



# The Haitian Revolution

Toussaint L'Ouverture,  
Haitian General and leader of  
rebellion

1792-1804



---

# Causes and Goals

## Causes:

- Social inequality of distinctive social classes
- Majority of population were mistreated slaves who desired more rights and equality
- Europeans in Santo Domingo disregarded France's government granting affranchis the right to citizenship which caused unrest
- The affranchis desired the political power the Europeans held
- 1791: Thousands of Haitian slaves revolted
- Toussaint L'Ouverture lead maroons the in rebellion

## Goals:

- Haitian slaves desired better treatment and independence from their European minority rulers
  - Affranchis wanted the obtain the same political influence as the Europeans
  - Citizenship for all people and classes
-

---

# Consequences

- In 1801 a constitution was created granting everyone citizenship
- Toussaint conquered Santo Domingo and named himself general for life
- Peasants were forced to return to working on the plantations, however land was more evenly divided out
- On January 1, 1804 the entire state of Haiti was declared permanently independent
- This was the first successful slave led revolt

Thesis: In 1791, the Haitian Revolution derived from a desire to eliminate racist mistreatment, gain independence and equal power across all social classes and was ultimately successful as it resulted in the citizenship of all Haitian people, the writing of a new constitution, and complete independence as a state.

---

---

# Historical Changes and Continuity

## Changes:

- the lowest social class (slaves) took over the country and removed most of the europeans from Haiti
- Haiti became the first non-european state in the Caribbean and the second democracy in the Western Hemisphere
- most of the plantations in Haiti were destroyed and less and less goods were exported
- the warfare of the revolution destroyed the capital and caused a major decline in the economy
- the name of the nation changed from St. Domingue to Haiti

## Continuity:

- Haiti has complete independence and has never been ruled by a European nation since the revolution
- Slavery has remained abolished
- Haiti has remained a country of growing poverty and has had unstable politics after the european leaders were forced out of the nation

Thesis: The Haitian Revolution changed the social hierarchy of Haiti and became a nation completely separate from European rule, however, Haiti has continued to remain a nation of growing poverty with an unstable government throughout and after the revolution

---

---

## Letter to the Minister of Marine, by Toussaint L'Ouverture on the Haitian Revolution, 13 April 1799

M-The revolution began when the white population of Haiti wanted to escape the control of France but did not want men of color equal to themselves or to end the slavery of the blacks. The revolution soon became lower class black slaves against the rule of upper class whites and men of color.

E-"[The whites of St. Domingue] wanted to escape from their arbitrary government, but did not intend...to destroy either the prejudices that debased the men of color or the slavery of the blacks...fearing the enfranchisement of the blacks, men of color deserted their comrades in arms...the blacks fought for sometime against the reunited whites and men of color."

H-During the 18th century Europe began to grow intellectually, and politically. Ideas from philosophers caused the rise of democracy and the authority of the church began to be questioned.

A- The audience of this letter is the Minister of Marine, which would affect the source because L'ouverture could have been over exaggerating about how the opposite side may have acted and could have made his own side sound more heroic.

P- The purpose of this document is to show a person outside of the rebellion why the rebellion/revolution began and to justify why it was necessary in order to achieve equality in St. Domingue.

P-Toussaint L'ouverture would have been prejudiced against the whites and men of color in St. Domingue because he was a leader of the rebelling side in the revolution.

Y-The document disagrees with the popular opinion at the time because the popular opinion was that whites and men of color deserved political rights and liberty.

---

---

**Definition:** A revolution derives from the desire for social, economic, or political change and results in the uprising and unification of oppressed and inspired to create distinctive change.

**Thesis:** The Haitian Revolution lead by slaves was largely revolutionary for the positive changes it instilled in Haiti's social hierarchy, distribution of power and the equality it provided for oppressed peoples. A desire for independence and equality was obtained through slave revolts proving it's effectiveness and longevity.

---