

## History of France: Big Picture

**Reformation:** France loyal to the Catholic Church, but passes the *Edict of Nantes* which grants religious freedom to the French Protestant group, the Huguenots. First country with an official religious split.

**Exploration:** Cartier claims Eastern Canada for France.

**Absolutism:** Louis XIV takes over France in 1643—he has absolute power, claims to rule by divine right and repeals the Edict of Nantes. The Huguenots leave France. Louis XIV also builds the Palace of Versailles, which showed his power and wealth.

**Enlightenment:** Often called the “Age of Reason” due to the emphasis on proving things with reason. French Thinkers: Baron de Montesquieu came up with the idea of the “Separation of Powers”, which said government power should be spread among three branches. He wrote the book “The Spirit of Laws. Rousseau wrote “The Social Contract.” He said that Government is a contract. Voltaire is famous for defending freedom of speech and religion. He gave the famous quote: “I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it.” A famous Enlightenment painter was Eugene Delacroix, who painted “Liberty Leading the \_\_\_\_.”

In 1789, Louis XVI was absolute ruler of France, but things were not going well. In heavy debt for helping the Americans in the American Revolution, Louis XVI had to raise high taxes even higher on the lower classes, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Estate. The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Estates did not have to pay taxes. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Estate was angry and rebelled. On July 14, 1789, a peasant mob overran the hated prison, Bastille; this became known as the French independence day, Bastille Day. The French Revolution had begun. In 1793, Louis XVI was beheaded in front of a cheering crowd. The new government was afraid it would lose its new power, so it launched the Reign of Terror where it killed anyone suspected of opposing it. With chaos reigning in France, a military hero, Napoleon seized control of France in a coup d’etat in order to restore order. The Revolution was over; it was 1799.

In 1799, Napoleon took over France. He desired to rule all of Europe, so he launched invasions of nearby countries. By 1808, Napoleon had defeated Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands, and he destroyed the Holy Roman Empire – which led to increased German nationalism. In 1812, Napoleon invaded Russia, but was stopped due to the Russian winter. Napoleon was finally defeated. He had tried to unify Europe. One lasting effect was the Napoleonic Code, which gave common people equality before the law. The peace conference after Napoleon was defeated, the Congress of Vienna, made France weaker by taking some of its land.

***Industrial Revolution:*** French scientist named Pasteur discovered bacteria—which led to improvements in medicine and health.

***World War I:*** 1914-1918 France is invaded by Germany. After the war France forces the humiliating Treaty of Versailles on Germany, which made Germany. After WWI, France gets Middle East mandates Syria and Lebanon from the League of Nations.

***World War II:*** 1940, Fall of France; defeated by Hitler’s blitzkrieg in 6 weeks. The 1944 Allied invasion of Europe (D-Day) took place in Normandy, France.

After the War, France loses Vietnam to Ho Chi Minh in 1954. Other colonies are given up as well. France joins NATO, but is never a world power again.