

# UNIT 2

# Europe



## **Chapter 4      The Geography and History of Europe**

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# Chapter 4

## The Geography and History of Europe

### Chapter Preview

#### People

Abraham, Jesus, Muhammad, Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin

#### Places


Arctic Ocean, Mediterranean Sea, Black Sea, Caspian Sea, Ural Mountains, Atlantic Ocean, Great Britain, English Channel, Iberian Peninsula, Pyrenees Mountains, European Plain, Rhine River, Alps Mountains, Danube River, Scandinavian Peninsula, United Kingdom, France, Spain, Italy, Germany, Ukraine, Venice, Genoa, Portuguese Empire, Spanish Empire, British Empire, Empire of France, East Germany, West Germany

#### Terms

European Union (EU), Germanic language, Romance language, Slavic language, monotheism, Judaism, Torah, Christianity, New Testament, Islam, Quran, Crusades, empire, Scramble for Africa, nationalism, militarism, Great War (World War I), depression, Great Depression, Nazi Party, chancellor, propaganda, Holocaust, Cold War, Iron Curtain, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), euro (€)

**Top:** View of Venice, Italy, from a cruise ship in the Adriatic Sea. Venice is a famous tourist destination in Italy.

**Background:** The Parthenon temple in Athens, Greece, was built about 2,500 years ago. Many democratic principles practiced in Europe have their roots in ancient Greece.



**Bottom Right:** The mountains of northern Italy are part of the Alps Mountains that span the middle of Europe.

Europe is the world's second-smallest continent; only Australia is smaller. Still, Europe's abundant resources and its history have worked together to spread European influence around the world. Most of the over 325 million Americans today have ancestors from Europe. These people's ancestors came from countries like England, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Ireland, Russia, Scotland, and Sweden to name a few.

This book is printed in English because of the colonization of North America by people from England. Most North Americans are English-speakers today. Language is just one connection to Europe. There are also foods such as pizza, spaghetti, lasagna, pretzels, and cheeses like cheddar and parmesan that come from Europe. The list of European foods could go on and on. Do not forget music: everything from Mozart to the Beatles to Adele. Stories from Europe that Americans enjoy include *Cinderella*, *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Frankenstein*, *The Hobbit*, and the Harry Potter books.

Europe's history records times of both peace and war. In the early 20th century, millions of people died in wars centered in Europe. However, ties between the countries of Europe have grown stronger. Much of Europe is now united in the **European Union (EU)**, an association of 28 member countries with over 500 million people.

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*Some day, following the example of the United States of America, there will be a United States of Europe.*

-George Washington, president of the United States

**Top Left:** World wars caused much destruction and killed tens of millions of Europeans in the early 20th century.

**Middle Left:** The Coliseum in Rome, Italy, is an archaeological site from the time of the ancient Roman Empire.

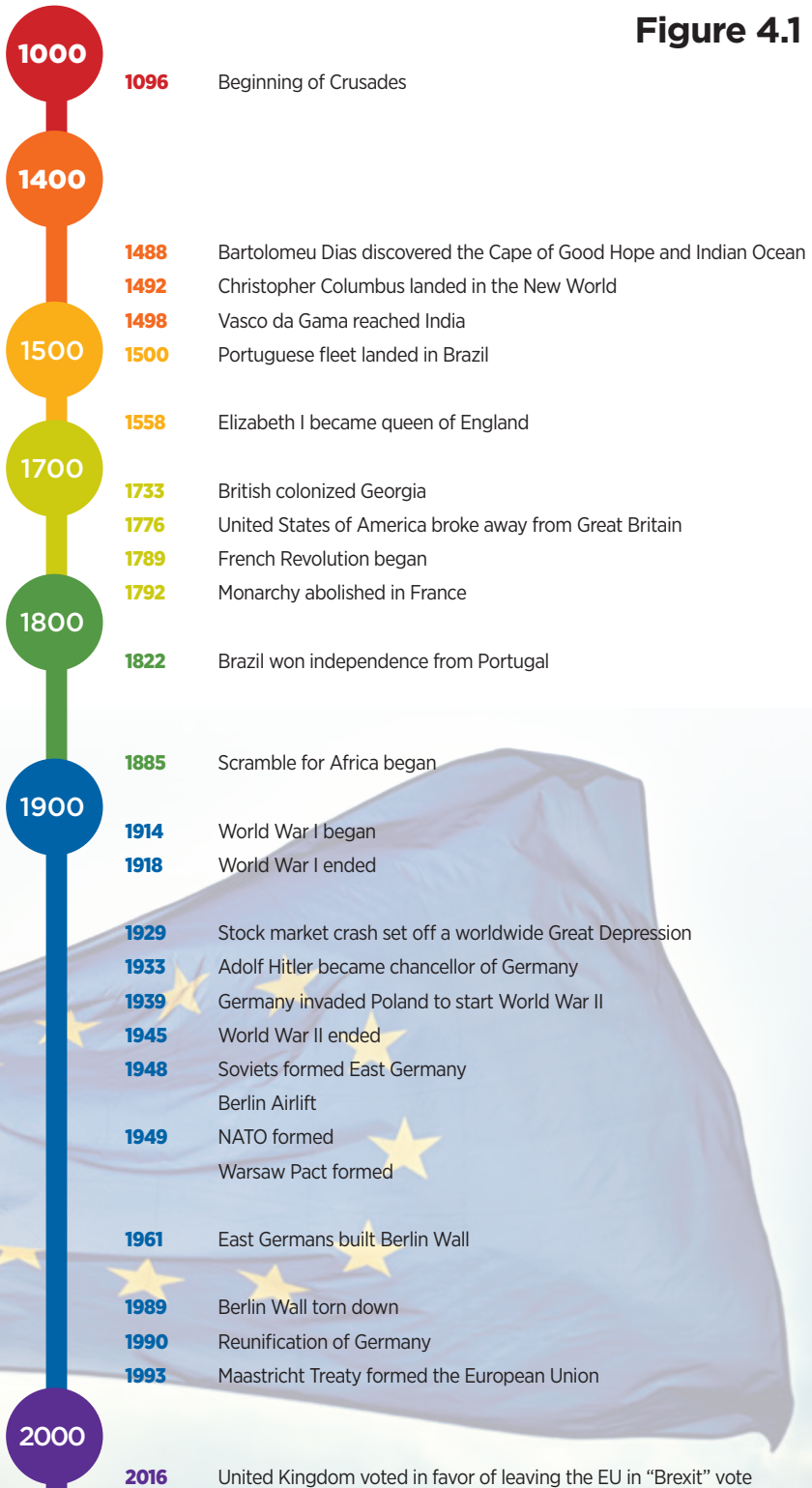
**Background:** The flag of the European Union consists of 12 golden stars on a blue background.



