

AP EUROPEAN HISTORY STUDY GUIDE

180 High-Yield Concepts

Advanced Placement Course | College Board CED-aligned

- All 9 CED units: Renaissance through Cold War and contemporary Europe
- Exam weights on every unit; real AP exam format on the how-to page
 - Key names, dates, treaties, and thinkers for the DBQ and LEQ
 - Perfect for the AP European History exam in May

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How to Use This Guide

This guide condenses the AP European History course and exam description into high-yield concepts. It is not a textbook replacement -- it is the fastest way to review everything the exam covers and to target your weak units.

The AP European History exam is 3 hours 15 minutes: 55 multiple-choice questions (55 min, 40% of the score), 3 short-answer questions (40 min, 20%), a document-based question (60 min, 25%), and a long essay (40 min, 15%). The 9 units below map to the College Board Course and Exam Description, with unit weights on each section title.

How to use the concepts

- Each concept = term + concise explanation + high-yield exam tip (+ example where useful).
- First pass: read every concept in order. Underline anything unfamiliar.
- Second pass: focus only on the concepts you underlined.
- Two weeks before the exam: rapid-review every tip line (they are the highest-yield).
- Use the Table of Contents to jump straight to your weakest units.

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Total: 180 high-yield concepts

How to use the TOC: work through the units in order on your first pass, then jump back to your weakest units for review. Each concept includes an Explanation, a high-yield exam tip, and where useful an Example. Mark the concepts you miss with a small dot in the margin and revisit them 48 hours later.

Unit 1: Unit 1: Renaissance and Exploration

10-15% of the AP European History exam. The Italian Renaissance, humanism, new monarchies, and the age of overseas exploration.

1	The Italian Renaissance
Explanation:	A cultural rebirth in Italy (c. 1350-1600) marked by renewed interest in classical antiquity, humanism, and artistic innovation, funded by wealthy city-states and patrons.
AP Euro Tip:	<i>The Renaissance = rebirth of classical learning; Italy led because of urban wealth and trade with the East.</i>
Example:	Florence, under the Medici, financed Leonardo and Michelangelo.
2	Humanism
Explanation:	An intellectual movement placing human potential and achievement at the center, drawing on classical Greek and Roman texts. Key figures: Petrarch, Erasmus, Thomas More.
AP Euro Tip:	<i>Humanism = humans at the center; civic humanism applied learning to public life and politics.</i>
Example:	Petrarch, 'father of humanism', wrote sonnets celebrating human love and fame.
3	Secularism
Explanation:	The growing focus on worldly concerns -- politics, art, commerce -- rather than exclusively religious ones, characteristic of Renaissance thought.
AP Euro Tip:	<i>Secularism = worldly focus; the Renaissance did not reject religion but added a secular layer.</i>
Example:	Machiavelli analyzed politics without theological assumptions -- secular analysis.
4	Individualism
Explanation:	The Renaissance emphasis on individual talent, achievement, and fame, expressed in self-portraits, biographies, and the cult of the 'Renaissance man'.
AP Euro Tip:	<i>Individualism = celebrating the individual; Vasari's Lives of the Artists is its textbook expression.</i>
Example:	Leonardo's self-portrait and Cellini's autobiography celebrate the individual.
5	Vernacular Literature
Explanation:	Literature written in local languages (Italian, French, English) rather than Latin, reaching wider audiences. Dante, Chaucer, and Luther used the vernacular.
AP Euro Tip:	<i>Vernacular = the people's language; it spread ideas and later fueled Protestantism.</i>
Example:	Dante's Divine Comedy was written in Tuscan Italian, not Latin.
6	Renaissance Art Innovations
Explanation:	Artists used linear perspective, chiaroscuro (light/shadow), realism, and classical themes. Patronage from merchants, popes, and princes drove the arts.
AP Euro Tip:	<i>Know perspective, realism, and patronage; the Medici and the papacy were the biggest patrons.</i>
Example:	Masaccio's frescoes introduced linear perspective to Florence.
7	Machiavelli and The Prince
Explanation:	Machiavelli's 1513 guide argued rulers should be pragmatic, using cunning and force when needed ('the ends justify the means'), separating politics from morality.
AP Euro Tip:	<i>Machiavelli = realistic politics divorced from morality; the term 'Machiavellian' comes from him.</i>
Example:	The Prince advised rulers it is safer to be feared than loved.

8 New Monarchies

Explanation: Late-15th-century rulers (France's Louis XI, England's Henry VII, Spain's Ferdinand and Isabella) centralized power, raised taxes, built standing armies, and curbed nobles.

AP Euro Tip: *New monarchs = centralization: taxes, standing armies, bureaucracy; they prepared the modern state.*

Example: Henry VII's Court of Star Chamber checked noble power in England.

9 The Reconquista and Spanish Unification

Explanation: Ferdinand and Isabella completed the Christian reconquest of Spain (1492), expelled Jews and Muslims, and unified Castile and Aragon, creating a strong Catholic state.

AP Euro Tip: *1492 = Reconquista completed + Columbus sails; religious uniformity was a royal goal.*

Example: The Alhambra Decree expelled Spain's Jews in 1492.

10 The Portuguese Maritime Empire

Explanation: Portugal led exploration down the African coast and around the Cape to India (Vasco da Gama, 1498), building a trading-post empire in spices.

AP Euro Tip: *Portugal = trading posts, not conquest; Prince Henry the Navigator sponsored the voyages.*

Example: Da Gama's sea route to India broke Venice's spice monopoly.

11 Columbus and the Columbian Exchange

Explanation: Columbus's 1492 voyage opened the Americas to Europe. The Columbian Exchange transferred crops, animals, diseases, and peoples between hemispheres, transforming both.

AP Euro Tip: *The Columbian Exchange = two-way transfer; diseases (smallpox) devastated Native Americans while potatoes and maize transformed Europe.*

Example: Smallpox killed up to 90% of some Native American populations.

12 The Atlantic Slave Trade Begins

Explanation: The demand for plantation labor in the Americas created the transatlantic slave trade, which grew massively from the 1500s onward, reshaping African and American societies.

AP Euro Tip: *The slave trade followed plantation demand; Portugal and Spain led the early trade.*

Example: Sugar plantations on Madeira and the Caribbean created the model for slavery.

13 Mercantilism

Explanation: The economic theory that wealth (gold/silver) is finite and states should maximize exports, minimize imports, and exploit colonies as sources of raw materials and markets.

AP Euro Tip: *Mercantilism = colonies serve the mother country; bullion = wealth. It drove empire-building.*

Example: Spain's treasure fleets shipped American silver to Europe.

14 The Price Revolution

Explanation: The 16th-century inflation caused by the influx of American silver and population growth, eroding fixed incomes and enriching merchants.

AP Euro Tip: *Price revolution = silver-driven inflation; it hurt nobles on fixed rents and helped the commercial class.*

Example: Spanish prices rose fourfold in the 16th century.

15 Printing Press

Explanation: Gutenberg's movable type (c. 1450) made books cheap and widespread, accelerating literacy, the spread of humanism, and later the Reformation.

AP Euro Tip: *The press = cheap ideas at scale; it was the internet of the 1500s.*

Example: By 1500, an estimated 20 million books had been printed in Europe.

16 The Commercial Revolution

Explanation: The expansion of trade, banking, and capitalism from the 1500s: joint-stock companies, stock exchanges, insurance, and global trade networks.

AP Euro Tip: *Commercial revolution = finance and trade institutions; joint-stock companies funded overseas ventures.*

Example: The Dutch East India Company (1602) was the first joint-stock company.

17 The Medici and Florence

Explanation: The Medici banking family dominated Florence, using wealth to patronize art and control politics, symbolizing the fusion of money and culture in the Renaissance.

AP Euro Tip: *The Medici = banking + patronage + political power; the Renaissance's sugar daddies.*

Example: Cosimo and Lorenzo de Medici sponsored Botticelli and Michelangelo.

18 Renaissance in Northern Europe

Explanation: Northern humanists (Erasmus, More) blended classical learning with Christian piety -- Christian humanism -- and criticized church corruption without leaving the church.

