

Name _____



The Bastille

The Bastille was built in the 1300s during the Hundred Years' War against the English. It was originally a fortress intended to protect the eastern entrance to Paris. It was made of stone and surrounded by a 100-foot-high wall and a wide moat.

In the years leading up to the French Revolution, it was being used as a prison by King Louis XVI and guarded by soldiers. Many famous people were locked away there without trial, including the writer and philosopher Voltaire, and the infamous Marquis de Sade, from whose name our word "sadist" was derived.

By 1789, the building had been scheduled to be demolished and replaced with a public square. At the time of the storming of the Bastille, only seven prisoners were being held there. Four had been accused of forgery, two were thought to be "lunatics," and one was being detained at the request of his own family.

To the revolutionaries who stormed the Bastille in 1789, it represented everything they thought was wrong with the British monarchy. Based on this brief history of the building, what do you think those things were?
