

Standard 10.2.4 Explain how the ideology of the French Revolution led France to develop from constitutional monarchy to democratic despotism to the Napoleonic empire.

## Document-Based Assessment

### Storming of the Bastille

One of the most famous and dramatic moments of the French Revolution was the storming of the Bastille. This prison fortress with 90-foot-high walls symbolized the injustices of absolute monarchy. The following documents describe the event from different viewpoints.

#### *Document A*

“Shouts of ‘Give us the Bastille’ were heard, and nine hundred had pressed into the undefended outer courtyard, becoming angrier by the minute...At about half past three in the afternoon the crowd was reinforced by companies of gardes francaises [French guards] and by defecting soldiers, including a number who were veterans of the American campaign. Two in particular, Second-Lieutenant Jacob Elie, the standard-bearer of the Infantry of the Queen, and Pierre-Augustin Hulin, the director of the Queen’s laundry, were crucial in turning the incoherent assault into an organized siege.

-From *Citizens: A Chronicle of the French revolution*, (1990) by Simon Schama

#### *Document D*



Demolition of the Bastille, 1789

#### *Document B*

“How much the greatest event it is that ever happened in the world! And how much the best!”

-Letter, July 30, 1789, by Charles James Fox (1749-1806),  
British Politician, on the fall of the Bastille

#### *Document C*

“The mob came closer and the governor declared his willingness to capitulate [give up]...The streets and houses, even the roofs were filled with people abusing and cursing me. Daggers, bayonets, pistols were constantly pointed at me. I did not know how I would be killed but was sure my last hour had come. Those who had no arms were throwing stones at me, the women wrenched their teeth and threatened me with their fists. Two soldiers behind me had already been killed by the furious mob and I am convinced I could not have reached City Hall had not one officer...escorted me.”

-“Reports of the taking of the Bastille, July 14, 1789,  
By One of its defenders” (1834) by Ludwig von der Fluhe  
(Swiss officer)

Use your knowledge of the Enlightenment and Documents A, B, C, D, and E to answer the questions

- In document B, Charles James Fox was most likely enthusiastic about the fall of the Bastille because
  - He had a personal grudge against prison guards.
  - The people stood up to authority.
  - He supported King Louis the XVI.
  - He was anxious to see what the people of France would do next.
- Which two documents attempt to give an objective view of the storming of the Bastille?
  - Documents A and B
  - Documents C and A
  - Documents C and B
  - Documents D and A
- In document C, which words best indicate which side the author is on?
  - The governor declared his willingness to capitulate
  - Daggers, bayonets, pistols
  - Even the roofs were filled with people
  - Furious mob
- Compare the four documents. Which lasting document best conveys the significance of the event? Use your knowledge of this event and specific evidence from the documents to support your opinion.