AP Euro Tip: *Northern humanism = reform within Christianity; Erasmus's Praise of Folly mocked abuses.*

Example: Thomas More's Utopia imagined a rational, reformed society.

19 Exploration Motivations (3 G's)

Explanation: God (spread Christianity), Glory (national prestige), and Gold (wealth) drove European exploration and empire.

AP Euro Tip: *God, glory, gold -- the standard trio on exploration FRQs.*

Example: Spanish conquistadors sought gold while missionaries sought souls.

20 The Treaty of Tordesillas (1494)

Explanation: The papacy divided the non-European world between Spain (west) and Portugal (east), shaping colonial empires -- Brazil went to Portugal.

AP Euro Tip: *Tordesillas = the line splitting the Atlantic; it explains why Brazil speaks Portuguese.*

Example: The line placed most of the Americas in Spain's sphere.

Unit 2: Unit 2: Age of Reformation

10-15% of the AP European History exam. Luther, Calvin, the Catholic response, religious wars, and the reshaping of European politics.

21 Martin Luther and the 95 Theses

Explanation: Luther's 1517 theses attacked indulgences, asserting salvation by faith alone and the Bible as sole authority. The printing press spread his challenge across Europe.

AP Euro Tip: *Luther = faith alone, scripture alone; the 95 Theses (1517) started the Reformation.*

Example: Luther's challenge to Tetzel's indulgence sales went viral via print.

22 Sola Scriptura and Sola Fide

Explanation: The Protestant principles of scripture alone (not tradition) and faith alone (not works) as the path to salvation, rejecting papal authority.

AP Euro Tip: *The two 'solas' define Protestantism: Bible + faith, not pope + works.*

Example: Luther argued indulgences were worthless because salvation came by faith.

23 The Protestant Ethic

Explanation: Max Weber's thesis that Calvinist beliefs in predestination and hard work encouraged capitalism: success signaled God's favor, so labor and profit were virtuous.

AP Euro Tip: *Weber = Calvinism + capitalism; the exam pairs the Protestant ethic with economic growth.*

Example: Calvinist merchants reinvested profits -- 'this-worldly asceticism'.

24 John Calvin and Geneva

Explanation: Calvin systematized Protestant theology around predestination, building a disciplined church-state in Geneva that became a model for Reformed churches.

AP Euro Tip: *Calvin = predestination + Geneva's moral discipline; his ideas spread to France (Huguenots), Scotland (Knox), and England (Puritans).*

Example: Geneva's consistory regulated morals from theater to dress.

25 The English Reformation

Explanation: Henry VIII broke with Rome to annul his marriage (Act of Supremacy, 1534), creating the Church of England. Edward VI and Elizabeth moved it toward Protestantism.

AP Euro Tip: *England's split = politics (divorce) first, theology later; Elizabeth's settlement charted a middle course.*

Example: Henry dissolved the monasteries and sold their lands.

26 Elizabethan Settlement

Explanation: Elizabeth I's compromise (1559) kept Protestant doctrine but retained Catholic ceremony, seeking religious peace in England.

AP Euro Tip: *Elizabeth's settlement = Protestant doctrine, Catholic-ish ritual; the 'middle way'.*

Example: The Thirty-Nine Articles defined Anglican doctrine moderately.

27 The Catholic (Counter) Reformation

Explanation: The Catholic Church's response: the Council of Trent (1545-63) reaffirmed doctrine and reformed abuses, and new orders like the Jesuits combated Protestantism.

AP Euro Tip: *The Counter-Reformation = Trent (doctrine + reform) + Jesuits + the Inquisition.*

Example: The Jesuits' schools and missions led the Catholic revival.

28 Council of Trent

Explanation: The Catholic council that affirmed tradition and works alongside faith, kept the seven sacraments, ended indulgence abuses, and required clerical education.

AP Euro Tip: *Trent = no compromise on doctrine, yes to reform of practice.*

Example: Trent condemned Protestant teachings but ordered bishops to reside in their dioceses.

29 The Society of Jesus (Jesuits)

Explanation: Founded by Ignatius Loyola, the Jesuits were educated, disciplined missionaries and educators who re-Catholicized parts of Europe and spread the faith globally.

AP Euro Tip: *Jesuits = education + missionary zeal + papal loyalty; the shock troops of the Counter-Reformation.*

Example: Jesuit missions reached China, Japan, and the Americas.

30 The Inquisition

Explanation: Church courts (Spanish and Roman) that tried heresy, using torture and execution to enforce Catholic orthodoxy.

AP Euro Tip: *The Inquisition = enforced orthodoxy; the Spanish Inquisition targeted conversos and Protestants.*

Example: Galileo was tried by the Roman Inquisition in 1633.

31 Witch Hunts

Explanation: The 16th-17th century panic prosecuting alleged witches, often women, driven by religious anxiety, social stress, and economic turmoil. Thousands were executed.

AP Euro Tip: *Witch hunts peaked in the Reformation era; they were fueled by fear and misogyny.*

Example: About 40,000-60,000 people were executed as witches in early modern Europe.

32 Religious Wars in France

Explanation: The French Wars of Religion (1562-98) between Catholics and Huguenots ended when Henry IV (a convert) issued the Edict of Nantes (1598) granting Huguenot toleration.

AP Euro Tip: *The French wars = Catholic vs Huguenot; the Edict of Nantes = limited toleration.*

Example: The St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre (1572) killed thousands of Huguenots.

33 The Thirty Years' War (1618-48)

Explanation: A devastating war beginning as a religious conflict in Bohemia and becoming a European power struggle. The Peace of Westphalia (1648) ended it.

AP Euro Tip: *Thirty Years' War = religion + power; Westphalia = state sovereignty and the end of religious wars.*

Example: Germany lost up to a third of its population in the war.

34 Peace of Westphalia (1648)

Explanation: The treaties that ended the Thirty Years' War, recognizing state sovereignty, religious toleration (*cuius regio*), and the independence of the Netherlands and Switzerland.

AP Euro Tip: *Westphalia = sovereignty wins; it is the birth certificate of the modern state system.*

Example: The treaties recognized Calvinism and let princes choose their territory's religion.

35 Cuius Regio, Eius Religio

Explanation: The principle that the ruler's religion determines the region's religion ('whose realm, his religion'), established by the Peace of Augsburg (1555) and extended by Westphalia.

AP Euro Tip: *The principle = ruler picks the religion; subjects could emigrate if they disagreed.*

Example: The Peace of Augsburg applied it to Lutherans and Catholics in Germany.

36 Anabaptists

Explanation: Radical reformers who rejected infant baptism and state churches, advocating adult baptism, separation from the world, and pacifism. They were persecuted by all sides.

AP Euro Tip: *Anabaptists = adult baptism + separation; the Mennonites and Amish descend from them.*

Example: The Anabaptist kingdom of Munster (1534-35) ended in massacre.

37 The Huguenots

Explanation: French Calvinists who faced persecution and civil war; many fled France after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685), taking skills abroad.

AP Euro Tip: *Huguenots = French Protestants; their flight after 1685 drained French talent.*

Example: Huguenot weavers brought silk and finance to England and Prussia.

38 Wars of Religion and State Building

Explanation: Religious conflict strengthened monarchies: rulers used wars to raise taxes, build armies, and crush noble resistance, centralizing the state.

AP Euro Tip: *Wars of religion = the crucible of absolutism; the French state grew stronger through the wars.*

Example: Richelieu allied Catholic France with Protestant Sweden against the Habsburgs -- realpolitik.

39 Protestant Work Ethic and Capitalism

Explanation: Calvinist communities valued frugality, discipline, and hard work, generating capital for investment -- a link between religion and the rise of capitalism.

AP Euro Tip: *The exam asks how religious values shaped economic behavior.*

Example: Dutch Calvinist merchants built Amsterdam's global trade empire.

40 Religious Pluralism in Europe

Explanation: By 1700 Europe was divided into Catholic, Lutheran, Calvinist, and Anglican zones, with toleration varying by state -- a permanent end to religious unity.

