



Bastille Day

twinkl

Click play buttons for red text throughout to hear the phrase.

Le Quatorze Juillet

(The 14th of July)



You're going to see some pictures of people celebrating the French national day.



- What do you think might be the reason for choosing 14th July as the national day?
- What is happening in each picture?
- Why are the colours special?
- Why do countries have national celebrations like this?

Le Quatorze Juillet

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La Révolution Française

(The French Revolution)



In the 18th Century, French society was divided into a **hierarchy** of three social classes: **clergy**, **nobles** and **commoners**. **Le Roi** (The King) was greedy and spoilt; his place was as **absolute ruler** over everyone.

The nobles and clergy controlled huge areas of land and industries, which made them extremely rich.

Unfortunately, the common people were the huge majority of the French population. They worked the land for very little in return, and had to pay enormous **taxes** to the nobles and the church.

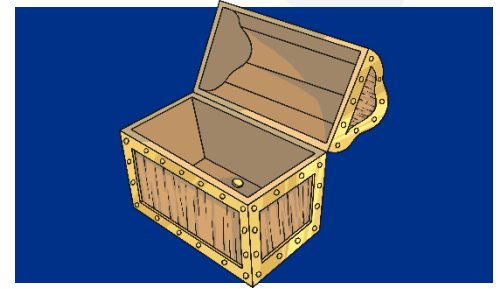
La Révolution Française

(The French Revolution)

In 1789, France was in a very bad way. The harvest had been poor in recent times and the common people were hungry.

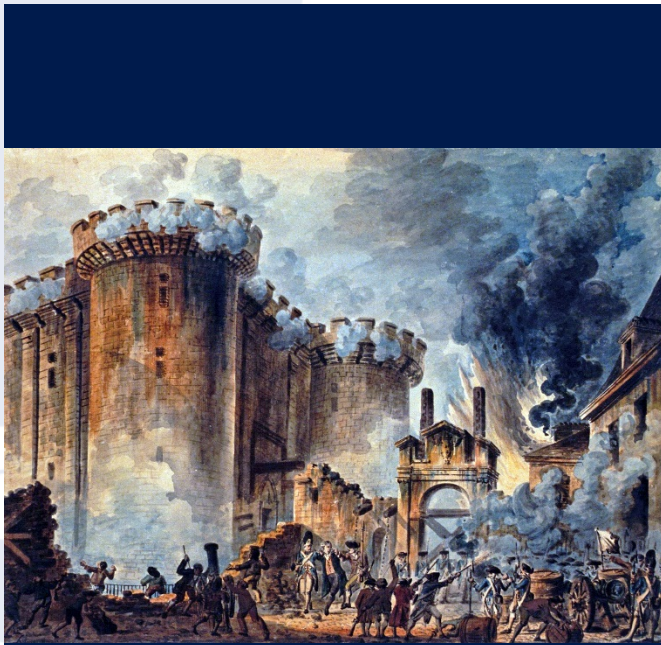
Additionally, **King Louis XVI's** extravagant spending had left the country with almost no money.

The King decided he would raise money by demanding even more taxes from the commoners.



La Révolution Française

(The French Revolution)



The Storming of the Bastille
by Jean-Pierre Houel

People who were against the unfair system were often imprisoned in the hated fortress known as **La Bastille Saint Antoine**.

On 14th July, 1789, hungry, angry **rioters** broke into the prison, set the prisoners free and stole the weapons which were kept there. Many of the guards and officers were killed.

Only seven people were in the prison cells at the time, but the 'Storming of the Bastille' was regarded as a **triumph** of the common people over the ruling classes.

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When **La Reine** (The Queen), **Marie Antoinette**, heard about the riots, she asked why the people were angry.

She was told that the poor people were hungry because they had no bread.

Marie Antoinette is supposed to have replied, “**Well, if they have no bread, let them eat cake instead.**”

It is not known if this story is quite true, but it is a good example of how **privileged** the upper classes were at that time – they just didn’t understand or care how the poor were suffering.



La Révolution Française

(The French Revolution)

The King refused to accept that the common people had the right to govern themselves and to share in the country's fortunes.



