

# The storming of the Bastille

« It is an emblem of the French Revolution  
and the beginning of a long and difficult way to liberty.»

- **Date:** (morning) 14 July 1789.
- **Location:** Paris, the Bastille.

The storming of the Bastille is probably the most iconic moment in the French Revolution. It was when Paris' crowd stormed and launched an attack on the Bastille. This structure was a royal prison, it was also a storehouse of gunpowder in the 1780s : it was a symbol of the abuses of the monarchy and the king's absolute and arbitrary power. At that time, there were inequalities between the Third Estate, the Clergy and the Nobility. The Third Estate was fed up and began speaking out and meeting in groups to claim new laws.



*Jean-Pierre Houël (1735-1813), The Bastille in the first days of its demolition, watercolour made in 1789.*

A large group of people rebelled against their king. France, at that time, was ruled by King Louis 16 and Queen Marie Antoinette, who had all the powers and took all the decisions like imprisoning people who did not agree with them. And the Third Estate was against this absolute monarchy.

They decided to revolt against it. So, they went to the Invalides to steal some weapons. The crowd knew that a pile of powder was stocked in the Bastille. So, the people took the decision to attack the Bastille and to liberate its prisoners (there were only seven inmates at this time, who were finally liberated by the crowd).

The storming made almost one hundred deaths and seventy three wounded at the end.

After that, on 4 August 1789, privileges were abolished and everybody began to be equal and free thanks to the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* .

Today, in France, July 14<sup>th</sup> is the National Day and a public holiday. On this day, every city celebrates it with music, speeches, parades and big fireworks.

*Inès, Asmâa, Mila.*