AP Euro Tip: *The Reformation shattered Christendom; map the religious zones of Europe.*

Example: Poland-Lithuania practiced remarkable religious toleration.

Unit 3: Unit 3: Absolutism and Constitutionalism

10-15% of the AP European History exam. Absolute monarchy in France, constitutionalism in England, and the competition for European power.

41 Absolutism

Explanation: A system where the monarch holds supreme, unchecked power, justified by divine right, controlling law, taxation, and the military.

AP Euro Tip: *Absolutism = the ruler is the state; Louis XIV is the model.*

Example: Louis XIV's 'L'etat, c'est moi' ('I am the state') defines absolutism.

42 Divine Right of Kings

Explanation: The doctrine that monarchs derive their authority from God alone and answer only to God, making rebellion against the king a sin.

AP Euro Tip: *Divine right = God-given rule; Bossuet defended it for Louis XIV.*

Example: James I of England wrote The True Law of Free Monarchies defending divine right.

43 Louis XIV and Versailles

Explanation: Louis XIV (r. 1643-1715) centralized France, built the palace of Versailles to control the nobility, and pursued glory through war.

AP Euro Tip: *Versailles = the golden cage for nobles; Louis = the sun king, absolutism's peak.*

Example: Nobles competed for the honor of holding the king's candle at Versailles.

44 Jean-Baptiste Colbert

Explanation: Louis XIV's finance minister who applied mercantilism: state-sponsored industry, tariffs, infrastructure, and a merchant marine to enrich France.

AP Euro Tip: *Colbert = mercantilism in action: state industry + tariffs + colonies.*

Example: Colbert's manufactures produced luxury goods to replace imports.

45 The Fronde

Explanation: A series of noble and parliamentary revolts against royal power during Louis XIV's childhood, teaching him to distrust nobles and centralize authority.

AP Euro Tip: *The Fronde = noble revolt; it pushed Louis toward absolutism.*

Example: The young Louis fled Paris during the Fronde -- he never forgot it.

46 Jean Bodin and Sovereignty

Explanation: Bodin argued for indivisible sovereign power in the ruler, laying the theoretical foundation of absolutism.

AP Euro Tip: *Bodin = sovereignty is absolute and undivided; the theorist of absolutism.*

Example: Bodin's Six Books of the Republic justified strong monarchy.

47 English Constitutionalism

Explanation: England developed a system where the monarch's power is limited by law and Parliament, in contrast to French absolutism.

AP Euro Tip: *Constitutionalism = limited government, rule of law, Parliament's power.*

Example: Magna Carta (1215) planted the seed of limited monarchy.

48 Petition of Right (1628)

Explanation: Charles I was forced to accept limits: no taxation without Parliament, no arbitrary imprisonment, no martial law in peacetime, no forced billeting.

AP Euro Tip: *The Petition of Right = parliamentary limits on the king; Charles ignored it, leading to civil war.*

Example: Charles dissolved Parliament and ruled personally for 11 years.

49 English Civil War (1642-51)

Explanation: Parliament (Puritans, gentry) fought Charles I (royalists) over religion and royal power. Parliament won; Charles was executed in 1649.

AP Euro Tip: *The Civil War = Parliament vs the crown; it ended with Charles I's execution.*

Example: Oliver Cromwell's New Model Army defeated the royalists at Naseby.

50 Oliver Cromwell and the Commonwealth

Explanation: Cromwell ruled England as Lord Protector after the regicide, with Puritan moral laws and military rule -- a republic in name, a dictatorship in practice.

AP Euro Tip: *Cromwell = Puritan republic; his rule was as authoritarian as any king's.*

Example: Cromwell banned theaters and enforced Sunday observance.

51 The Restoration (1660)

Explanation: Charles II was invited back to the throne, restoring the monarchy and the Anglican Church while Parliament kept its gains.

AP Euro Tip: *Restoration = monarchy returns; Charles II was pragmatic and popular.*

Example: Theaters reopened and Christmas returned under Charles II.

52 Glorious Revolution (1688)

Explanation: William and Mary replaced James II with almost no bloodshed, accepting the Bill of Rights (1689) that made Parliament supreme.

AP Euro Tip: *Glorious = bloodless; the Bill of Rights = Parliament's supremacy over the crown.*

Example: James II fled to France when William of Orange landed.

53 English Bill of Rights (1689)

Explanation: The settlement guaranteeing free elections, frequent parliaments, no standing army without consent, and no taxation without Parliament -- the foundation of constitutional monarchy.

AP Euro Tip: *The Bill of Rights = Parliament's victory codified; it followed the Glorious Revolution.*

Example: It barred Catholics from the throne.

54 John Locke and Natural Rights

Explanation: Locke's Two Treatises argued government rests on consent and protects life, liberty, and property; if it fails, the people may rebel. His ideas fueled the Enlightenment and revolutions.

AP Euro Tip: *Locke = natural rights + consent + right of revolution; the philosopher of constitutionalism.*

Example: Jefferson's Declaration echoes Locke almost word for word.

55 Thomas Hobbes and Leviathan

Explanation: Hobbes argued humans are selfish and life without government is 'nasty, brutish, and short'; people need an absolute sovereign to keep order.

AP Euro Tip: *Hobbes = absolute state for security; contrast with Locke's limited state.*

Example: Leviathan (1651) justified absolutism from fear of the state of nature.

56 Peter the Great and Russia

Explanation: Peter I (r. 1682-1725) westernized Russia: built St. Petersburg, reformed the army and bureaucracy, and forced nobles to adopt Western ways.

AP Euro Tip: *Peter = forced Westernization + expansion; St. Petersburg was his window to Europe.*

Example: Peter cut boyars' beards and imported Western technology.

57 Prussia and Frederick William I

Explanation: Prussia built a militarized state under the Hohenzollerns: the 'soldier king' Frederick William I made the army the state's core, with an efficient bureaucracy.

AP Euro Tip: *Prussia = army + bureaucracy; the Junker nobility supplied officers.*

Example: By 1740 Prussia's army was the fourth largest in Europe though it was the tenth state.

58 Austria and the Habsburgs

Explanation: The Habsburgs ruled a diverse empire (Austria, Hungary, Bohemia) held together by dynastic loyalty rather than national unity, facing constant centrifugal pressures.

AP Euro Tip: *The Habsburg empire = diversity + dynastic glue; Maria Theresa modernized it.*

Example: Maria Theresa centralized taxes and education after losing Silesia.

59 Balance of Power

Explanation: The principle that no single state should dominate Europe; states ally to check the strongest power, a guiding rule of European diplomacy.

AP Euro Tip: *Balance of power = alliance against the hegemon; it shaped the War of Spanish Succession.*

Example: The Grand Alliance fought Louis XIV to stop French dominance.

60 War of Spanish Succession (1701-14)

Explanation: The war over who would inherit Spain's throne; the Treaty of Utrecht (1713) stopped a Franco-Spanish union and preserved the balance of power.

AP Euro Tip: *Utrecht = France and Spain never united; Britain gained Gibraltar and trade rights.*

Example: Philip V kept Spain but renounced the French throne.

Unit 4: Unit 4: Scientific, Philosophical, and Political Developments

10-15% of the AP European History exam. The Scientific Revolution, the Enlightenment, and the flowering of reason in the 17th-18th centuries.

61 The Scientific Revolution

Explanation: The 16th-17th century transformation in how Europeans understood nature, replacing ancient authority (Aristotle, Ptolemy) with observation, experiment, and mathematics.

AP Euro Tip: *The Scientific Revolution = observation + math over ancient authority.*

Example: Copernicus, Galileo, and Newton each broke with ancient science.

62 Geocentrism vs Heliocentrism

Explanation: The old model placed Earth at the center (Ptolemy); Copernicus placed the Sun at the center, and Kepler added elliptical orbits.

AP Euro Tip: *Copernicus = sun at the center; Kepler = elliptical orbits; Galileo = telescopic proof.*

Example: Galileo's telescope found moons orbiting Jupiter -- Earth was not the only center.

