

UNIT 1 – The 18th Century in Europe

- Absolute Monarchy
 - concept
 - why it didn't succeed everywhere in Europe
- A century of balance
- Population in the 18th century
 - great increase
 - cities
 - division of the states
 - first state: the clergy
 - second state: the nobles
 - third state: the rest of the people
 - the peasants
 - the bourgeoisie
- Writers of the Enlightenment
 - Montesquieu
 - Voltaire
 - Rousseau
- Spain in the XVIII century
 - Charles II
 - Philip V
 - Charles III



Absolute Monarchy

Absolutism was the system of government in most European countries.

European kings governed without convoking Parliaments and imposed their own will.



But they made some changes with the objective of improving the administration and the economy of their states. This form of government was called **Enlightened Despotism**.

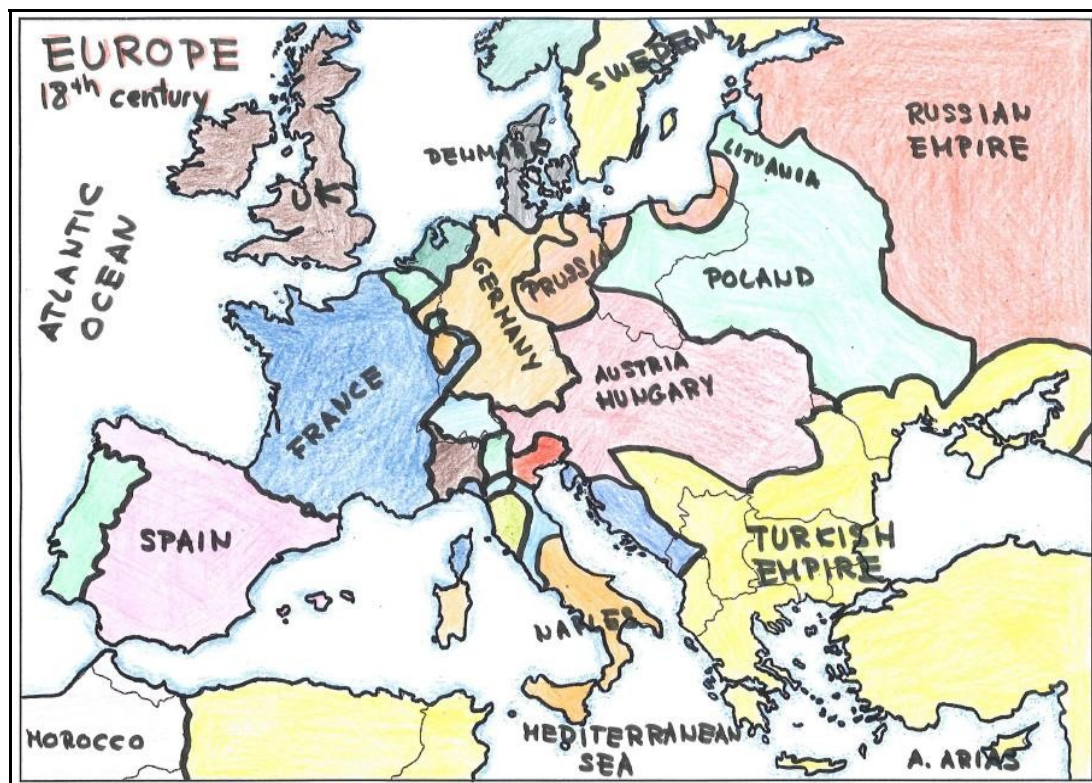
The most important ones were: Frederic II of Prussia, Joseph II of Austria, Catherine II of Russia, Louis XV of France and Charles III of Spain.

The reforms they made were:

- Develop the national industry thanks to the help of the states and the creation of public factories.
- Improve trade: enhancing the means of communication and infrastructures, like roads and channels.
- Encourage scientific development and modernize the education system.
- Centralize the administration.
- Increase and make a more professional army.
- Subject the other powers especially the church and the nobles.

Absolutism did not succeed in all European countries.

- In the **United Kingdom** Parliament Monarchy was the form of government.
- In the **United Provinces**: Parliament Republic remained during the 18th century.
- In **Poland**: Monarchy was elected. This system caused an unstable interior political life from which Prussia, Austria and Russia (nearby countries) took advantage, sharing out the country between them at the end of the 18th century.



A century of balance

In 1700 Charles II of Spain died without any children. He left the crown in his will to a grandson of Louis XIV's, Philip V from Anjou. But most of European countries did not accept the new king. They were afraid of a possible union between the crowns of France and Spain that would give rise to a



very strong monarchy in Europe, so the war of the Spanish Succession exploded (1700-1714) in which most of the European countries took part.

