

Name: _____ Date: _____

Bastille Day

Americans celebrate Independence Day on July 4th. The French have a similar day that they celebrate on July 14th, called "Bastille Day". Until the late 1700s, France was ruled by a king and a group of wealthy people. Anyone who disagreed with the king, or had views that didn't match the king's, was thrown into a large prison, which was built like a fortress. This prison was called the Bastille, and to many people the Bastille represented all the *inequalities*, the things that were unfair, in France. The king and other aristocrats held all the power and were very wealthy, while the rest of the population had no power and very little money.

On July 14th, 1789, a large group of French peasants gathered together and stormed the Bastille, and released all the prisoners. This was the start of the French Revolution. The Revolution resulted in the overthrow of the monarchy, and the rule of France was given to the people in the form of a democratic government. Now there is no longer a king in France. Like Independence Day, which celebrates America's independence from the British king, Bastille Day celebrates the end of the rule of the French king.

Questions about Bastille Day

1. In this passage, what is meant by the word 'stormed'?
 - a) lightning struck the Bastille
 - b) a hurricane hit Paris
 - c) the people attacked the Bastille
 - d) all of the above

2. What revolution was started by storming the Bastille?
 - a) the French Revolution
 - b) the American Revolution
 - c) the Industrial Revolution
 - d) the Russian Revolution

3. Why were the French people unhappy?

4. Make a table comparing Independence Day and Bastille Day.

Independence Day	Bastille Day

Answers to Bastille Day

1. c
2. a
3. all the power and money were held by the king and other aristocrats

Independence Day

- July 4th
- no longer ruled by the King of England
- American Revolution
- lead to a people's government
- happened in 1776

Bastille Day

- July 14th
- no longer ruled by the King of France
- French Revolution
- lead to a people's government
- happened in 1789