

## Western Europe

### Lesson 2: History of Western Europe

#### ESSENTIAL QUESTION

**Why do civilizations rise and fall?**

#### Terms to Know

**smelting** the process of refining ore to create metal

**feudalism** the political and social system in which kings gave land to nobles in exchange for the nobles' military service

**Middle Ages** the period in European history from about A.D. 500 to about 1450

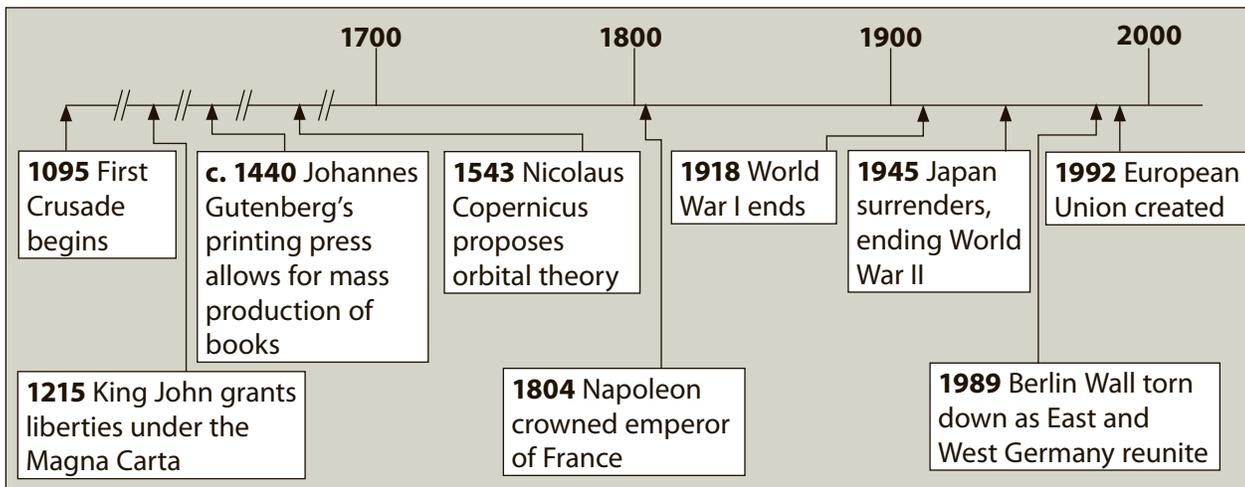
**pilgrimage** a journey to a sacred place

**Parliament** the national legislature of England (now the United Kingdom), consisting of the House of Lords and the House of Commons

**industrialized** describing a country in which manufacturing is a primary economic activity

**Holocaust** the mass killing of 6 million Jews by Germany's Nazi leaders during World War II

#### When did it happen?



#### ? Identifying

1. How is bronze made?

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#### History of the Region Through 1800

**Guiding Question** *How did Western Europe change from a land controlled by loose-knit tribes to a region of monarch-ruled nations?*

Modern humans have lived in Europe for about 40,000 years. Early peoples were hunters and gatherers, then farmers. As populations grew, settlements became towns. People began making metal tools. They discovered how to make bronze by melting and fusing tin and copper, a process called **smelting**.

## Western Europe

### Lesson 2: History of Western Europe, *continued*

Meanwhile, the Romans spread from Southern Europe into Western Europe. By A.D. 14, they controlled France and most of Germany. They controlled most of Britain within 100 years. The Romans brought their language, Latin, and their technologies.

Over the centuries, Rome's empire in Western Europe weakened. Huns invaded from the east, driving Germanic peoples westward. Rome could no longer protect its lands in Western Europe. Germanic tribes settled there and created kingdoms.

When Christianity became the religion of the Roman Empire in A.D. 312, it spread quickly throughout the empire. The Roman Catholic Church became a major force in Western European life. It helped preserve order and played a key role in education.

