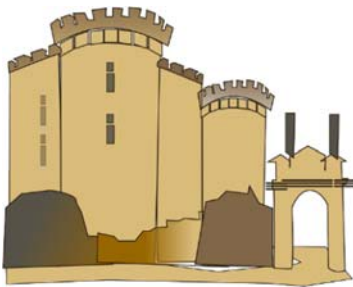


The Storming of the Bastille

The French Revolution began in 1789 with the storming of the Bastille, a fourteenth century fortress used by King Louis XVI as a prison. On July 14th, 1789, a group of about 1,000 people from France's Third Estate, the social class composed of everyone who was not royalty or nobility, stormed the Bastille. They were upset because they had asked for more voice in their government and the king had not responded to them. They also thought that there were revolutionaries being held prisoner there. They believed the king was preparing to use military force against them.

They first raided the Hotel des Invalides in Paris to get muskets, but they needed ammunition. There was gunpowder stored in the Bastille. That, coupled with their other feelings about the Bastille, motivated their attack.

The revolutionaries gathered at the Bastille on the morning of July 14, 1789, demanding that its military leader, De Launay, give them control of both the prison and the gunpowder. When he refused, they tried to negotiate. The group's excitement continued to escalate, and they managed to break into the courtyard. From there, they tried to enter the main fortress. Soldiers tried to defend it by firing into the crowd. Some soldiers changed sides and joined the revolutionaries. De Launay finally surrendered the Bastille. Around 100 people were killed that day, including Governor de Launay and three of his officers.



YOUR ASSIGNMENT: Imagine you are one of the revolutionaries on the morning of July 14th, 1789. What are you thinking? How are you feeling? What do you see, hear, and smell? Write a descriptive paragraph on a separate sheet of paper.