# TIMELINE OF EUROPE HISTORY



**Figure 4.1**



**For More Maps**  
See Pages 444-445

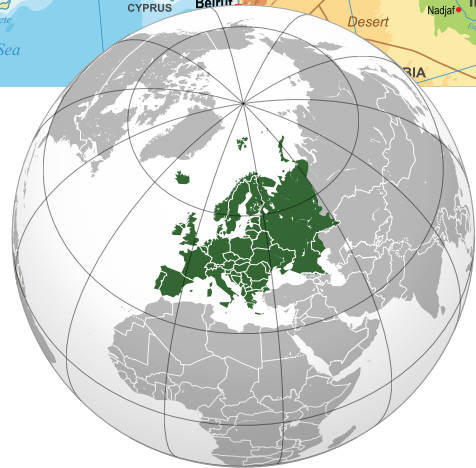


**Area** (square miles): 3,931,000  
**Population:** 743,100,000  
**Population density** (people per square mile): 189

**Bounded by:**  
 Arctic Ocean  
 Atlantic Ocean  
 Mediterranean Sea  
 Black Sea  
 Caspian Sea  
 Ural Mountains

**Highest point:**  
 Mount Elbrus (Russia) 18,510 feet above sea level

**Lowest point:**  
 Caspian Sea (Russia) 92 feet below sea level



**Map 4.1**

**Europe**

**Map Skill:** What do the red squares on the map indicate?

## Section 1

# The Land and People of Europe



Setting a Purpose


### As you read, look for

- ▶ the location and features of Europe;
- ▶ advantages of Europe's location for trade;
- ▶ ways the Europeans have adapted to their large number of languages;
- ▶ the main religions of Europe;
- ▶ terms: **Germanic language, Romance language, Slavic language, monotheism, Judaism, Torah, Christianity, New Testament, Islam, Quran.**

## Location and Features of Europe

Europe has tall ice-capped mountains as well as endless plains of rich farmland and rivers that can tell stories of war and peace. To better understand Europe, one must appreciate its location and its features, both land and water.

Europe is located in the northern hemisphere. It is the second-smallest continent and shares the same landmass as Asia to the east. It is bordered by the Arctic Ocean on the north and the Mediterranean Sea to the south. Toward its southeastern side are the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. The Ural Mountains form the eastern boundary.



**Bottom:** The village of Chamonix, France, lies just below Mont Blanc, the highest point in the European Union.



Look at the map of Europe at the beginning of this chapter and locate the Atlantic Ocean. It is on the eastern side of the United States and the western side of Europe. Locate the large island, Great Britain, off the northwest coast of the European continent. The water that separates this island from the rest of Europe is the English Channel. Move your finger south along the coast of Europe until you reach another large body of water that joins the Atlantic Ocean. This is the Mediterranean Sea. It also touches the continent of Africa.

Europe has several main physical features that identify it. The Iberian Peninsula, for instance, is the landmass found where the Mediterranean Sea joins the Atlantic Ocean. Put your finger on the Iberian Peninsula. Moving north, your finger will cross the Pyrenees Mountains, a natural border between the Iberian Peninsula and the rest of Europe.

The Pyrenees Mountains form the western border of the European Plain. This plain extends from France to Russia. It ranges from 50 to 1,500 miles wide. The eastern border of the plain is the Ural Mountains. Some of the world's best farmland is on this plain. When you move your finger east from the Pyrenees and your finger enters the European Plain, you will cross the Rhine River. This important river begins in the Alps, the mountain range that forms the southern border of the European Plain. The European Plain contains another major river, the Danube. The Rhine and Danube Rivers form natural political boundaries for many European countries and act as highways for the transportation of goods and people.

After you locate the Danube River, the Rhine River, and the Alps Mountains, continue north from the Alps to the Scandinavian Peninsula. This is the largest peninsula in Europe. Move your finger east to the Ural Mountains, which run in a north/south direction. The Ural Mountains mark the eastern border between Europe and Asia as well as the eastern boundary of the European Plain.



**Top:** The Pyrenees Mountains separate the Iberian Peninsula from the rest of Europe. The Pic du Midi is on the French side of the mountains. **Bottom:** A field of sunflowers thrives on the European Plain of Russia.



## Locating Countries in Europe

Many countries, large and small, make up the continent of Europe. Put your finger on the United Kingdom. It is an island country off the northwestern coast of Europe. The United Kingdom contains the island of Great Britain, the northeastern part of the island of Ireland, and many other smaller islands. Move your finger to the south, across the English Channel to the country of France.

France has many natural borders: the Pyrenees Mountains, the Alps, and the English Channel. From France, move your finger to the southwest across the Pyrenees Mountains and enter the country of Spain on the Iberian Peninsula. Spain is bordered by the Mediterranean Sea to the south and east. Move east across the Mediterranean with your finger, and you will find the boot-shaped peninsula of Italy. The country of Italy also includes two of the largest Mediterranean islands, Sardinia and Sicily.

Moving north from Italy, your finger will cross the Alps and enter the country of Germany, located in central Europe. Germany shares an international border with more countries than any other nation in Europe. Move your finger to the southeast to find Ukraine.

One of the largest countries in Europe, Ukraine is mostly plateaus (broad flat areas of high land) and fertile plains. The Danube River forms one of Ukraine's natural boundaries. Continue northeast into Russia, the largest country by land area in the world. Russia covers all of northern Asia and about 40 percent of Europe.

## Languages of Europe

Most European languages are in three main categories: Germanic, Romance, and Slavic languages. The **Germanic language** group has the most European native-speakers. They live mostly in northwestern and central Europe. About 20 percent of Europeans speak one of two Germanic languages—English or German—as their native language. Another large group is the **Romance languages**, which include French, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish. These languages are found in southern and western Europe. Romance languages come from Latin, the language of the ancient Roman Empire. The **Slavic languages** include Polish, Russian, and Ukrainian, which generally use a different alphabet. Slavic languages are found in central and eastern Europe.



**Above:** This sign for the European Parliament in Brussels, Belgium, provides an example of Europe's many languages. **Bottom:** The harbor at Dover, England, on the English Channel has a view of the city's famous white cliffs.