As time went on, invaders threatened the region. There were no strong governments. To bring order, the system of **feudalism** arose. Under this system, kings gave land to nobles. The nobles in turn gave kings military service. Today, we call this period of transition between ancient and modern times the **Medieval Age**.

One of the most important rituals in medieval society was the religious **pilgrimage**. This was a visit to places that were central to Christianity, such as Jerusalem. In the late 1000s, Muslims controlled the city. Kings sent great armies to conquer Jerusalem for Christianity. The Crusades, as they were called, failed. Muslims regained control of the city, and their power continued to grow.

The crusaders returned from the east with new ideas. At the same time, the economy of Western Europe was changing. Traders and merchants began to play a bigger role in town life. People with special skills, such as metalsmiths and carpenters, began to organize guilds. Guilds were not as powerful as the noblemen or the Church, but they helped towns grow stronger.

During the Hundred Years' War, which broke out in 1337, France and England fought over land in France. One of the major developments was the spread of a terrible plague, or disease, called the Black Death. The plague raged in Western Europe for four years starting in 1347. Whole towns were wiped out.

The Roman Catholic Church was wealthy and had power over many aspects of society. Many wanted to reform, or change, some Church practices. One such practice was the sale of indulgences, or pardons for people's sins. A German priest named Martin Luther wrote the Ninety-Five Theses, a document attacking this practice. The Church expelled Luther for his beliefs, but his ideas spread. His followers became known as Lutherans. The religious movement he started is called the Protestant Reformation.



#### Marking the Text

- Highlight the countries of Western Europe the Romans controlled.



#### Defining

- Describe how *feudalism* worked.

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#### Describing

- How did guilds help change life in Western Europe?

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#### Identifying

- What was one of the results of the plague?

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#### Marking the Text

- Underline the sentences that tell how the Protestant Reformation began.

**Western Europe**

**Lesson 2: History of Western Europe, *continued***



**Finding the Main Idea**

- 7. How did thinking change during the historical period known as the Enlightenment?

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**Making Connections**

- 8. How did John Locke's ideas affect the French Revolution?

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**Reading Progress Check**

- 9. What roles did the Reformation and the Enlightenment play in changing the balance of power in Western Europe?

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As the Catholic Church's power weakened, England's kings were being forced to share power with a new lawmaking body called **Parliament**. It was made up of two houses. The House of Lords represented the nobles, and the House of Commons represented common citizens, usually guild members and business owners.

In the 1600s and 1700s a wave of discovery and scientific observation swept over Europe. People began to use reason to observe and describe the world around them. They began to question the authority of kings and the Church. This period is called the Enlightenment.

During this time, explorers were traveling and mapping the world. Astronomers were mapping the solar system. In 1543 Polish astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus suggested that Earth and the other planets revolved around the sun. English philosophers such as John Locke and Thomas Hobbes studied society itself. Locke believed that the best form of government was an agreement between the ruler and the people.

In 1789 France was a powerful country ruled by a king. Most of the people were peasants who lived in poverty. The growing middle class were angry about not having a voice in government. In July of that year, a revolution limited the king's power and ended the privileges of nobles and church leaders. *The Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen* was written. This important document stated that the government's power came from the people, not the king. A few years later, the king was executed.

Not everyone in France supported the revolution. Violence raged for 10 years. In 1799 a young general named Napoleon Bonaparte took military and political control of the country. With a powerful army, he brought much of Europe under French control. In 1814, France's enemies were able to defeat Napoleon and remove him from power.

**Change and Conflict**

**Guiding Question** *How did the industrial system change life in Western Europe?*

During the 1800s, some Western European nations **industrialized**. This means they changed from an agricultural society to one based on industry. Cities grew as people moved from the countryside to work in factories. At the same time, some Europeans began to feel strong loyalty to their country. A new, national spirit was rising.

