

# Western Europe

All questions require at least  
THREE sentences on own paper.

## PLACES & TERMS

**Benelux** the countries of Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg

**Reformation** a period when many Christians broke away from the Catholic Church and started Protestant churches

**feudalism** a political system in which powerful lords owned most of the land

**nationalism** the belief that people should be loyal to their nation

**Holocaust** the Nazis' program of mass murder of European Jews

**Berlin Wall** the wall that divided Berlin into two zones

## A History of Cultural Divisions

**What** shaped language and religion in the region?

France and Germany are **dominant** countries in Western Europe. They have influenced Austria, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Switzerland and the **Benelux** countries of Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg.

Western Europe is divided by language. French is a Romance language. It evolved from the language of Rome. Rome never fully conquered the Germanic tribes in the lands east of France. Germanic languages are still spoken there.

In the late 700s, a Germanic king conquered most of the region. His name was Charlemagne. His empire fell apart after his death. Western Europe remained a region of small, competing kingdoms.

Religion also divides the region. In 1517, Martin Luther published 95 statements that criticized the Catholic Church. This began the Reformation. During the **Reformation**, many Christians left the Catholic Church and started Protestant churches.

Today, France is mostly Catholic. Germany, the Netherlands, and Switzerland have both Protestants and Catholics.

## 1. What are two elements that divide cultures in this region?

Answer in at least THREE SENTENCES on own paper.

## The Rise of Nation-States

**What** is nationalism?

After Rome fell, **feudalism** evolved. It was a system in which lords owned most of the land. They gave land to nobles who served in their armies.

Over time, strong kings gained power over feudal lords, and nationalism evolved. **Nationalism** is the belief that people should be loyal to their nation.

Nationalism caused modern nation-states to form. A nation-state is an independent nation of people with a common culture. France was one of

the first nation-states. French kings abused their power, so in 1789, the people began the French Revolution. They *deposed* the king and started a republic. Later, Napoleon Bonaparte seized power. In 1804, he made himself emperor. He tried to conquer Europe but was defeated.

In the 1800s, a wave of nationalism swept Western Europe. Industrial growth also took place. Europeans wanted raw materials and markets. To get them, European nations set up colonies in other lands.

Nationalism and competition for colonies helped start World War I. The Allied Powers, including France, fought the Central Powers, including Germany. The Allies won and treated Germany harshly. German anger helped cause World War II. Germany, led by the Nazis, tried to conquer Europe. The Nazis carried out the Holocaust, a program to murder all European Jews. In 1945, the Allies defeated Germany.

After the war, Germany was split in two parts. East Germany was *Communist*. West Germany was non-Communist. The Berlin Wall cut the capital city of Berlin in two. In 1989, anti-Communist reforms swept Europe. East Germany opened the Berlin Wall. In 1990, the two Germanys united under a democratic government.

## 2. What effects did nationalism have on this region?

Answer in at least THREE SENTENCES on own paper.

## Economics: Diversity and Luxury

### **What** products come from this region?

Western Europe has long been rich in agriculture. In the 1800s, it was one of the first regions to develop industry. France, Germany, and the Netherlands are still three of Europe's top manufacturing nations.

High-tech and service industries are important. The Netherlands makes electronics. Germany produces electronics and scientific instruments. France has high-speed trains and a space program. Switzerland specializes in banking.

Tourism is also a major part of the economy. And the region is famous for luxury goods. These include

German cars, French fashions, and Swiss watches.

Germany's reunification caused economic problems. West Germany has a higher standard of living. East Germany's factories are outdated. Germany is trying to foster growth in the East.

## 3. Why would such economic diversity be beneficial?

Answer in at least THREE SENTENCES on own paper.

## Great Music and Art

### **Which** art forms were characteristic of the region?

Western Europe has a strong artistic legacy. Germany and Austria are famous for music. Bach, Beethoven, and Mozart were composers from those countries.

France and the Netherlands have had many important painters. Vermeer and Rembrandt were famous Dutch artists. Major French painters include Monet, Cézanne, and Gauguin.

## 4. How does the artistic legacy of France and Germany differ?

Answer in at least THREE SENTENCES on own paper.

## Modern Life

### **What** are cities like in Western Europe?

Most Western Europeans live in cities. Most have good public transportation systems and cultural attractions. Europeans spend time in parks and cafés.

There have been conflicts. In the 1980s, many people from Yugoslavia and Turkey came to West Germany for jobs. When the economy grew worse, some Germans committed violence against immigrants.

## 5. What led to recent conflicts?

Answer in at least THREE SENTENCES on own paper.