Crane Brinton’s *Anatomy of a Revolution*

historian who wrote about revolutions, generally beginning with the French Revolution

*Compares a revolution to a fever or a disease:*

* The revolutionary “fever” begins with the appearance of certain “symptoms.”
* It proceeds by advances and retreats to a crisis stage, or “delirium.”
* The crisis ends when the “fever” breaks.
* A period of convalescence follows, interrupted by a relapse or two before the recovery is complete.

*Revolutions to be considered:* American (even though it precedes the French),

French, Haitian, German, Italian, Russian

*Conditions Present Before a Revolution Occurs*

1. People from all social classes are discontented.
2. People feel restless and held down by unacceptable restrictions in society, religion, the economy or the govt.
3. People are hopeful about the future, but they are being forced to accept less than they had hoped for.
4. People are beginning to think of themselves as belonging to a social class, and there is a growing bitterness between social classes.
5. The social classes closest to one another are the most hostile.
6. The scholars and thinkers give up on the way their society operates.
7. The government does not respond to the needs of its society.
8. The leaders of the government and the ruling class begin to doubt themselves. Some join with the opposition groups.
9. The government is unable to get enough support from any group to save itself.
10. The government cannot organize its finances correctly and is either going bankrupt or trying to tax heavily and unjustly.

*Question: How well and in what ways does this fit the American Revolution?*

**CRANE BRINTON’S EIGHT STAGES OF A REVOLUTION**

On the right side of the page, list as many examples as you can from the French Revolution that fit Crane Brinton’s stages.

**I. THE OLD REGIME WEAKENS**

A. The state is economically weak

B. The central government is ineffective and cannot enforce its rules

C. New ideas circulate which challenge the older traditions

D. A vocally powerful and influential opposition arises

**II. THE OLD REGIME LOSES CONTROL**

A. The old social elites attempt to reassert their privileges

B. Some disaster rallies the forces, who oppose the revolution

C. Some short-term event sparks a conflict

D. Government too divided and weak to suppress the revolt

**III. THE MODERATE PHASE OF THE REVOLUTION**

A. The moderates come to control and initiate changes

B. Electorate expanded, constitution liberalized, reforms initiated

**IV. REACTION ARISES TO THE MODERATES**

A. Moderates stop reforms at some point having achieved what they sought

B. Radicals feel the moderates are not moving far or fast enough

C. Radicals mobilize their supporters

**V. THE RADICALS SEIZE POWER CONTROL**

A. The radicals take control of the state and revolution

B. The radials initiate sweeping changes eliminating old institutions completely

**VI. RADICAL REIGN OF TERROR (*THE REVOLUTION EATS ITS CHILDREN)***

A. Opposition both foreign and domestic arises to challenge the radical control

B. The radicals remove their opposition through violent methods

C. Radicals seek to institutionalize and spread their ideologies

**VII. THE MODERATE REACTION**

A. Moderates overthrow the radicals and reestablish a moderate regime

B. Moderates repress the more radical elements

C. Moderates abandon many of the more radical reforms of the revolution

D. Moderates return some of the privileges and policies of the old regime

E. Moderates lose touch with the majority of the population

**VIII. THE RISE OF A STRONG LEADER**

A. A leader, usually from the strong military arises and focuses opposition to moderates

B. The leader seizes control of the government, often ruling through the army

C. The leader blends better conservative, moderate, and radical policies

D. The leader establishes new, effective, stable, and generally popular institutions

E. The revolution ends.

\*\* Now, fill this out for French Revolution. \*\*