63 Galileo Galilei

Explanation: Galileo's telescopic observations (phases of Venus, Jupiter's moons) confirmed heliocentrism; his trial by the Inquisition (1633) made him science's martyr.

AP Euro Tip: *Galileo = observation + conflict with the Church; the exam loves the trial.*

Example: Under house arrest, Galileo still wrote his Dialogue on the Two World Systems.

64 Isaac Newton and Universal Gravitation

Explanation: Newton's Principia (1687) unified celestial and terrestrial motion with universal gravitation and laws of motion -- the mechanical universe.

AP Euro Tip: *Newton = gravity + three laws of motion; the model of the rational universe.*

Example: Newton's inverse-square law explained both falling apples and orbiting planets.

65 The Scientific Method

Explanation: Francis Bacon championed empiricism (observation and experiment); Rene Descartes championed rationalism (deduction from clear ideas). Together they formed the method.

AP Euro Tip: *Bacon = empiricism; Descartes = rationalism ('I think, therefore I am').*

Example: Descartes doubted everything until he reached the one indubitable fact: his own thinking.

66 Bacon and Empiricism

Explanation: Bacon's Novum Organum argued knowledge comes from observation and induction, not ancient texts -- science should experiment and build knowledge gradually.

AP Euro Tip: *Bacon = induction + experiment; 'knowledge is power'.*

Example: Bacon proposed the systematic accumulation of experiments.

67 Descartes and Rationalism

Explanation: Descartes sought certainty through deduction, doubting all but his own mind; his coordinate geometry also advanced mathematics.

AP Euro Tip: *Descartes = deductive rationalism; 'cogito ergo sum'.*

Example: Descartes' method began with radical doubt of everything.

68 The Enlightenment

Explanation: The 18th-century intellectual movement applying reason to society, government, and religion, questioning tradition and authority.

AP Euro Tip: *The Enlightenment = reason applied to everything; the philosophes led it.*

Example: Kant's motto: 'Dare to know!' -- sapere aude.

69 The Philosophes

Explanation: French intellectuals (Voltaire, Diderot, Montesquieu, Rousseau) who popularized Enlightenment ideas in salons, encyclopedias, and books.

AP Euro Tip: *Philosophes = Enlightenment public intellectuals; the salon was their arena.*

Example: Diderot's Encyclopedia compiled Enlightenment knowledge for the public.

70 Voltaire

Explanation: The sharpest critic of the Church and intolerance, championing free speech, religious toleration, and reform, though skeptical of democracy.

AP Euro Tip: *Voltaire = toleration + free speech; 'I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it.'*

Example: Voltaire's Candide mocked optimism and clerical hypocrisy.

71 Montesquieu and Separation of Powers

Explanation: Montesquieu's Spirit of the Laws praised Britain's separation of legislative, executive, and judicial powers as the safeguard of liberty.

AP Euro Tip: *Montesquieu = three branches checking each other; the blueprint of the US Constitution.*

Example: The Federalist Papers cite Montesquieu repeatedly.

72 Rousseau and the Social Contract

Explanation: Rousseau argued legitimate government rests on the general will of the people; his ideas were radical, egalitarian, and later revolutionary.

AP Euro Tip: *Rousseau = popular sovereignty + the general will; the bridge to democracy and revolution.*

Example: Rousseau opened The Social Contract: 'Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains.'

73 Enlightened Absolutism

Explanation: Monarchs (Frederick the Great, Catherine the Great, Joseph II) who claimed to rule by Enlightenment principles -- reform, toleration, efficiency -- while keeping absolute power.

AP Euro Tip: *Enlightened absolutism = reform from above, power retained; Catherine corresponded with Voltaire.*

Example: Joseph II of Austria abolished serfdom and granted religious toleration.

74 Adam Smith and Capitalism

Explanation: Smith's Wealth of Nations (1776) argued free markets, guided by the 'invisible hand' of self-interest, allocate resources better than state control.

AP Euro Tip: *Smith = laissez-faire capitalism; the state should be a night watchman, not a manager.*

Example: Smith's pin factory showed division of labor multiplying output.

75 Laissez-Faire

Explanation: The principle that government should not interfere in the economy -- free trade, minimal regulation, private property.

AP Euro Tip: *Laissez-faire = let it be; the economic face of the Enlightenment.*

Example: French physiocrats coined 'laissez-faire, laissez-passer'.

76 The Salon

Explanation: Informal gatherings, often hosted by elite women (Madame Geoffrin, Madame de Stael), where philosophes, nobles, and artists exchanged ideas.

AP Euro Tip: *Salons = women-hosted intellectual hubs; they spread Enlightenment ideas.*

Example: Madame Geoffrin's salon hosted Voltaire and Diderot.

77 Deism

- Explanation:** The Enlightenment view of God as a rational creator who set the universe in motion but does not intervene -- 'the clockmaker God'.
- AP Euro Tip:** *Deism = reason-based religion, no miracles; Voltaire and many founders were deists.*
- Example:** Jefferson's Bible cut the miracles from the Gospels.
-

78 Religious Toleration in the Enlightenment

- Explanation:** Philosophes attacked religious persecution and the confessional state, arguing tolerance served both morality and commerce.
- AP Euro Tip:** *Toleration = an Enlightenment core value; the Edict of Nantes' revocation was its foil.*
- Example:** Locke's Letter Concerning Toleration (1689) made the philosophical case.
-

79 The Public Sphere

- Explanation:** Habermas's concept: a space of rational public debate -- newspapers, coffeehouses, salons -- where citizens discussed politics outside state control.
- AP Euro Tip:** *The public sphere = print + coffeehouses + salons; it nurtured the Revolution.*
- Example:** London's coffeehouses were called 'penny universities'.
-

80 Censorship and the Encyclopedia

- Explanation:** Authorities censored Enlightenment texts; Diderot's Encyclopedia was banned but smuggled, showing both state limits and the demand for ideas.
- AP Euro Tip:** *Censorship = the state's rear-guard action against the public sphere.*
- Example:** The Encyclopedia's 28 volumes spread Enlightenment knowledge across Europe.
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Unit 5: Unit 5: Conflict, Crisis, and Reaction in the Late 18th Century

10-15% of the AP European History exam. The French Revolution, Napoleon, and the reaction against revolutionary change.

81 The Old Regime (Ancien Regime)

Explanation: French society before 1789 divided into three estates: clergy (First), nobility (Second), and everyone else (Third). The First two enjoyed privileges and tax exemptions.

AP Euro Tip: *The Three Estates: clergy, nobles, commoners; the Third paid the taxes.*

Example: The Third Estate was 97% of the population but held 0 privileged status.

82 Causes of the French Revolution

Explanation: Financial crisis (debt from wars), bad harvests and bread prices, Enlightenment ideas, and resentment of aristocratic privilege converged in 1789.

AP Euro Tip: *Causes = money + hunger + ideas + resentment; the cahiers de doléance recorded grievances.*

Example: Louis XVI's ministers failed to tax the nobles, forcing the Estates-General.

83 The Estates-General and the National Assembly

Explanation: Louis XVI summoned the Estates-General (1789); the Third Estate declared itself the National Assembly and swore the Tennis Court Oath to write a constitution.

AP Euro Tip: *The Tennis Court Oath = the Third Estate defies the king and claims sovereignty.*

Example: The National Assembly began drafting a constitution while the king dithered.

84 The Storming of the Bastille (July 14, 1789)

Explanation: Parisians stormed the royal fortress-prison, a symbolic blow against royal authority that became the Revolution's founding act.

AP Euro Tip: *The Bastille = the Revolution's symbol; July 14 is France's national day.*

Example: The mob sought weapons and gunpowder, not just prisoners.

85 The Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen (1789)

Explanation: The Revolution's founding document: natural rights, liberty, equality before the law, popular sovereignty, and private property.

AP Euro Tip: *The Declaration = rights + sovereignty + property; compare it directly to the US Declaration.*

Example: It granted rights to men, not women -- Olympe de Gouges protested.

86 The Civil Constitution of the Clergy

Explanation: The National Assembly nationalized church property and made priests state employees, splitting France between loyal clergy and refractory priests.