La Révolution Française

(The French Revolution)

The 'Revolutionaries' said that the King was no longer the ruler.



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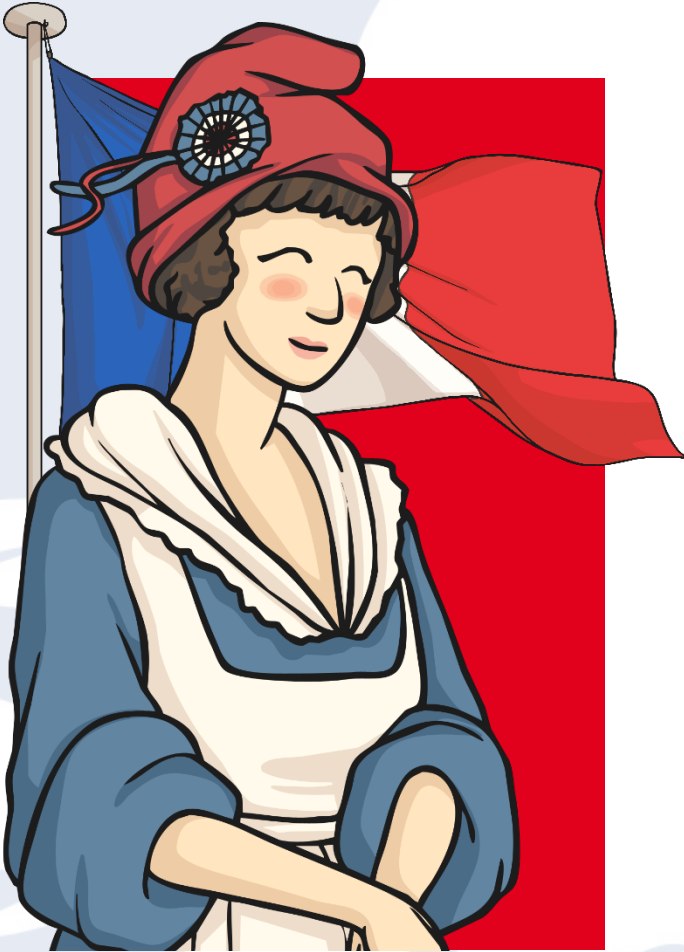
Instead, they declared that France was now a republic, ruled by the people, for the people.

They adopted the motto of **Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité** (freedom, equality, brotherhood) to show that the new country would be fair to all.

The Church's land and the Nobles' property were confiscated, so that everyone could benefit from their riches.

La Révolution Française

(The French Revolution)



People flew **Le Tricolore Drapeau** (the three-coloured French flag) to show how proud they were.

It was common to wear a traditional farmer's cap, to show you were one of the people and supported the protests. Even today, when French people protest in public, many of them wear these little red caps.

They even made jewellery and ornaments out of the ruined stones of the Bastille, demonstrating how they had crushed the unfair system!

La Révolution Française

(The French Revolution)



Many thousands of French nobles were **executed** in the coming years. They were called 'Enemies of the People' and regarded as dangerous to the new, equal French society.

The King and Queen tried to flee with their family to Austria (**Marie Antoinette's** home) but they were forced to return to France.

The royal family were arrested and imprisoned.

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In 1793, the King (who had been renamed simply **citizen Louis Capet**) was executed, along with the queen.

The 'enemies of the people' were usually killed using the **guillotine**, a fearsome machine which sliced off the prisoner's head with a razor-sharp blade.

Huge crowds turned out in the **Place de la Révolution** in Paris to watch the death of the King and his old regime.

The revolution was complete...



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Vive La France! ▶

Every year, on the anniversary of the Storming of the Bastille, French people all over the world celebrate their nation.

Citizens fly (and wear) their national colours and sing the national anthem, **La Marseillaise**.

La Tour Eiffel was built in 1889, to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the revolution.

The symbol of liberty, a woman known always as **Marianne**, is seen everywhere, wearing her traditional cap.



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Quiz Time!



What have you learned about Bastille Day?

Write down 5 things you can remember!



**Bastille
Day Quiz**



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here to
play!**

