes they would make to improve either its historical realism or its fun.

### Assessment:

1. Collect each student's work at the end of the period to check for completeness and accuracy. This would also be an opportunity to check for critical reasoning skills and the ability to express those skills in both written and oral form.