AP Euro Tip: *The Civil Constitution = state control of the Church; it alienated devout Catholics.*

Example: The pope condemned it, deepening the revolution's religious divide.

87 The Women's March on Versailles (1789)

Explanation: Parisian women marched to Versailles demanding bread and forced the royal family back to Paris, where the Revolution could watch them.

AP Euro Tip: *The women's march = bread + politics; it moved the king to Paris.*

Example: The crowd chanted 'the baker, the baker's wife, and the baker's boy' -- the royal family.

88 The Jacobins and the Sans-Culottes

Explanation: The Jacobin club hosted the Revolution's radicals (Robespierre); the sans-culottes were the militant Parisian working poor who pushed the Revolution left.

AP Euro Tip: *Jacobins = radical deputies; sans-culottes = street pressure from below.*

Example: The sans-culottes' price controls pushed the Revolution toward terror.

89 The Flight to Varennes (1791)

Explanation: Louis XVI's failed escape attempt destroyed faith in the monarchy and radicalized the Revolution.

AP Euro Tip: *Varennes = the king's betrayal; after it, republicanism gained ground.*

Example: The king was recognized by his face on the assignats and captured.

90 The Legislative Assembly and War

Explanation: The new Assembly declared war on Austria and Prussia (1792); early defeats inflamed patriotism and fear of counter-revolution.

AP Euro Tip: *War = the Revolution's radicalizer; foreign threats fed the Terror.*

Example: The Brunswick Manifesto threatened Paris, sparking the September Massacres.

91 The September Massacres and the Republic

Explanation: Panic in 1792 led to mob killings of prisoners, and the monarchy was abolished, proclaiming the First French Republic.

AP Euro Tip: *The Republic (1792) = the monarchy's end; Louis XVI was executed in 1793.*

Example: The guillotine became the Revolution's signature instrument.

92 The Reign of Terror (1793-94)

Explanation: Robespierre's Committee of Public Safety executed suspected enemies of the Revolution, about 16,000 by guillotine plus thousands more, under the Law of Suspects.

AP Euro Tip: *The Terror = revolutionary violence in the name of virtue; Robespierre led it.*

Example: The Terror targeted nobles, priests, and fellow revolutionaries alike.

93 Robespierre and the Cult of the Supreme Being

Explanation: Robespierre promoted deism and civic virtue, executing 'enemies' including Danton; his own fall (Thermidor, 1794) ended the Terror.

AP Euro Tip: *Robespierre = virtue + terror; his execution ended the radical phase.*

Example: The Thermidorian Reaction executed Robespierre and closed the Jacobin club.

94 The Directory (1795-99)

Explanation: A five-man executive governing a conservative republic, corrupt and unstable, which relied on the army and fell to Napoleon's coup.

AP Euro Tip: *The Directory = weak, corrupt; it was the Revolution's failed ending.*

Example: Napoleon's coup of 18 Brumaire (1799) overthrew the Directory.

95 The Haitian Revolution (1791-1804)

Explanation: Slaves in Saint-Domingue revolted under Toussaint Louverture, defeating France and creating the second independent republic in the Americas.

AP Euro Tip: *Haiti = the only successful slave revolt; it terrified slaveholders everywhere.*

Example: Haiti's independence (1804) followed a brutal war against Napoleon's forces.

96 Napoleon's Rise and Reforms

Explanation: Napoleon restored order as First Consul and Emperor, codifying the Civil Code (Napoleonic Code), centralizing administration, and stabilizing finances.

AP Euro Tip: *The Napoleonic Code = legal equality + property rights, but limited women's rights.*

Example: Napoleon's lycees and the Legion of Honor rewarded talent over birth.

97 The Napoleonic Code

Explanation: The legal code establishing equality before the law, property rights, and secular authority -- exported across Europe by conquest.

AP Euro Tip: *The Code = the Revolution's legal legacy; it followed French armies everywhere.*

Example: The Code survives today in Louisiana and much of Europe.

98 Napoleon's Empire and Its Collapse

Explanation: Napoleon conquered much of Europe, but the failed invasion of Russia (1812), the Peninsular War, and the coalition wars brought him down (1814-15).

AP Euro Tip: *Napoleon's overreach = Russia 1812; the Grande Armee froze and starved.*

Example: The 1812 retreat destroyed over 400,000 of Napoleon's soldiers.

99 The Congress of Vienna (1814-15)

Explanation: The great powers (Metternich, Castlereagh, Talleyrand) redrew Europe to restore the balance of power and contain France, establishing a conservative order.

AP Euro Tip: *Vienna = balance of power + legitimacy + containment of France.*

Example: Metternich's Congress system aimed to prevent revolution.

100 The Concert of Europe

Explanation: The great powers' agreement to consult and cooperate against revolutionary change, suppressing liberal and nationalist movements for decades.

AP Euro Tip: *The Concert = conservative cooperation; it crushed revolts in Italy and Spain.*

Example: The Concert broke down over the Crimean War (1853-56).

Unit 6: Unit 6: Industrialization and Its Effects

10-15% of the AP European History exam. The Industrial Revolution, its social consequences, and the rise of new ideologies.

101 The Industrial Revolution in Britain

Explanation: Industrialization began in Britain (c. 1760-1840) thanks to coal, iron, colonies, capital, and a commercial culture -- the world's first industrial nation.

AP Euro Tip: *Britain = coal + colonies + capital + commerce; the hearth of industry.*

Example: British textiles led: cotton cloth was the first mass industrial product.

102 The Agricultural Revolution

Explanation: New crops (turnips, clover), enclosure, and improved breeding raised food output, freeing labor for factories and feeding growing cities.

AP Euro Tip: *Enclosure = the privatization of common land; it displaced peasants into industrial labor.*

Example: Norfolk's four-course crop rotation boosted yields without fallow.

103 Coal and Steam

Explanation: Coal powered steam engines (Watt's improved engine) that drove factories, railways, and steamships -- the energy basis of industrialization.

AP Euro Tip: *Coal + steam = the industrial energy system; railways shrank space.*

Example: Stephenson's Rocket (1829) proved the railway age.

104 The Factory System

Explanation: Production centralized in factories with machinery, division of labor, and discipline -- replacing the putting-out system of home production.

AP Euro Tip: *The factory = machines + discipline + division of labor; the putting-out system died.*

Example: Textile mills and iron works were the first factories.

105 The Railway Age

Explanation: Railroads linked markets, moved coal and goods cheaply, and created national economies -- the most visible symbol of industrial progress.

AP Euro Tip: *Railways = market integration + time zones + mass travel.*

Example: By 1850 Britain had over 6,000 miles of track.

106 Urbanization and Industrial Cities

Explanation: Factory towns mushroomed: Manchester, Birmingham, the Ruhr. Cities grew faster than housing, sanitation, or government could cope.

AP Euro Tip: *Industrial cities = rapid growth + terrible conditions; Manchester was 'Cottonopolis'.*

Example: Manchester's population sextupled in the first half of the 19th century.

107 Working Conditions in Factories

Explanation: Workers faced long hours (12-16), low pay, child labor, and dangerous machinery; the 'dark satanic mills' of the early industrial era.

AP Euro Tip: *Early factories = exploitation; reform came slowly through laws and unions.*

Example: Children as young as 5 worked in mines and mills.

108 Luddites and Machine Breaking

Explanation: Skilled workers smashed the machines they blamed for unemployment and wage cuts; the movement was crushed by the state.

AP Euro Tip: *Luddites = anti-machine protest; they feared craft destruction.*

Example: The Frame-Breaking Act (1812) made machine breaking a capital crime.

109 The British Class System

Explanation: Industrialization created a new middle class (bourgeoisie: factory owners, merchants, professionals) and an urban working class (proletariat), reshaping society.

AP Euro Tip: *Class = the new social geography: bourgeoisie vs proletariat; the aristocracy declined relatively.*

Example: Samuel Smiles' 'Self-Help' (1859) preached middle-class striving.