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### Lesson 2: History of Western Europe, *continued*

A big change took place in Britain between 1760 and 1830. People began to use steam-powered machines for work that had been done by humans or animals. Machines could do the same work at greater speed for lower cost. Machines of the Industrial Revolution also improved farm labor so that fewer people were needed to work the land. People began to leave farms and villages for industrial cities.

<b>Society:</b>	Agricultural	→	Industrial
<b>Population:</b>	Countryside	→	Cities
<b>Power source:</b>	Humans or animals	→	Machines

As nations industrialized, loyalties changed. Former enemies Great Britain and France became closer as Germany gained military strength. As the possibility of war increased, countries formed alliances.

European nations became rivals for colonies and economic power. These rivalries helped lead to World War I. Political changes also contributed as modern nation-states replaced monarchies and empires. World War I began in 1914 and involved all of Europe. It resulted in millions of deaths and great destruction. Germany lost the war and was found guilty of starting it. The winning countries demanded that Germany pay for damages.

The defeat greatly weakened the German economy. Germans believed that they were being punished too harshly for their role in the war. A political radical named Adolf Hitler used the people's anger to gain power. He fueled an aggressive nationalist spirit. By 1933 he was the absolute ruler of Germany.

Hitler and his Nazi Party believed that the Germans were a superior race. They carried out the **Holocaust**, the government-sponsored murder of 6 million Jews. Other minorities also suffered under the Nazis. Hitler and the Nazis wanted to build a new German empire. They began to build a military force to do this.

War came when Hitler's armies began seizing other countries. World War II stretched far beyond Western Europe. Germany allied with Italy and Japan. They were the Axis Powers. The Soviet Union and the United States sided with Britain. They were the Allied Powers. American soldiers fought in Europe, Africa, and the Pacific. A combination of American, British, and Canadian troops invaded France in June 1944 and liberated it from Germany.



#### Marking the Text

10. Read the text on the left. Underline the sentence that describes a change in loyalties that came about as a result of industrialization.



#### Identifying

11. Who was Adolf Hitler?

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#### Defining

12. What was the *Holocaust*?

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#### Identifying

13. Who were Germany's allies during World War II?

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## Western Europe

### Lesson 2: History of Western Europe, *continued*

#### Sequencing

**14.** When and in what area did World War II end first? When and where was its final end?

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#### Reading Progress Check

**15.** How were the causes of World War I and World War II similar? How were the causes different?

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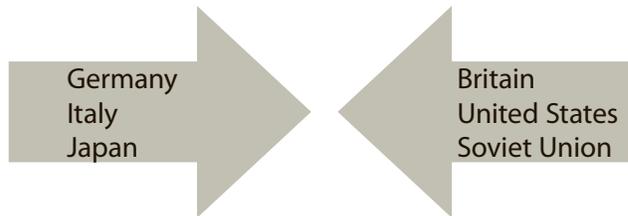
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With Hitler's death and Germany's surrender in May 1945, the war ended in Europe. However, it continued in East Asia and the Pacific for another three months. It did not end until the United States used atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. During the war, between 40 million and 60 million people died. More civilians died than military forces.

Before the war, Britain, France, and Germany were among the most powerful countries in the world. They and other European nations were weakened by the war. After the war, the United States and the Soviet Union emerged as the leading world powers. The United States was a strong ally to nations in Western Europe. The Soviet Union took control of most of Eastern Europe. Germany was split, with Britain, the United States, and France occupying the western part. The Soviet Union controlled eastern Germany. This was the beginning of the Cold War.

For over 40 years, the United States and the Soviet Union were in conflict. War never broke out, but the threat of war always existed. Both sides stockpiled nuclear weapons. In the 1980s, Soviet influence began to weaken. Protest movements spread to European countries under Soviet control. The Cold War ended when the government of the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991.

## Writing

### Check for Understanding

**1. Informative/Explanatory** List three things that the Romans brought to Western Europe.

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**2. Informative/Explanatory** How did World War II change the world's power structure?

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