The war finished with the **peace of Utrecht** (1713) and Rastadt (1714).

Philip V was accepted as a king but Spain lost all the possessions in Europe. After this peace we had a continental balance system whose objective was that all European powers were balanced and none of them became dominant.

In spite of this, there were a lot of wars during the 18th century, for several reasons:

- Strong new powers like Russia, Prussia, Austria and England wanted to extend across Europe or form colonial empires.
- Old dominant countries like France and Spain tried to recover part of their power or, at least, not lose more influence in front of the new powers.

However, the 18th century wars were not as destructive as the previous centuries' wars and they killed much less of the civil population.

Population in the 18th century

During the 18th century the European population increased a lot: from 115 to 190 million people, including Russia.

The reasons for this were:

- the drop in mortality thanks to a better diet

- fewer virulent epidemic plagues and
- fewer bloody wars.

This demographic stage with a high birth rate and a high death rate but decreasing and an increasing population is called **demographic transition**.

The population increased a lot. The most important cities in Europe were: London (800.000 inhabitants), Paris (600.000) and Madrid, Moscow, Naples...

In the 18th century society was still divided in **3 states**, typical in an Ancient Regime, but changes were starting that announced the revolution.

First state: the clergy

The clergy had had a lot of influence on European society for well over a thousand years. It dominated education, laid down moral values and the values of society in general. Before the use of the printing press, the clergy wrote, published and kept in its own libraries almost every book written.

Through the pulpit it controlled the most important means of communicating with population.

They had a monopoly on education.

Bishops were great landowners and often warriors

Second state: The nobles

Noble rank in most European countries conferred privileges as well as power. They were exempt from direct taxation. In some countries (Poland...) landownership was restricted to the nobility.



In western Europe, despite their privileges, the nobility did come under financial pressure and they were forced into borrowing increasing sums of money.

Marriage to rich heiresses, sometimes from backgrounds in trade, was often necessary to maintain the family fortune.

The first and second states enjoyed certain privileges that the third state did not. Although they were the richest, they did not have to pay taxes. They were also the only members in society who could hold positions of importance such as Officers in the army.

Third state: the rest of the people

The third state was made up of the bourgeoisie, wage earners, and the peasantry. It made up the majority of the population of a country (97%).

The Peasants

In most parts of Europe, outside the Low Countries, most people lived in the countryside. Most country dwellers were either free peasants, who worked on land which they leased from landowners, or landless labourers.

In eastern Europe serfdom still existed.

The conditions of living varied enormously for the peasants: the peasantry in Spain



suffered from high levels of rent and taxation, a situation which contributed to the depopulation of the countryside, the growth of towns and emigration to the New World.

The situation was often made worse in France by the frequency of civil wars and political instability.

The Bourgeoisie

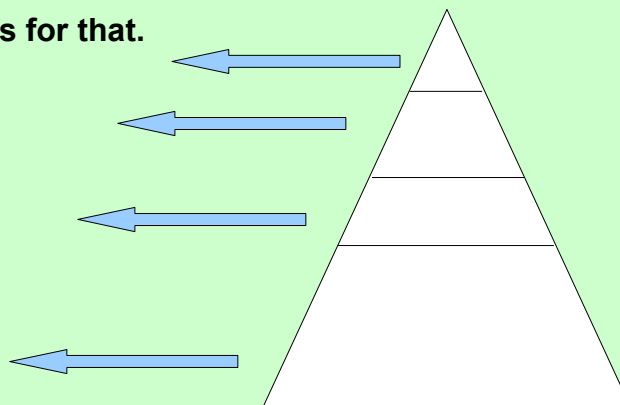
In the 16th and the 17th centuries we see the emergence of an urban bourgeoisie, but outside the Netherlands, they exercised relatively little political power.

Some members of the bourgeoisie were able to make considerable amounts of money from exploiting the emerging capitalist system, international trade...

The aspiration to acquire a landed estate was often highly developed among the urban bourgeoisie, many of them were able to acquire noble status through the acquisition of land.

TASKS

1. A day in the life of a: noble, clergy, bourgeoisie or peasant. Choose one of them. Write 12-15 lines.
2. Give some advantages of the 1st and 2nd state.
3. Write about some disadvantages of the third state.
4. Complete and explain the next graphic:
5. Differences and similarities between bourgeoisies and peasants.
6. Complete the following pyramid with the different social groups and explain the reasons for that.

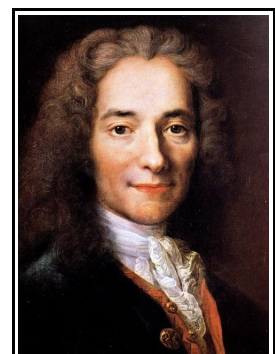


Writers of the Enlightenment

The ideas of the writers of the Enlightenment announced big changes.