110 Child Labor Laws

Explanation: The Factory Acts (1833, 1847) limited child labor and the workday: the 1833 act barred under-9s from textile mills and the 1847 Ten Hours Act limited women and children.

AP Euro Tip: *Factory Acts = the state begins regulating labor; the Ten Hours Act is the landmark.*

Example: The 1833 act created factory inspectors to enforce the limits.

111 The Rise of Labor Unions

Explanation: Workers organized unions and cooperatives (the Rochdale Pioneers, 1844) to bargain for wages and conditions; legal recognition came gradually.

AP Euro Tip: *Unions = collective bargaining; Combination Acts banned them until 1824-25.*

Example: The Rochdale Pioneers founded the modern cooperative movement.

112 Chartism

Explanation: The British working-class movement (1838-48) demanding the People's Charter: universal male suffrage, secret ballot, and parliamentary reform.

AP Euro Tip: *Chartism = the first mass working-class political movement; it failed but set the agenda.*

Example: The six points of the People's Charter became reality piecemeal over decades.

113 The Reform Bill of 1832

Explanation: The British reform extending the vote to parts of the middle class and reapportioning rotten boroughs -- a step toward democracy, not a revolution.

AP Euro Tip: *1832 = middle-class suffrage; it showed reform could prevent revolution.*

Example: The Great Reform Act doubled the electorate but left workers voteless.

114 Liberalism

Explanation: The ideology of individual liberty, constitutional government, free markets, and limited state power, championed by the middle class.

AP Euro Tip: *Liberalism = freedom + markets + constitutions; John Stuart Mill is its voice.*

Example: Mill's On Liberty defended free speech against majority tyranny.

115 Socialism

Explanation: The ideology holding that the means of production should be owned collectively, reducing inequality -- from utopian socialism to Marx's scientific socialism.

AP Euro Tip: *Socialism = collective ownership; it grew from the misery of industrial capitalism.*

Example: Robert Owen's New Lanark mills showed workers could be treated humanely.

116 Marxism

Explanation: Marx and Engels argued history is class struggle and capitalism would be overthrown by the proletariat, creating a classless communist society.

AP Euro Tip: *Marx = class struggle + revolution + communism; the Communist Manifesto (1848).*

Example: The Manifesto's opening: 'A spectre is haunting Europe -- the spectre of communism.'

117 Utopian Socialism

Explanation: Early socialists (Fourier, Owen, Saint-Simon) designed ideal communities based on cooperation, before Marx made socialism 'scientific'.
AP Euro Tip: *Utopian = ideal communities; contrast with Marx's class-based revolution.*
Example: Fourier's phalansteries were planned cooperative communes.

118 Anarchism

Explanation: The ideology rejecting the state entirely, seeking self-governing communities; Proudhon, Bakunin, and later anarcho-syndicalists led it.
AP Euro Tip: *Anarchism = no state; it split from Marxism over strategy and authority.*
Example: Bakunin clashed with Marx at the First International.

119 The Great Famine in Ireland (1845-52)

Explanation: Potato blight killed over a million Irish and drove another million to emigrate, while Britain's inadequate relief exposed imperial failure.
AP Euro Tip: *The Famine = potato monoculture + British policy; it reshaped Irish nationalism.*
Example: Population fell by a quarter through death and emigration.

120 Industrialization and Global Inequality

Explanation: Industrial Europe's wealth came partly from colonial raw materials and markets, widening the gap between industrial core and agrarian periphery.
AP Euro Tip: *The industrial gap = core vs periphery; it set the stage for imperialism.*
Example: British cotton came from the American South and India, fueling empire.

Unit 7: Unit 7: 19th-Century Perspectives and Political Developments

10-15% of the AP European History exam. Nationalism, liberalism, unification, and the transformation of politics 1815-1914.

121 Nationalism

Explanation: The belief that each nation should have its own state; a powerful force for unification (Italy, Germany) and for dissolving empires (Ottoman, Habsburg).

AP Euro Tip: *Nationalism = nation + state; it both created and destroyed states.*

Example: The 1848 revolutions were driven by nationalism and liberalism.

122 The Revolutions of 1848

Explanation: A wave of liberal and nationalist revolutions across Europe (France, Austria, Prussia, Italy); nearly all failed, but they modernized politics.

AP Euro Tip: *1848 = the 'springtime of peoples'; failure taught rulers to reform or repress.*

Example: France's revolution toppled the July Monarchy but restored an empire under Napoleon III.

123 The Second French Republic and Napoleon III

Explanation: France's 1848 republic collapsed when Louis Napoleon became President, then Emperor Napoleon III (1852-70) -- 'order' over democracy.

AP Euro Tip: *Napoleon III = authoritarian modernization: railways, banks, rebuilding Paris.*

Example: Haussmann rebuilt Paris with broad boulevards under Napoleon III.

124 Italian Unification (Risorgimento)

Explanation: Cavour (Piedmont) and Garibaldi united Italy by 1870, using diplomacy, war, and popular revolt; the papacy lost Rome in 1870.

AP Euro Tip: *Italy = Cavour's diplomacy + Garibaldi's Red Shirts; Rome became the capital in 1870.*

Example: Cavour allied with France against Austria to expel Austrian power from Italy.

125 Cavour and Piedmont

Explanation: Camillo di Cavour, prime minister of Piedmont-Sardinia, engineered Italian unification through realpolitik, alliances, and war.

AP Euro Tip: *Cavour = the brain of unification; Garibaldi = the sword.*

Example: Piedmont's modern army and French alliance defeated Austria in 1859.

126 German Unification

Explanation: Bismarck united Germany through 'blood and iron': wars against Denmark, Austria, and France, culminating in the German Empire (1871).

AP Euro Tip: *Germany = Bismarck's three wars; the empire was proclaimed at Versailles.*

Example: The Franco-Prussian War (1870-71) crowned the German Empire.

127 Otto von Bismarck

Explanation: Prussia's chancellor practiced realpolitik, using war and diplomacy to unify Germany, then isolating France and building alliances.

AP Euro Tip: *Bismarck = realpolitik + the alliance system; the architect of the Second Reich.*

Example: Bismarck's 'iron and blood' speech promised unification through force.

128 Realpolitik

Explanation: Politics based on practical power and national interest rather than morality or ideology -- the Bismarckian method.

AP Euro Tip: *Realpolitik = power politics; contrast with idealist nationalism.*

Example: Bismarck provoked wars he knew Prussia could win.

129 The Dual Monarchy (Austria-Hungary, 1867)

Explanation: The Compromise of 1867 created a dual monarchy with separate Austrian and Hungarian governments under one emperor, managing ethnic tensions.

AP Euro Tip: *The Compromise = two states, one emperor; Hungary gained autonomy.*

Example: The dual monarchy gave the Hungarians their own parliament and army.

130 The Ottoman Empire's Decline

Explanation: The 'sick man of Europe' lost territory to national revolts (Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria) and great-power pressure throughout the 19th century.

AP Euro Tip: *Ottoman decline = nationalism + great-power rivalry; the Eastern Question.*

Example: The Congress of Berlin (1878) carved up Ottoman Balkans.

131 The Crimean War (1853-56)

Explanation: Russia lost to an Anglo-French-Ottoman coalition; the war destroyed the Concert of Europe and left Russia humiliated and reform-minded.

AP Euro Tip: *Crimea = Russia's humiliation; Florence Nightingale made nursing famous.*

Example: The Charge of the Light Brigade symbolized the war's futility.

132 The Emancipation of Russian Serfs (1861)

Explanation: Alexander II freed the serfs to modernize Russia, but the settlement left peasants land-poor and resentful.

AP Euro Tip: *1861 = serfdom ends; the reform satisfied no one fully.*

Example: Emancipation gave peasants land but with redemption payments to nobles.

133 The Second Industrial Revolution

Explanation: The late-19th-century wave of steel, chemicals, electricity, and the internal combustion engine, led by Germany and the US.

AP Euro Tip: *Second Industrial Revolution = steel + electricity + chemicals + autos.*

Example: Siemens and Edison electrified industry and cities.