Having so many languages in Europe can be a problem. Many countries share borders, and people move back and forth across borders easily. It is difficult to live, work, and trade with people who cannot communicate with each other. Europeans have worked hard to solve

this problem. Most schoolchildren learn one or two languages besides their own. Over half of all Europeans speak some English. It is chosen because it is considered the worldwide language of business. The European Union has 23 official languages to make sure people can understand laws and decisions made by the government.

## Religions in Europe

Religion has been very important in the history of Europe. Wars have been fought and government leaders have been changed because of religious issues. Today, most Europeans have the legal freedom to choose their religion, and they respect the rights of others to choose as well. Europe is home to many religions. The three largest are Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. These religions have some similarities and a common history. All three are called Abrahamic religions because they started with Abraham, and each has a belief in a single God, known as **monotheism**.

The history of **Judaism** began with the founding father Abraham around 2000 BC. The Jewish holy book called the **Torah** contains the history of the Jewish people and laws to live by. The Ten Commandments, the most famous of these laws, provide a set of ethics still valued by many people today. These include commandments not to steal or murder. Despite facing prejudice throughout history and the Holocaust, about 1.4 million Jews remain in Europe today. When World War II began, there were 9.5 million Jews in Europe. Jewish people still face prejudice in many European countries.



**Top Left:** Signs in European airports, like this one in Amsterdam, Netherlands, are often written in at least two languages. **Top Right:** The ornately decorated St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City is one of the world's largest Christian churches. Vatican City—a city-state inside Rome, Italy—serves as the headquarters for the Roman Catholic Church. **Above:** The star of David, the cross, and the star and crescent are symbols in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. **Left:** The Duisburg Central Mosque is in Germany.

**Christianity** has historically been the dominant religion of Europe. While its followers do not always agree on religious details, they all study the life and follow the teachings of Jesus in the **New Testament** of the Bible. Christianity is divided into three major groups: Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Protestant. Protestants consist of many denominations including Anglicans, Methodists, and other non-Catholic Christians. At times, the religion of European rulers became the official religion of everyone in the country. This caused internal conflicts and pitted countries with opposing views against one another. Today there are about 553 million Christians in Europe.

The followers of **Islam**, called Muslims, are believers in the teachings of the prophet Muhammad. Their holy book called the **Quran** contains revelations recorded by Muhammad. Muslims believe he was the last of the prophets, which include Abraham and Jesus. Muslims practice the five pillars of Islam: prayer, giving to charity, belief in and submission to one God (Allah), fasting during Ramadan, and a pilgrimage to Mecca once during their lifetime. Islam is the dominant religion of the Middle East, North Africa, and parts of Asia. There are around 43 million Muslims in Europe. With the 2016 refugee crisis and the increasing number of terrorist attacks, many Muslims are facing increasing prejudice across Europe. Many anti-immigration political parties are gaining power as they argue against allowing Muslims into their countries. They believe Muslim and European values are not compatible.



## Reviewing the Section

1. What are some advantages of Europe's location that make it good for trading with other countries?
2. Why are rivers such as the Danube and Rhine important for trade?
3. How do Europeans adapt so they can live and work in an area with so many languages?
4. Copy and complete the table with information from the reading.

	JUDAISM	CHRISTIANITY	ISLAM
Founder			
Holy Book			
Followers called			
Fact #1			
Fact #2			

**Top Left:** The Neue Synagogue of Berlin, Germany, was built in 1859 to serve Berlin's Jewish community.

**Above:** This Russian Orthodox Church is in Moscow, Russia.

## Section 2

# Europe's Expanding Influence

### As you read, look for

- ▶ three reasons Europeans explored in the 15th and 16th centuries;
- ▶ results of Europeans' explorations;
- ▶ empires that grew rich and powerful as a result of exploration;
- ▶ terms: **Crusades**, **empire**.



## The Crusades

Europe's history stretches back thousands of years. For the purposes of this book, the focus will be on the more recent centuries. But to understand the recent past, we must review a bit of the last 1,500 years. The **Crusades** (1096 to 1272) were military expeditions sent by different popes (leaders of the Roman Catholic Church) to capture important religious lands from the Muslim Turks. These lands were across the Mediterranean Sea in the area that is now the country of Israel in Southwest Asia. Though the Crusaders were not successful, one result was that the people of Western Europe learned how to draw better maps and build better ships. The Crusades also exposed the European Crusaders to desirable products of the East. Europeans and Asians created trade routes to bring products from the East to markets in Europe. These benefits of the Crusades later contributed to the expansion of Portugal, Spain, England, and France.



**Above:** A stained-glass window in Brussels, Belgium, depicts fighters in the First Crusade. **Left:** An actor portrays a medieval crusader in Rhodes, Greece.



## The Age of Exploration

By the 15th century, the major trade routes from Asia to Europe went to the Italian cities of Venice and Genoa. Italian merchants marked up the prices on spices, precious jewels, fragrances, woods, and finished goods before selling them throughout Europe. The wealth of the Italian merchants became well known. Leaders in other countries such as Portugal, Spain, France, and England were envious of the huge profits made by the Italian merchants. Because Venice and Genoa controlled the trade routes through the Mediterranean Sea, the jealous European countries looked for another way to reach the Asian countries of India, China, and the Spice Islands. Their efforts to find new trade routes paid off in many ways, and the four countries grew into **empires** (countries that rule a number of territories).

### The Empire of Portugal

Portugal established the earliest of the modern European colonial empires, and the Portuguese Empire lasted for centuries. Portugal is located at the western end of the Iberian Peninsula. This gave its sailors easy access to the Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea. In the early 1400s, Prince Henry of Portugal sent ships down the west coast of Africa searching for a way to India and China. He also started a naval observatory, the Institute of Sagres, where students studied navigation, astronomy, and cartography (mapmaking).

These efforts advanced Europeans' knowledge about sailing on the seas and helped Portugal become an effective seafaring nation. Other Portuguese sailors such as Bartolomeu Dias reached the southern tip of Africa and discovered the Cape of Good Hope and the Indian Ocean. Vasco da Gama, another Portuguese explorer, later sailed around the cape and then continued on to India. In 1500, Pedro Álvares Cabral claimed Brazil for Portugal. By 1571, a string of outposts connected Portugal with Africa, India, the South Pacific islands, and Japan. Portugal grew wealthy from its trade route around Africa to Asia.

## DID YOU KNOW ?

Bartolomeu Dias originally named his discovery the Cape of Storms because of all the violent storms in the area. The Portuguese king later renamed it the Cape of Good Hope so it would sound less threatening and others would want to travel in that direction.