Montesquieu (1689-1755). Works: *Persian letters*, and *Spirit of the laws*.

He disapproved of absolutism, he was a defender of privilege and nobility but he proposed the "separation of powers" (executive, legislative and judicial). The monarch would administer the laws (and have the power to veto them), an assembly with two houses would make the laws, while an independent judiciary would ensure that the laws were obeyed. He warned against intolerance and tyranny.



Voltaire (1694-1778): Works: *Letters philosophiques*.

He was a critic. He had no time for the Catholic Church, which he regarded as the worst example of an intolerant institution. He emphasised the importance of reason and toleration. He liked a Parliamentary Monarchy that controlled the power of kings.

Rousseau (1712-1778). Works: *The Social Contract*... "Man is born free, but everywhere in chains"

He proposed that direct participation of all people would give the government the authority to run the state. Everybody had to be involved in this ideal of democracy: people should meet in assemblies to discuss laws and either choose or sack the government.

TASKS

The people should have power, 1775.

"Man is born free. No man has any natural authority over others; force does not give anyone that right. The power to make laws belongs to the people and only to the people."

(a pamphlet, banned by the French government in 1775, Jean Jacques Rousseau.)

7. Which social group would be most influenced by this words and why?
8. Why do you think this pamphlet was banned?
9. Which members of the French society wanted it to be banned?

Spain in the 18th century

King Charles II died in 1700 without any children; this caused *The Succession war* (1701-1714): the war divided Spain in two factions, on one side the Kingdom of Aragon that supported the Archduke Charles, on the other side the Kingdom of Castille that supported Philip V.

Philip V won the war and was determined to change the Spanish political system to one like the French. With "Decretos de Nueva Planta" he abolished the local laws of

Aragon; the only exceptions were Navarra and the Basque Country because they supported the king during the war.

Philip V changed the administration:

- He introduced the Secretary of the States, similar to the present ministers.
- He created a new civil servant, the *intendente* who represented the central government in local places.
- He reorganized the army into a permanent national army.

Charles III made a lot of reforms with the aim of modernizing the country according to the ideas of the Enlightenment:

- He tried to develop the Spanish economy creating Royal Manufactures, introducing free market, improving the roads and making the Castille Channel for better transportation in the Peninsula.
- He tried to modernize agriculture to increase production.
- He tried to dominate the Church reducing its power and influence so that he could have absolute authority.
- He supported science and culture so *Sociedades de Amigos del Pais* were created.



The results of all these changes were not very important due to the opposition of the nobles and the church; and because the new ideas were against absolutism.

When the French Revolution started (1789), just one year before Charles IV became king, all the reforms finished because the king, nobility and clergy considered that the ideas of the Enlightenment were responsible for the new situation.

UNIT 2 – The American Revolution

- The American Revolution
 - concept
 - causes
- The new political order
 - principles
 - The Constitution
- The formation of the United States of America
 - The first half of the 19th century
 - Secession War
 - Abraham Lincoln



The American Revolution

The first English colonizers arrived at the American East coast in 1607. In the second half of the 18th century there were **13 colonies** which depended on England, with 1.300.000 inhabitants.

The differences between the population were racial: white people were the dominant group; 350,000 black people (slaves) worked in the agricultural plantations in the south.



Causes

The main cause of the American Revolution was political: People from the 13 colonies paid taxes like the rest of people in England but they did not have any representatives in the London Parliament; this provoked the **Boston Tea Party** (1773). After this, the war between England and the 13 colonies started and in 1776 the **Declaration of Independence** took place. The rebels were helped by France and Spain.

Finally (1783) England signed the **Paris Peace** that recognized the independence of the colonies, called from then on **United States of America**. **George Washington** was elected the first president of the USA in **1789**.



We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.

From the Declaration of Independence

The new political order

Principles

For the first time American revolutionaries created a liberal political system with some new principles:

Citizens had some rights that political power had to respect. That's why they wrote the **Declaration of Rights**. Three main things were recognized in this Declaration:

- 1) Power is in the hands of the citizens; they choose their governors by vote.
- 2) We all have the same rights.
- 3) Freedom to express opinions or to have property.

These rights did not affect all the population: women and black people were excluded from political events.

A Constitution

It promulgated the separation of the three powers.

The American Constitution (1787) emphasized:

- ➔ the **Congress** (House of Representatives) has **legislative power**. They make the laws
- ➔ the **Government** has **executive power** and it is directed by the President
- ➔ and the **Judicial power** is with independent judges who watch over the observance of laws.

This system, with a few changes, is the one in use today.

