

Dates and Periods in European History

Students often have difficulty keeping track of the parallel timelines of politics, culture, and economics. Give them a guide like this to help keep them from getting lost and also to remind them of important connections.

Later Middle Ages (c. 1300–1450) and the Renaissance (c. 1400–1550)

Political Dates and Periods
Later Middle Ages Hundred Years' War begins (1337) Black Death (1347) Fall of Constantinople (1453)
Art Dates
Late Gothic, Renaissance
Economic Dates
Commercial Revolution funds the Renaissance Decline of feudalism

First Half of the Early Modern Period (c. 1450–1648)

Political Dates and Periods
New Monarchies Hundred Years' War ends (1453) Marriage of Ferdinand and Isabella (1469) End of the War of the Roses (1485) The Reformation/Religious Wars/The Counter Reformation Martin Luther's 95 Theses (1517) Charles V becomes Holy Roman Emperor (1519) Diet of Worms (1521) Peasants' War (1524-26) Council of Trent (1545-63) Peace of Augsburg (1555) St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre (1572) French Wars of Religion (1559-89) Edict of Nantes (1598) Hapsburg Hegemony and Golden Age of Spain (1550-1650) Christopher Columbus sails the ocean blue (1492) Treaty of Tordesillas (1494) Opening of Potosí mines (1545) Invincible Armada sinks (1588) Thirty Years' War (1618-48) End of the war between France and Spain (1656) Imperialism in the Western Hemisphere
Art Dates
Renaissance, mannerism
Economic Dates
Rise of the domestic system First enclosure movement in England Price Revolution Bullionism leads to mercantilism, rise of monopolies, imperialism Dutch and English trade via East India Companies (1601)

Second Half of the Early Modern Period (1648–1789)

Political Dates and Periods
Rise of Constitutionalism English Civil War (1642-49) Restoration (1660-68) Glorious Revolution (1688) English Bill of Rights (1689) Ancien Régime (1648–1789) Age of Absolutism (c. 1650–1750) and the Wars of Louis XIV (1660–1714), Louis XIV (1643–1715), Peter the Great (1682–1725), Frederick William the Great Elector (1640-88), and Frederick William I (1713-40)
Art Dates
Baroque, rococo
Economic Dates
Bank of England (1694) England and France experience “Bubbles” (1720) England pays debt from the War of Spanish Succession while France repudiates it

The Enlightenment (c. Eighteenth Century)

Political Dates and Periods
Enlightened Despotism Frederick the Great (1740-86) Recovery of the Hapsburgs (Joseph II, 1780-90) Catherine the Great (1762-96)
Economic Dates
Agricultural Revolution (“the Enlightenment comes to the farm”) Second enclosure movement in England More food Population explosion Adam Smith publishes <i>The Wealth of Nations</i> , the bible of capitalism (1776) Industrial Revolution (c. 1750–1850)

Beginning of the Modern Period (1789–1871)

Political Dates and Periods
French Revolution and Age of Napoleon (1789–1815) Age of Montesquieu: National Assembly (1789-91), Legislative Assembly (1791-92) Age of Rousseau: National Convention (1792-95), Directory (1795-99) Age of Voltaire Napoleonic era: Consulate (1799–1804) Empire (1804-15) Congress of Vienna (1814-15) Age of Metternich (1815-48) Nationalism Conservatism July Monarchy (1830) Second Republic (1848-52) Age of Realpolitik (1848-71) France has Second Empire (1852-70), Alexander II frees the serfs (1861), Italy becomes a unified kingdom (1870), Prussia becomes Germany after the Franco-Prussian War (1871)

Appendix

Art Dates
Neoclassicism, romanticism (a reaction to the Industrial Revolution in England and the French Revolution on the continent), realism in art (naturalism in literature)
Economic Dates
Rise of liberalism in England; Manchester School Utopian Socialism: Claude Saint-Simon, Robert Owen, Charles Fourier Scientific Socialism: Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels publish <i>The Communist Manifesto</i> (1848)

Second Part of the Modern Period (1871–1991)

Political Dates and Periods
Second Industrial Revolution (steel, oil, electricity, chemicals) Age of Imperialism Berlin Congress of 1878, Berlin Conference of 1884-85 Mass Politics (1871–1914) Third Republic in France (1870–1940) World War I (1914-18) Russian Revolution (1917) Interwar Period (1918-39) Age of Anxiety Rise of Fascism and Nazism World War II (1939-45) Cold War (1945-91) Decolonization (1940s–1970s) European Union Marshall Plan (1948) Treaty of Rome (1957) Treaty of Maastricht (1991) Fall of the Soviet Union (1991)
Art Dates
Impressionism, neoimpressionism, pointillism, cubism, expressionism, futurism, art nouveau, La Belle Époque, fin de siècle, surrealism, realism, Dada, Bauhaus, expressionism, Socialist realism, abstract expressionism, miscellaneous modernisms, theater of the absurd
Economic Dates
Beginning of social legislation and entitlements Managed economies Beginning of the postindustrial age

Word Chronology for European History, or Who's Down, Who's Up?

This guide gives students a very quick overview of some of the most important political, intellectual, and economic developments from the Renaissance to the present day.

Black Death—death drives up the price of labor and accelerates the end of feudalism

Commercial Revolution (I)

Renaissance—comes in two flavors: North (Germany) and South (Italy)

New Monarchies—England, France, and Spain: NOBLES down, KINGS up

AFTERLIFE down, THIS LIFE up

Opening of the Atlantic/Golden Age of Spain/Price Revolution/Commercial Revolution (II)

Tudor England—first enclosure movement: PEOPLE down, SHEEP up

Years of Hapsburg power start here

Mercantilism

Reformation: POPE down, INDIVIDUAL up

Catholic (or Counter) Reformation

Religious wars end in the Peace of Augsburg

Religion of the prince is the religion of the people

Scientific Revolution starts here

French Wars of Religion: VALOIS down, BOURBON up

Revolt of the Netherlands and defeat of the Armada

Thirty Years' War/balance of power/Peace of Westphalia

Years of Hapsburg power end here: SPAIN down, FRANCE up

English Civil War/Oliver Cromwell/Restoration/Glorious Revolution

Age of Louis XIV—"Here Comes the Sun King. Everybody's Happy. . ."

War of Spanish Succession ends in Peace of Utrecht ("Hello, Prussia!")

In the economy, after Louis XIV's wars: FRANCE down, ENGLAND up

Enlightenment starts here

American Revolution/partitions of Poland/French Revolution

Second enclosure movement/enlightened despots

RELIGION down, REASON up

Capitalism

Industrial Revolution starts here

Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* (1776)

French Revolution

Napoleonic Wars/Congress of Vienna

(Goodbye, Enlightenment!)

Romanticism/nationalism/liberalism

Socialism/communism (1848)/suffrage reform in England

REASON down, EMOTION up

Appendix

Revolutions of 1848—(Goodbye, Metternich!)
EMOTION down, MANIPULATION up

Realism and Realpolitik
Unification of Italy and Germany/rise of imperialism
Positivism/La Belle Époque
Fin de siècle

World War I
Versailles Treaty
Unexpected devastation leads to isolationism
New governments created based on self-determination

Russian Revolution

Great Depression/worldwide depression/rise of fascism
Holocaust
Appeasement/World War II

Fall of imperialism/Cold War
End of European economic supremacy
Beginning of the postindustrial age

Fall of communism
Treaty of Maastricht/beginning of European unity