**Above:** Ships such as the *Niña*, *Pinta*, and *Santa Maria* took Christopher Columbus and other explorers who sailed for Spain to the New World. **Right:** Prince Henry is shown symbolically leading the Portuguese explorers on the Monument to the Discoveries in Lisbon, Portugal.



## The Empire of Spain

King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain, who also lived on the Iberian Peninsula, worked on a plan to increase their wealth and power like the Portuguese. In the 1490s, they hired Christopher Columbus, an Italian, to lead this effort. Columbus was given ships and men to try to find a passage across the Atlantic Ocean to Asia. His first discoveries were the islands of the Bahamas, although he thought he was in Asia. It was later learned that Columbus had found entire continents that were unknown to the Europeans. Exploration and colonization of this “New World” gave Spain enormous wealth. This wealth allowed the Spanish to build a powerful navy and begin to spread Roman Catholic Christianity to other parts of the world.

The Spanish Empire was one of the largest empires in history. Spanish conquistadors conquered the Inca and Aztec civilizations in the 1500s and brought home much of the wealth of these people in the form of gold and silver. Spain claimed huge areas of North and South America and ruled parts of them for over 300 years. Their empire stretched to Asia, where they controlled the Philippine Islands until almost the 20th century.

## The Empire of Great Britain

England was one of three countries (England, Scotland, and Wales) that shared the island of Great Britain. Queen Elizabeth I of England reigned in the late 1500s. She observed the great wealth of Spain and Portugal and the growing power of the Spanish navy. At the same time, there was a scientific curiosity about the world at large and a desire to spread Christianity. Under Elizabeth's reign, the English dealt a severe blow to the Spanish navy and began English exploration and colonization in the New World.

By the early 1700s, England, Scotland, and Wales were united as the Kingdom of Great Britain. The British Empire became the largest in history. At its peak, Great Britain controlled lands that are now Canada, Australia, India, much of eastern Africa, and numerous islands across the world.

The English colonized parts of North America, including the colony of Georgia (1733). Even though other European countries had colonies in North America, Great Britain won out over its European rivals that included the Dutch, French, and Spanish. Great Britain also colonized the continent of Australia and many islands along its trading routes. During the 19th century and into the early 20th century, Great Britain's influence increased. By the 1920s, one-fourth of the world's population was under British control.



## DID YOU KNOW ?

In the 1800s, the phrase “the sun never sets on the British Empire” was a poetic way to say the empire stretched so far around the world that there was always daylight somewhere in the realm.

**Background:** Christopher Columbus prepares to leave Palos, Spain, in search of a faster route to Asia. **Above:** Jamestown, Virginia, is the site of the first English colony in the New World. **Left:** English Queen Elizabeth I expanded England's navy and sent explorers to the New World in hopes of increasing the country's wealth and power.



## DID YOU KNOW?

The guillotine was invented in the 1790s in France. Its weighted knife blade was designed to forcefully slice through the neck of its victims. It was used in France on nobles and other prisoners with the idea that it was the most painless way to execute a prisoner.

### The Empire of France

From the 1600s to the 1900s, the Empire of France was one of the world's major powers. Like Spain and Portugal, France had ports on the Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea. The French did not plan to be outdone by their Spanish neighbors in terms of wealth and power. The French kings paid for explorations of their own and started colonies including Quebec in Canada and islands in the Caribbean, the Indian Ocean, the South Pacific, the North Pacific, and the North Atlantic.

France in the 1780s was Europe's largest country by population. Many of its people were wealthier and better educated than previous generations. However, there was great poverty, and landowning citizens wanted more rights and protections from their government. Like Great Britain, France paid for its many wars with taxes, and by the late 1700s, high taxes were a common problem. In North America, taxes became a cause that led to the American Revolution. The French king was an absolute monarch, unlike the British monarch whose power was limited by Parliament. In France, the monarchy failed to adapt to changing times. In 1789, the French Revolution—inspired by the American Revolution—began. By 1792, the monarchy was officially abolished, and in 1793, King Louis XVI and his wife Marie Antoinette were executed.

## Reviewing the Section

1. In what ways was Portugal's Prince Henry important to the Age of Exploration?
2. What were three reasons for European exploration in the 15th century?
3. How did the English, French, and Spanish end up with so many colonies around the world?
4. In what ways has the Age of Exploration affected today's world?

**Top Left:** Jacques Cartier was sent to the New World by France's King Francis I in search of a route to Asia and wealth for the king. **Top Right:** Versailles Palace was home to the French kings. Riches from the New World helped to build the palace.

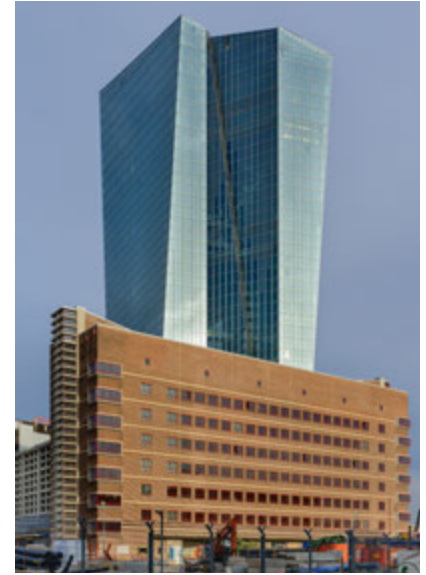
## Section 3

# Modern Europe

### As you read, look for



- ▶ rivalries in Europe;
- ▶ causes and effects of the Scramble for Africa;
- ▶ how nationalism and militarism led to World War I;
- ▶ connections between the Great Depression and World War II;
- ▶ how the end of World War II led to the Cold War;
- ▶ terms: **Scramble for Africa, nationalism, militarism, Great War (World War I), depression, Great Depression, Nazi Party, chancellor, propaganda, Holocaust, Cold War, Iron Curtain, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), euro (€).**



### Times of Rivalry and Peace

Economic rivalries fueled by colonization created a tense atmosphere in Europe. Small feuds set the stage for two world wars. Millions of people lost their lives during these conflicts. The 20th century was shadowed by the Cold War, which introduced the threat of nuclear weapons. However, in 1993, numerous European countries were working harder to promote peace and prosperity through membership in the European Union.