134 Bessemer Steel and Chemicals

Explanation: The Bessemer process made cheap steel; the chemical industry produced dyes, fertilizers, and explosives -- science-driven industry.

AP Euro Tip: *Steel + chemicals = the material base of the second industrial age.*

Example: German chemical firms (BASF, Bayer) led the world.

135 The Rise of Mass Politics

Explanation: Suffrage expanded, mass parties formed (Social Democrats, Catholic Center), and politics became a mass phenomenon by 1900.

AP Euro Tip: *Mass politics = parties + suffrage + propaganda; the SPD became Europe's largest party.*

Example: Germany's SPD won a million votes by 1890 despite bans.

136 Social Democracy and Revisionism

Explanation: Eduard Bernstein argued socialism could be achieved through elections and reform, not revolution -- revisionism split the Marxist movement.

AP Euro Tip: *Revisionism = socialism by ballot; orthodox Marxists insisted on revolution.*

Example: Bernstein's Evolutionary Socialism (1899) proposed gradual change.

137 Feminism and Suffrage

Explanation: The women's movement demanded education, property rights, and the vote; the British suffragettes (Pankhurst) used militant tactics.

AP Euro Tip: *Suffrage = the vote; the suffragettes' militancy broke the deadlock.*

Example: Britain granted women over 30 the vote in 1918, equal suffrage in 1928.

138 Anti-Semitism and Zionism

Explanation: Persecution in Eastern Europe and the Dreyfus Affair in France fueled both anti-Semitic politics and the Zionist movement (Herzl) seeking a Jewish homeland.

AP Euro Tip: *Zionism = the national answer to anti-Semitism; Herzl convened the first Congress in 1897.*

Example: The Dreyfus Affair split France over a Jewish officer's false conviction.

139 The Belle Epoque

Explanation: The era of peace and prosperity before 1914 in Western Europe: culture, consumption, and confidence -- with tensions underneath.

AP Euro Tip: *Belle Epoque = the golden afternoon before the Great War.*

Example: The 1900 Paris Exposition celebrated science and progress.

140 The Alliance System Before 1914

Explanation: The Triple Alliance (Germany, Austria-Hungary, Italy) faced the Triple Entente (France, Russia, Britain); the rigid alliances turned a Balkan crisis into world war.

AP Euro Tip: *Alliances = the powder keg; a local war became a general one.*

Example: Germany's Schlieffen Plan assumed a two-front war.

Unit 8: Unit 8: 20th-Century Global Conflicts

10-15% of the AP European History exam. World War I, the Russian Revolution, totalitarianism, and World War II.

141 Causes of World War I

Explanation: Militarism, alliances, imperialism, and nationalism (MAIN) combined with the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand (1914) to ignite the war.

AP Euro Tip: *MAIN: militarism, alliances, imperialism, nationalism; the assassination was the spark.*

Example: The July Crisis turned a Balkan murder into a continental war.

142 Total War and the Home Front

Explanation: World War I mobilized entire societies: conscription, rationing, propaganda, and women in factories -- war without limits.

AP Euro Tip: *Total war = the whole society fights; women's war work won the suffrage argument.*

Example: Germany's 'turnip winter' (1916-17) showed the blockade's toll.

143 Trench Warfare and the Western Front

Explanation: Stalemate on the Western Front: trenches, machine guns, artillery, and battles like Verdun and the Somme that killed millions for meters.

AP Euro Tip: *The Western Front = attrition; the Somme's first day killed 20,000 British.*

Example: No-man's-land between the trenches made attack nearly suicidal.

144 The Russian Revolution (1917)

Explanation: February's revolution toppled the tsar; Lenin's Bolsheviks seized power in October, promising 'peace, land, and bread'.

AP Euro Tip: *The Revolution = February (liberal) + October (Bolshevik); Russia exited the war.*

Example: The Bolsheviks' slogan 'peace, land, bread' captured war-weary Russia.

145 Vladimir Lenin and the Bolsheviks

Explanation: Lenin's vanguard party, disciplined and centralized, took power and established the first communist state.

AP Euro Tip: *Lenin = the vanguard party + dictatorship of the proletariat.*

Example: Lenin's April Theses demanded 'all power to the soviets'.

146 The Treaty of Versailles (1919)

Explanation: The peace settlement blamed Germany (war guilt), demanded reparations, stripped territory, and created the League of Nations -- breeding resentment.

AP Euro Tip: *Versailles = the 'diktat' to Germans; its harshness fueled revanchism.*

Example: Article 231 (war guilt) infuriated Germany.

147 The League of Nations

Explanation: Wilson's proposed collective security organization, weakened by US refusal to join and its lack of enforcement power.

AP Euro Tip: *The League = collective security without teeth; it failed in the 1930s.*

Example: The League could not stop Japan, Italy, or Germany.

148 The Rise of Fascism in Italy

Explanation: Mussolini's Fascists exploited post-war crisis and fear of communism, marching on Rome (1922) to take power with a cult of the state and violence.

AP Euro Tip: *Fascism = extreme nationalism + anti-communism + dictatorship.*

Example: Mussolini's March on Rome made him 'Il Duce'.

149 Mussolini and Italian Fascism

Explanation: Fascist Italy: one-party rule, corporatism, propaganda, and imperial ambition (Ethiopia, 1935), the first fascist state.

AP Euro Tip: *Italian fascism = the model; corporatism organized economy by state-controlled groups.*

Example: The Lateran Treaty (1929) reconciled the Vatican with the regime.

150 The Weimar Republic

Explanation: Germany's democratic republic (1919-33) faced hyperinflation, reparations, and political violence, eroding faith in democracy.

AP Euro Tip: *Weimar = democracy under siege; hyperinflation (1923) destroyed savings.*

Example: The 1923 inflation made a wheelbarrow of marks buy a loaf.

151 The Rise of Hitler and the Nazis

Explanation: Hitler's Nazi Party exploited depression, fear, and resentment to win power legally (1933), then dismantled democracy.

AP Euro Tip: *Hitler = legal rise + totalitarian takeover; the Reichstag Fire enabled the Enabling Act.*

Example: The Enabling Act (1933) let Hitler rule by decree.

152 Stalin and the USSR

Explanation: Stalin built 'socialism in one country' through five-year plans, forced collectivization, and mass terror, industrializing the USSR at immense cost.

AP Euro Tip: *Stalin = rapid industrialization + collectivization + the purges.*

Example: Collectivization's famine (1932-33) killed millions of Ukrainians.

153 The Great Depression

Explanation: The 1929 crash and depression shattered economies, discredited liberalism, and empowered extremists across Europe.

AP Euro Tip: *Depression = the seedbed of fascism; unemployment hit 30% in Germany.*

Example: Bank failures and deflation spread from the US to Europe.

154 World War II: Causes and Expansion

Explanation: German rearmament, appeasement, and the invasion of Poland (1939) began the war; Blitzkrieg conquered Europe by 1941.

AP Euro Tip: *Causes = Versailles revision + depression + appeasement; Poland was the trigger.*

Example: The Munich Agreement (1938) handed Hitler the Sudetenland.

155 Blitzkrieg and the Fall of France

Explanation: Germany's lightning war (tanks + planes) defeated Poland, Denmark, Norway, and France in months (1940).

AP Euro Tip: *Blitzkrieg = speed and surprise; France fell in six weeks.*

Example: The Dunkirk evacuation saved 300,000 Allied troops.

156 Operation Barbarossa and the Eastern Front

Explanation: Hitler's 1941 invasion of the USSR became the war's bloodiest theater; Stalingrad (1942-43) was the turning point.

AP Euro Tip: *The Eastern Front = the war's decisive slaughter; Stalingrad broke the Wehrmacht.*

Example: The USSR lost over 20 million people in the war.

157 The Holocaust

Explanation: The Nazi genocide of six million Jews plus Roma, disabled people, and others, through ghettos, Einsatzgruppen, and death camps.

AP Euro Tip: *The Holocaust = industrial genocide; Auschwitz-Birkenau was the largest camp.*

Example: The Wannsee Conference (1942) planned the 'Final Solution'.