The formation of the United States of America

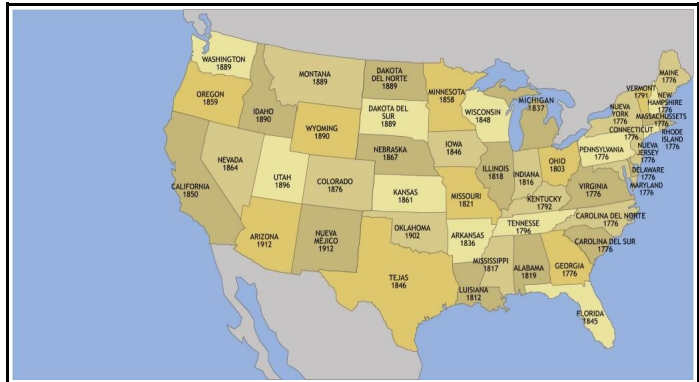
First half of 19th century

Louisiana was bought from France, **Florida** from Spain, England transferred **Oregon** and **Texas** decided to join, after a short war against Mexico they won **New Mexico**

UNIT 2

The American Revolution

and **California**. This expansion to the west gave them not only a lot of land and resources but also a population with an identity.

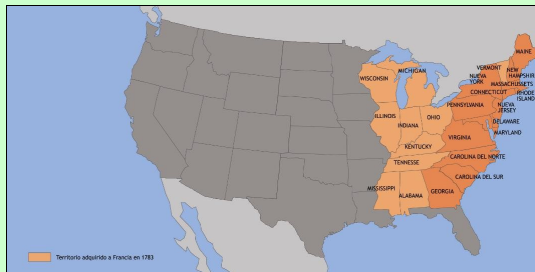


TASK:

1. Write a couple of lines about each of the maps that show the process of formation of the USA:



First...



In 1783...



Then in 1819...



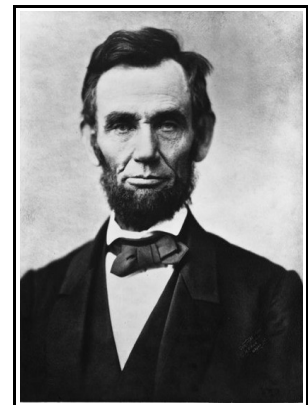
And finally...

TASKS:

2. Name the part of North America that was controlled by Britain by the mid 1700s.
3. Why did Britain tax American citizens?
4. How many British Americans were living there?
5. Explain the Boston Tea Party.
6. When was the Declaration of Independence signed?
7. Who commanded the Colonial army?
8. Name three countries that helped the colonists?
9. The war lasted _____ years, ended in _____, when the British surrendered at _____.
10. _____ became the first President of the USA in _____.

Secession war

The constitution of the USA allowed slavery and its abolition depended on the decision of each of the states. Thus, slavery was kept in the Southern states because there were a lot of plantations and the main work force were slaves.



Abraham Lincoln was elected president in 1860 and he was abolitionist. That's why 11 Southern states left the USA and formed a **Confederation**. The Congress (**House of Representatives**) declared them rebels and war started in 1861; it lasted 4 years, 500.000 people died. The North won the war and slavery was abolished.

TASKS:**Causes of the Secession War:**

11. Do you think that slavery was the cause of the war?
12. What were the economic and social differences between North and South of the USA? Explain.
13. Do you think that these differences could have something to do with the war?
14. Were the different opinions about slavery a moral question or an economic question? Explain.
15. What happened with the black population as soon as the war finished? And some years later?

Find out more at...

- these websites:
 - ✓ www.schoolhistory.co.uk (general information for students- simple language)
 - ✓ www.wikipedia.com (general information)
- these books from our school library:
 - ✓ BINGHAM, Jane et al.: *The Usborne Internet-Linked Encyclopedia of World History*. Usborne.2000. Pages 330-331, 324-325, 348-349 and up to 350-351. ISBN: 97807-4605361-4 (interesting links to their website)
 - ✓ GANERI, Anite et al.: *Encyclopedia of World History. From the Stone Age to the 21st Century*. Parragon. United Kingdom. 2005. Pages 154-155, 138-139, 176-177. ISBN: 1-405-45-684-1
 - ✓ McCAFFREY, Susie et al.: *The Usborne-linked First Encyclopedia of History*. 2003. Pages 46-47 and 54-55. ISBN: 079450386-1
 - ✓ GARWOOD, Christopher, et al.: *Aspects of Britain and the USA*. Oxford University Press. ISBN: 0-19-454245-9
- and these films:
 - ✓ *Gone with the Wind / Foise co vento (Secession War)*
 - ✓ *The Patriot / O patriota (about the American Revolution)*
 - ✓ *Dances with Wolves / Bailando con lobos (1990), (the American Civil War and shortly after)*

Pictures from:

- Banco Imágenes ITE