**Top:** Frankfurt, Germany, is one of Europe's largest financial centers. The European Central Bank moved into its new high-rise headquarters there in 2015. **Bottom:** The busy streets of London, England, are full of modern advertisements for companies such as Georgia's Coca-Cola.



## Empire Building in Africa and Asia

During the late 19th century, rival European countries wanted more colonies. These countries were Great Britain, France, Portugal, Spain, Denmark, Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands. Asia and Africa held many valuable resources such as gold, diamonds, and oil, which could be used in European manufacturing. The result was the **Scramble for Africa** between 1885 and 1910. During this period, European countries divided control of the African continent among themselves.

Politics and religion also led to increased colonization. European nations showed national pride by competing for African colonies. No major nation wanted to be without colonies. Furthermore, 19th century Europeans viewed themselves as the world's most advanced civilization. Some felt it necessary to "civilize" people in the rest of the world. They used this objective to justify their economic plans. Increased activity by Christian missionaries to Africa helped make colonization seem less offensive in Europe. This scramble for land also reached farther into Asia. Many Asians' view of Europe changed from trading partner to conqueror.

Due to competitive colonization efforts, **nationalism** (the love of one's country) and **militarism** (using strong armies and threats of war) were on the rise in Europe. European countries signed treaties agreeing to help one another in case of attack. In 1914, a series of events caused Germany to declare war on Russia and France. The British joined France and Russia and formed the Allied Powers. Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire (Turkey and its colonies), and Bulgaria joined the Germans as the Central Powers.

Because these large countries controlled lands around the world, the war was called the **Great War**. Later, the United States became involved on the side of the Allied Powers. The war lasted until 1918, and an estimated 10 million people died. Some believed it was "the war to end all wars." Unfortunately, the Great War became known as World War I only 20 years later with the start of World War II.

At the end of World War I, leaders from the countries involved met at Versailles Palace outside Paris, France, to write a treaty. The Treaty of Versailles explained what the winners would gain and what the losers would lose. Many of the leaders of the winning countries blamed Germany for the war. They wanted the Germans punished severely. Germany lost important territory, including lands rich in natural resources. It also lost all of its colonies.



**Top:** World War I was the first major conflict to involve the use of aircraft. These British and German airplanes are engaged in a midair battle. **Right:** This painting depicts a torpedo from a German U-boat (submarine) streaking by a British vessel during World War I.





France and Great Britain wanted to make sure Germany could not attack them again. Their goal was to make Germany a weak country. The treaty stated that Germany had to reduce the size of its army and navy. France suffered great losses in the war including the lives of over two million people. A large part of the war was fought in France. Farms, homes, cities, and industries were destroyed. Highways, bridges, and railroads had to be rebuilt. The Allies added a condition in the treaty that Germany had to pay the Allies reparations (a payment or help given to compensate for past wrong deeds) to repay civilians who lost property because of the war.

## Worldwide Depression

After World War I, most countries in the world began to prosper. Americans enjoyed a time called the “Roaring Twenties.” People felt good about the economy, but an economic **depression** (a severe economic downturn) was already beginning. In the autumn of 1929, the United States experienced a stock market crash. The value of stocks (shares of ownership) people held in companies began a steep and quick drop. Stockholders began to sell their stocks as fast as they could in order to get some money for the stocks. Because there were more sellers than buyers, the prices continued to fall.

Businesses found they could no longer sell their goods because consumers had less money to spend. Many of these businesses had to close, which meant workers lost their jobs. Many farmers, who could no longer afford their loans, lost their farms. These events happened so quickly that a panic occurred. There was a “run on the banks” as people tried to withdraw all their money. All these factors caused the economy of the United States to come to a halt.

Businesses around the world traded with the United States, and as Americans stopped buying goods, businesses in other countries suffered. When US banks closed, banks in other countries were hurt, too. Stockholders in other countries began to sell their stocks for low prices. They could not sell their stocks in US companies for any price. What followed was called the **Great Depression**.



**Top:** Crosses mark many graves of soldiers killed in World War I. France alone lost over two million people in the war. **Above:** During the Great Depression, these people were making a “run on the bank”—hoping to withdraw their money before it disappeared.

# special Feature

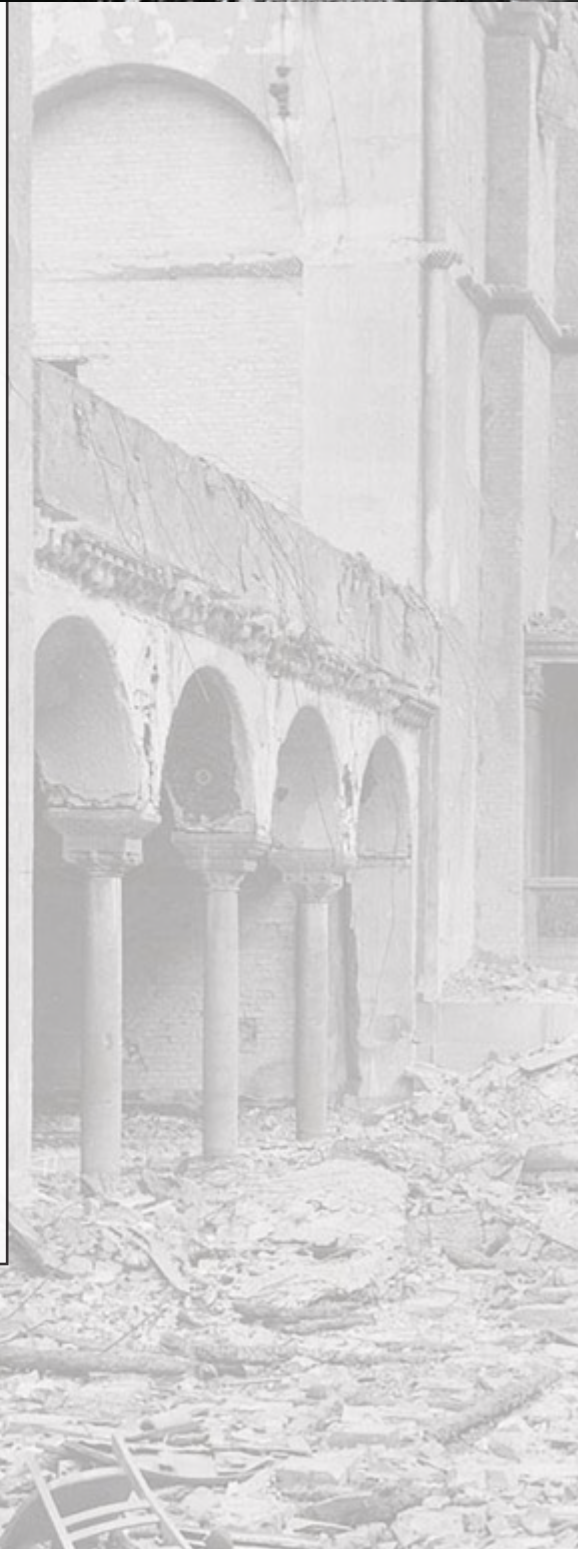
## Kristallnacht: An Example of Nazi Propaganda

One way the Nazi Party in Germany was able to gain power was by using propaganda. Groups usually have a set of beliefs, called a doctrine, which they put forth as the truth. When the group tries to convince others to believe their doctrine, they may use propaganda—false or exaggerated statements—to recruit members.