158 D-Day and the Defeat of Germany

Explanation: The Allied Normandy landing (June 6, 1944) opened the Western Front; Germany surrendered in May 1945.

AP Euro Tip: *D-Day = the second front; the Red Army took Berlin.*

Example: VE Day (May 8, 1945) ended the war in Europe.

159 The Atomic Bomb and Japan's Surrender

Explanation: The US dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki (August 1945); Japan surrendered, ending World War II.

AP Euro Tip: *The bomb ended the war and opened the nuclear age.*

Example: Japan surrendered on August 15, 1945.

160 The Yalta and Potsdam Conferences

Explanation: The Allied leaders divided post-war Europe and Germany; the agreements sowed the Cold War's seeds.

AP Euro Tip: *Yalta/Potsdam = the post-war settlement; Germany split into occupation zones.*

Example: The wartime alliance fractured into the Cold War within two years.

Unit 9: Unit 9: Cold War and Contemporary Europe

10-15% of the AP European History exam. The Cold War division, decolonization, the European project, and Europe today.

161 The Cold War

Explanation: The 1945-91 ideological and geopolitical struggle between the US-led West and the Soviet-led East, fought by proxy rather than direct war.

AP Euro Tip: *The Cold War = superpower rivalry without direct war; Europe was the front line.*

Example: The Iron Curtain divided Europe from Stettin to Trieste.

162 The Iron Curtain and the Bloc System

Explanation: Churchill's 'iron curtain' metaphor described the division of Europe into Western democracies and Soviet satellites.

AP Euro Tip: *The Iron Curtain = the East-West divide; NATO vs the Warsaw Pact institutionalized it.*

Example: The Berlin Wall (1961) was the curtain made concrete.

163 The Marshall Plan

Explanation: US aid (1947-52) rebuilding Western Europe's economy, containing communism by creating prosperity.

AP Euro Tip: *Marshall Plan = dollars against communism; it revived Western Europe.*

Example: The USSR forbade its satellites from accepting Marshall aid.

164 NATO and the Warsaw Pact

Explanation: NATO (1949) united the Western allies militarily; the Warsaw Pact (1955) answered on the Soviet side.

AP Euro Tip: *NATO vs Warsaw Pact = the military blocs of the Cold War.*

Example: West Germany joined NATO in 1955, provoking the Warsaw Pact.

165 The Berlin Blockade and Airlift (1948-49)

Explanation: Stalin blockaded West Berlin; the Western powers airlifted supplies for 11 months, forcing the blockade's end.

AP Euro Tip: *The Airlift = the first Cold War crisis; West Berlin survived.*

Example: Planes landed every few minutes at Tempelhof for nearly a year.

166 The European Economic Community (EEC)

Explanation: The 1957 Treaty of Rome created the Common Market (six states) -- the seed of the EU, designed to bind Europe against war.

AP Euro Tip: *The EEC = coal and steel to common market; integration built peace.*

Example: The Schuman Plan (1951) pooled coal and steel between France and Germany.

167 Decolonization

Explanation: After 1945, European empires dissolved: India (1947), the Middle East, Africa (1950s-60s), as national movements and superpower pressure ended empire.

AP Euro Tip: *Decolonization = empire ends; it was peaceful (Ghana) or bloody (Algeria, Indochina).*

Example: The 1960 'Year of Africa' saw 17 colonies become independent.

168 The Algerian War (1954-62)

Explanation: France fought a brutal war against Algerian independence; de Gaulle ultimately granted it, ending the Fourth Republic.

AP Euro Tip: *Algeria = the empire's bloodiest end; it toppled the Fourth Republic.*

Example: The 1961 generals' putsch against de Gaulle failed.

169 De Gaulle and the Fifth Republic

Explanation: De Gaulle's 1958 constitution created a strong presidential Fifth Republic, ending France's parliamentary instability.

AP Euro Tip: *The Fifth Republic = presidential power + de Gaulle's grandeur.*

Example: De Gaulle withdrew France from NATO's military command in 1966.

170 The Welfare State

Explanation: Post-war governments built universal social programs: health care, pensions, and education (the NHS in Britain, 1948).

AP Euro Tip: *The welfare state = the post-war social contract; Beveridge's report inspired Britain's NHS.*

Example: Sweden's model combined welfare with full employment.

171 The German Economic Miracle

Explanation: West Germany's post-war boom, driven by the social market economy, Marshall aid, and hard work, made it Europe's economic engine.

AP Euro Tip: *The 'Wirtschaftswunder' = market + welfare; the Deutschmark was its symbol.*

Example: Germany's recovery astonished observers within a decade.

172 1968: Protest and Change

Explanation: The 1968 student revolts (Paris, Prague Spring) challenged authority and conservatism, reshaping culture and politics.

AP Euro Tip: *1968 = cultural revolution from below; France nearly fell, Czechoslovakia's spring was crushed.*

Example: The Prague Spring ended with Soviet tanks in August 1968.

173 The Prague Spring (1968)

Explanation: Czechoslovakia's liberalization under Dubcek ('socialism with a human face') was crushed by Warsaw Pact invasion.

AP Euro Tip: *Prague Spring = reform crushed; it disillusioned Western communists.*

Example: The Brezhnev Doctrine justified intervention in socialist states.

174 Detente

Explanation: The 1970s thaw in Cold War tensions: arms control (SALT), Ostpolitik, and East-West summitry.

AP Euro Tip: *Detente = relaxation of tension; the Helsinki Accords (1975) recognized borders and rights.*

Example: Helsinki's human rights provisions later empowered dissidents.

175 The End of the Cold War

Explanation: Gorbachev's reforms (glasnost, perestroika), Eastern European revolutions (1989), and the USSR's collapse (1991) ended the Cold War.

AP Euro Tip: *1989 = the revolutions; the Berlin Wall fell on November 9, 1989.*

Example: Gorbachev's refusal to intervene let Eastern Europe go.

176 The Fall of the Berlin Wall (1989)

Explanation: The Wall opened amid peaceful revolution, symbolizing communism's collapse and German reunification (1990).

AP Euro Tip: *The Wall's fall = the Cold War's end; Germany reunited within a year.*

Example: East Germans streamed through the opened border checkpoints.

177 The Breakup of the USSR and Yugoslavia

Explanation: The USSR dissolved into 15 states (1991); Yugoslavia fragmented into wars (1991-99) over ethnic nationalism.

AP Euro Tip: *Post-communist transition = market reform + ethnic conflict in the Balkans.*

Example: The Bosnian War and Kosovo intervention marked Europe's new crises.

178 The European Union Deepens

Explanation: The Maastricht Treaty (1993) created the EU with the euro (2002) and citizenship; enlargement added former Soviet bloc states.

AP Euro Tip: *Maastricht = the EU's deepest step; the euro is its symbol.*

Example: The EU enlarged to 28 (now 27 after Brexit) members.

179 Brexit (2020)

Explanation: Britain voted to leave the EU (2016) and exited in 2020, driven by sovereignty and immigration concerns -- the first member withdrawal.

AP Euro Tip: *Brexit = integration's first reversal; it tested the EU's cohesion.*

Example: The UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement settled post-Brexit relations.

180 Contemporary Challenges

Explanation: Europe faces migration, climate change, economic inequality, and the rise of populism, reshaping the post-war consensus.

AP Euro Tip: *Contemporary Europe = crisis + adaptation: the refugee crisis, COVID, and Ukraine.*

Example: The 2015 refugee crisis and the 2022 Ukraine war redefined European politics.

What's Next?

You have now reviewed every unit of the AP European History course, from the Renaissance to the European Union. Go back to the Table of Contents, find the units you marked, and reread just those tip lines. Two weeks out, do a rapid pass over the entire guide; the day before, review only the tip lines. On the DBQ and LEQ, establish context, state a clear thesis, use specific evidence (names, dates, treaties), and explain how the evidence supports your argument -- sourcing the documents is where most students lose points.

Pair it with the Study Mastery Cheat Sheet (\$19) -- how to actually retain all of it

Also available: AP US History, AP World History, AP US Government, AP Human Geography, and more study guides

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