Adolf Hitler and the Nazis rose to power at a sad time for Germany. There were food and job shortages, and the country had lost millions of men and women in World War I. At this low point in German history, Hitler and his National Socialist Party, commonly known as the Nazi Party, believed they had a way to make the lives of Germans better. In fact, Hitler wanted his country to be the best in the world. He began a campaign of teaching the German people that they were, in fact, the best people in the world. The Nazis believed that certain other groups—especially the Jewish minority and the Bolsheviks (Russian Communist Party)—were holding the country back.

Although Hitler's message was full of racism and hate, he was skillful in his speech and made his words sound hopeful to Germans. Hitler promised that the country would be a world leader once those holding back the Germans were eliminated. After he became Germany's leader, Hitler established an entire government department, referred to as a propaganda machine, to create art, books, educational materials, music, movies, news, and plays that supported the Nazis' doctrine.

Children's books such as *The Poisonous Mushroom* and *Trust No Fox* were placed in schools. These books looked like typical children's stories, but the messages in them were aimed at building distrust for Jewish people. The messages also helped to build support for the use of force against Jews in order to protect "good Germans." In all areas of life, the German people were getting messages telling them about the bad things Jews had done, and planting the idea that harming Jews was acceptable behavior.





Violence against Jews broke out all over Germany on the evening of November 9, 1938, when Nazi soldiers and Hitler Youth instigated riots and began destroying property. Windows were broken in Jewish-owned businesses and homes. So much glass was in the streets that the event became known as Kristallnacht, or “Night of Broken Glass.” Afterward, officials stated that the riot was a spontaneous outburst from the public against Jews. This event was a sign of the success of German propaganda against the Jews. Rioters killed 91 Jews and destroyed 267 synagogues (Jewish buildings of worship), which were set on fire. Fire departments were told to let the fires burn and only protect nearby buildings. Over 7,000 Jewish-owned businesses were damaged and looted.

The Nazi government’s propaganda machine went to work immediately. News stories about the events contained descriptions of how the German police were needed to bring order and safety back to the streets. This was accomplished by arresting Jewish men—not the attackers! Later, the government blamed all Jews for the riots and passed a law that insurance companies could not pay the Jewish business owners for their losses, but instead had to give the money to the government. Additional laws made it illegal for Jews to own a business, have a job with the German government, or obtain a driver’s license. Jewish children were not allowed to attend German schools.

Propaganda had been so effective that, although some Germans thought these new laws were wrong, a great many others had come to believe what they were seeing and reading. An attitude of acceptance had emerged. Germans had become content with the idea that it was acceptable for one group to lose their rights

as long as everyone else’s lives were improving. The propaganda machine was working. Can you think of any examples of propaganda today?



**Opposite Page, Top:** The funeral of Ernst vom Rath, a German diplomat who was assassinated in Paris by a 17-year-old exiled Jew, stirred German emotions. The assassination triggered the Kristallnacht attack on German Jews. **Top:** The Neue Synagoge on Oranienburger Strasse (Street) was spared major damage in Kristallnacht but was severely damaged by Allied bombing in World War II. **Left:** Windows of a Jewish-owned printing business in Berlin were smashed during the Night of Broken Glass.

## The Rise of Nazism

With the loss of valuable lands and lives, Germany was a country in distress after World War I. Added to these problems was the large debt it was required to pay to the winning Allies. As consumer goods became scarce, prices rose, and available jobs decreased, people began to blame the government. Adolf Hitler and his National Socialist or **Nazi Party** claimed they could fix the country's problems, which they blamed on the Treaty of Versailles and on the Jews, who they alleged had control over money and the banks. They found eager followers among the defeated Germans.



In 1933, Hitler became **chancellor** (head of government) of Germany and soon gained complete control of the government. He put people to work and improved the economy with ambitious projects such as rebuilding the military and constructing a superior highway system, but he took away many civil liberties. Those who spoke out against him were imprisoned or killed. To ensure his continued power, Hitler made extensive use of **propaganda** (ideas or statements that are often false or exaggerated and that are spread to help a cause, a political leader, or a government).

### In Other Words

Holocaust is a word of Greek origin that means “sacrifice by fire.”

## The Holocaust and World War II

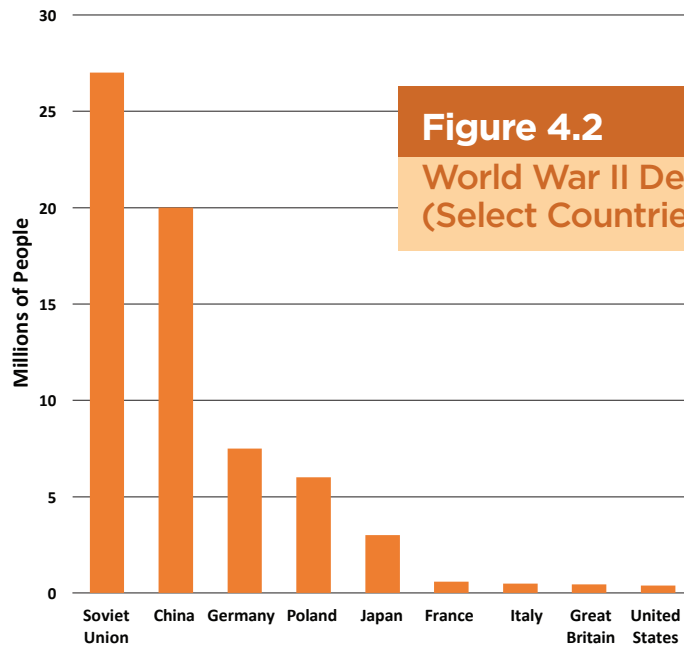
Hitler's ambitions grew beyond Germany, and he began sending troops into some of their former territories. By 1938, German troops controlled Austria and Czechoslovakia. His 1939 invasion of Poland finally forced France and Great Britain to declare war on Germany. This was the start of World War II.

As a solution to their “Jewish problem,” the Nazi regime initiated the **Holocaust**—a systematic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of Jews and other groups they considered inferior in the countries they controlled. This included Romanis, disabled people, homosexuals, and Hitler's political opposition. The government established concentration camps where they jailed Jews and some other “undesirable” people. Many prisoners were forced into working for the Nazis, but many more were packed into gas chambers and killed by the thousands. Before the war ended, the Nazis had killed as many as 12 million in concentration camps.

**Top:** Parades of Nazi troops, like this one in 1933, helped build Germans' pride in their country. **Right:** Hitler's concentration camps were prisons for the Nazis' enemies. The slogan at the camp in Dachau, Germany, suggests that “Work Makes You Free,” but prisoners were rarely released to freedom.



World War II waged on for six bloody years. In 1941, the United States joined the Allies after it was attacked by the Japanese, who were allies of Germany. By 1945, the Allies were pushing the Germans back into their home territory. In the final months of the war, German guards started forcing survivors of the concentration camps on marches called death marches. They hoped to prevent the Allies from freeing the prisoners they needed for labor. As Allied forces moved across Europe, they began to encounter and liberate concentration camp inmates and prisoners who were on the march. Finally, on May 7, 1945, the marches ended when the German armed forces surrendered unconditionally to the Allies.



**Figure 4.2**

**World War II Deaths  
(Select Countries)**

## End of World War II and the Cold War

When World War II ended in Europe, about 25 percent of all German housing had been destroyed, and about half of the urban population was dead. For those who remained, there was little food. Electric power was disrupted. Highways, railroads, and bridges were destroyed. To rebuild the country, the Allies divided Germany into four zones controlled by four countries: the United States, Great Britain, France, and the Soviet Union. Berlin, the capital city, was in the Soviet Zone, but it was divided into four zones, too.

The “hot war” of bombing and fighting became the **Cold War** in which countries threatened to attack each other with nuclear weapons. The Soviet Union had been one of the Allies during World War II, but it was a communist country and a rival of the United States. The Soviet Union believed a powerful central government should control the economy (command economy) as well as the government. This idea was very different from the democracy and capitalism (market economy) found in the United States. The United States believed businesses should be privately owned and citizens should freely choose their leaders. After World War II, Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin placed most of the Eastern European countries under communist control and took over their businesses and property. These countries became known as the Eastern Bloc. The United States and Great Britain led the Western Bloc countries of Western Europe. The line separating the two was called the **Iron Curtain**.

In 1948, the Soviets declared their zone of Germany to be East Germany. The other three sections became West Germany. Even the capital of Berlin in East Germany was divided into East and West. In 1961, communist leaders built the Berlin Wall to separate East Berlin from the free sections of the city.

### DID YOU KNOW ?

The term “Iron Curtain” had been used on occasion since the 19th century, but it became well known when former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill used it in a speech in Fulton, Missouri, in 1946. He said that “an iron curtain has descended across the Continent.”

### DID YOU KNOW ?

In 1948, the Soviets blocked roads and railroads leading into West Berlin. The United States and Great Britain responded with the Berlin Airlift in which they flew fuel and food to West Berlin for nearly a year.



Some countries under communist rule tried to break away from the Soviet Union, but the Soviets sent their military into these countries to keep them in line. Each side in the Cold War thought the other was trying to rule the world. Neither side gave up, and people lived in fear that another world war might erupt. People worried that, if such a war happened, it would be a nuclear war. That would be a disaster for everyone in the world.

Countries formed new alliances to protect themselves. In 1949, the Western European countries plus the United States and Canada formed the **North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)**. The eastern countries signed the Warsaw Pact.

## Rise of the Superpowers

As the Cold War continued, the United States and Soviet Union had ever-growing influence. As countries allied with one side or the other, the United States and Soviet Union had the ability to influence world events and project an image of global power. Both countries invested heavily in military and spy systems, had stockpiles of nuclear weapons, and had permanent seats on the United Nations Security Council. They made use of all these advantages to help their allies.

## The Collapse of the Soviet Union and German Reunification

Luckily this Cold War never translated to all-out war, and by 1985, the Soviets were facing many political and economic problems. In November 1989, the Berlin Wall was torn down. People around the world celebrated the end of the Cold War. Soon after, the Soviet Union was separated into different countries. The largest of these countries is Russia.

## The European Union

During the Cold War, the countries of Europe increased their efforts to live peacefully together on their small continent. In order to improve business and trade, six countries came together to form the European Coal and Steel Community. This group evolved into the European Economic Community (EEC). Countries in the EEC agreed not to have trade barriers such as tariffs, embargoes, or quotas with each other. Removal of trade barriers has led to a more prosperous economy in all the countries.



**Top:** Germans in Berlin celebrate reunification on October 3, the Day of German Unity. **Above:** The Soviet Union supported Cuba's military during the Cold War with weapons like this rocket launcher. **Right:** Flags of the nations of the European Union fly in Brussels, Belgium.

The group worked to help create jobs in poorer parts of Europe and pass laws to protect the environment. More countries joined, and in 1993, the Maastricht Treaty changed the group to the European Union (EU). Within the European Union, the Single Market was completed with the idea that goods, services, people, and money should be able to move freely through the EU countries. Europeans no longer had to carry their passports when traveling between EU countries. They could, instead, travel from country to country much as people in the United States cross state borders. By 1999, many of the countries began exchanging their national currency for a new currency, the **euro (€)**. Using the euro made trade much easier for citizens of the European Union. With freedom of movement and a common currency, the small countries of Europe were finally united in a large single market that could compete with countries like the United States.

In the 21st century, the European Union has faced a number of problems. First was the worldwide terrorism crisis that grew after the 9/11 attacks in the United States. Numerous terrorist attacks targeted EU nations as the countries also tried to deal with refugees fleeing wars caused by religious extremism in the Middle East. Another issue facing the European Union was the weak economy of some member countries such as Greece. New banking laws and loans from wealthier countries had to be put in place to assist countries that were struggling. Finally, the people of the United Kingdom voted in June 2016 to leave the European Union. The complicated treaties that unite the EU nations were tested by this vote. No country had ever left the European Union, and it was unclear how long it would take for the United Kingdom to actually leave the association of countries.



## Reviewing the Section

1. How did the Scramble for Africa contribute to World War I?
2. How did the Treaty of Versailles cause problems for Germany after World War I?
3. How was Hitler able to gain support in Germany after World War I?
4. Which countries were the superpowers of the Cold War, and how did the Cold War differ from a “hot war”?
5. What are some advantages EU membership gives its citizens?

**Top:** In 2016, protesters marched in Thessaloniki, Greece, demanding the European Union open its borders to more refugees from war zones in the Middle East. **Above:** This graphic indicates that the British should exit the European Union in the move that came to be called “Brexit.”



# special Feature

## The European Union

The European Union (EU) is an economic area made up of 28 European countries as of 2016. After World War II, Europeans decided that creating economic interdependence between countries was the best way to avoid another war. In 1957, the Treaty of Rome created the European Economic Community (EEC), which began to remove trade barriers. The six founding countries were Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands. After decades of growing interdependence, the Maastricht Treaty on European Union formed the modern day European Union in 1993.

To become an EU member, countries agree to the unhindered movement of people, tariff-free trade, and a single currency, the euro (€). This concept is known as a single market because economic tools and goods move around freely as if in a single country. This allows the European Union to compete economically with large countries like the United States. Members of the European Union also assist one another by helping to finance infrastructure in poorer EU countries, subsidizing farming, and passing regulations to improve the standard of living.

The Eurozone refers to EU countries that use the euro as their currency, but not all EU member countries use the euro. Some countries wanted to keep their own currency even though there are many benefits to adopting the euro. Since the European Union allows for the free movement of people, using the same currency as neighboring countries is good for the economy. When tourists or businesspeople visit, they are more likely to spend money because they do not need to exchange currencies. They simply use what is already in their wallet! Similarly, when businesses trade in the Eurozone, they do not need to pay banks a fee to exchange their currency. This means the company earns more profit.





The European Union has also grown into a political body. There are several EU institutions such as the European Commission, European Parliament, and Council of the European Union. To ensure fairness, there are representatives from each country who collectively make decisions. The main goals of these institutions are to promote the interests of the European Union and create similar social and economic policies across all member countries. The European Union was awarded the 2012 Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of its promotion of peace and reconciliation, democracy, and human rights. In addition to helping members economically, the European Union has improved standards of living, allowed easy access to better education and jobs, and encouraged international friendships.



However, as the European Union grows stronger, some Europeans have become increasingly opposed to some of its principles. In particular, some are fearful that the free movement of people actually hurts the economy, that requirements to accept refugees increase the possibility of terrorism, and that EU institutions have too much power over individual countries. In a nonbinding referendum, the United Kingdom controversially voted in 2016 to leave the European Union. Now the futures of both the United Kingdom and Europe are uncertain. To learn more about the European Union, visit its official website: <https://europa.eu>.

### European Union Countries



**Opposite Page, Top:** Borders between many EU countries are marked simply with a standard sign such as this one between Germany (Bundesrepublik Deutschland) and Austria. There are no guards, gates, or border checkpoints. **Middle Left:** Only 19 of the 28 EU countries use the euro as their currency. **Above:** This map pictures flags of the 28 countries in the European Union.

# Chapter Review

## Chapter Summary

### Section 1: The Land and People of Europe

- The continent of Europe has convenient access to the Atlantic Ocean as well as many seas and rivers that help provide fertile land and transportation.
- There are a variety of physical features across Europe including plains, many mountain chains, islands, and peninsulas.
- There are many countries in Europe, which means there are many languages and cultures.
- In Europe, the three largest religions are Christianity, which has led to many conflicts in the continent's history, Judaism, and Islam.

### Section 2: Europe's Expanding Influence

- The Crusades exposed Europeans to the wealth of knowledge and goods in the Middle East and Asia.
- By the 15th century, merchants in Venice and Genoa were becoming rich by importing these goods and selling them in Europe; many other countries wanted the same wealth and began to set up colonies.
- The Portuguese were the first to build a major empire. They greatly improved the navigation and cartography skills necessary for further European exploration.
- The French monarchy experienced the negative effects of colonization after their people were motivated by the United States' revolution to overthrow their king.

### Section 3: Modern Europe

- The competition between European countries to colonize Africa became known as the Scramble for Africa. This led to growing nationalism and militarism across Europe.
- The many military alliances across Europe, which were meant to protect the people, actually caused most countries to be dragged into the Great War.
- Hitler took advantage of the economic depression and the anger of Germans after World War I to rise to power in 1933.
- With the use of propaganda, Hitler dehumanized many people who would eventually be murdered during the Holocaust.
- After World War II, distrust between the Soviets and the Western allies led to the Cold War, which lasted until 1989.
- Today most of Europe is united in the European Union (EU).

## Activities for Learning

### Reviewing People, Places, and Things



Create a crossword puzzle with the following words. Create clues for each of the words.

European Union  
Germanic  
empire  
propaganda  
monotheism  
Iron Curtain  
plains  
Pyrenees

### Understanding the Facts



1. Name three mountain ranges found in Europe.
2. What is the name of the body of water that separates Britain from France?
3. Why were European Muslims facing discrimination in 2016?
4. What were the first two European cities to grow rich from selling African and Asian goods?
5. Why did European countries want to have colonies?
6. What is militarism?
7. How did Nazi propaganda lead to the Holocaust?
8. Who made the phrase “Iron Curtain” famous?
9. What is the euro?

### Developing Critical Thinking



1. Today, Europe has ways to manage the many languages spoken in the European Union. However, most of these methods were not used in the past. How do you think the multitude of languages affected the continent’s history?
2. The increase of militarism and nationalism created a tense atmosphere across Europe that led to World War I. Why do you think the combination of these two concepts created such a tense and ultimately violent environment?

### Writing across the Curriculum



Write a paragraph describing propaganda and explaining how the Nazi government created and used propaganda to ensure their power.

### Applying Your Skills



Create a chart with information on each of the three language categories found in Europe. List examples of languages in each category, where they are spoken, and one interesting fact.

### Exploring Technology



In order to build their empire, the Portuguese improved their cartography skills. This also helped other Europeans navigate and establish colonies. Follow the links below to view European maps that Oxford University has put online. In three short paragraphs, describe what was happening with European colonization on each map, notable differences between the maps, and how these differences allowed for further colonization.

<http://tiny.cc/1482>

<http://tiny.cc/1540>

<http://tiny.cc/1606map>