



Rewarding Learning

eGUIDE//History

Historical Conflict and Change

Unit AS 2

Option 4: France 1815–1870

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Introduction

In this option, students focus on France's attempts to find a stable and lasting regime in the wake of the turmoil of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic period. This includes the Bourbon restoration of Louis XVIII and Charles X, the 'bourgeois monarchy' of Louis Philippe, the Second Republic, and why the Second Empire, headed by Napoleon III, failed to achieve permanence. Students examine why each of these regimes was established and evaluate the relative importance of the political, economic and social reasons for their failure to survive.

Assessment for this option consists of a written examination that includes both short response and extended questions. Each question tests the Assessment Objective AO1: the candidate's ability to demonstrate, organise and communicate knowledge and understanding to analyse and evaluate the key features related to the periods studied, making substantiated judgements and exploring concepts, as relevant, of cause, consequence, change, continuity, similarity, difference and significance.

For ease of consultation, the following study is divided into four sections:

1. The Bourbon Monarchy 1815–30
2. The Reign of Louis Philippe 1830–48
3. The Second Republic 1848–52
4. The Second Empire 1852–70



1. The Bourbon Monarchy 1815–30

A. The Reign of Louis XIII 1815–24



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(a) The reasons why the Bourbons were restored to the throne of France

- The Allies were opposed to a Republic or an Empire
- They briefly considered a member of the Orleans family, but were persuaded by Talleyrand that France would accept the Bourbons
- The Paris press supported a Bourbon restoration
- Wellington was impressed by the welcoming crowds in Bordeaux shouting “Vive le roi!”
- The Bourbons represented an end to war and a return to stability and prosperity
- When Louis XVIII agreed to the Charter, this signified that he was prepared to compromise with the gains made during the Revolution and the Empire.



Teaching and Learning Activity

The Second Peace of Paris (1815)

Using the bullet points below as headings, make notes on the terms of the Second Treaty of Paris (1815). Louis XVIII had no choice but to accept this if he was to stay on the



throne. Research the First Treaty and note where it had been altered. Why was the Second Treaty less lenient than the first?

The treaty contained clauses relating to:

- Territory
- Frontier fortresses
- Art treasures
- An indemnity
- An army of occupation

(b) The Charter of Liberties 1814

(i) Aims

- Louis *granted* this to underline his belief that only the King had the right to limit the King's powers
- The Charter aimed to create stability in France
- It set out the parameters within which the King could rule to prevent royal despotism
- It represented a compromise by the Bourbons and a recognition that France had changed as a result of the Revolution.

The Charter aimed to make clear that there would be no prospect of a return to the *ancien régime*.

(ii) Terms

- There were two main aspects to the Charter: individual freedoms and the future government of France:

Freedoms

All Frenchmen equal before the law
All Frenchmen eligible for official posts
All property was guaranteed
All had the right to a proper trial
All were liable to taxation
Freedom of religion for all
Freedom of speech and of the press



Teaching and Learning Activity

Look at the “freedoms” identified above. Find out how these rights were less clear cut than they appear at first sight.



Constitution

A bicameral parliament:
Chamber of Peers, nominated by King
Chamber of Deputies, elected by a very narrow franchise
Only King could propose laws
He could veto any laws
King did not have to appoint ministers representative of the Chambers



Teaching and Learning Activity

Discuss, in small groups, whether the Charter would satisfy those who had lived through Revolutionary and Napoleonic times, or lead to dissatisfaction with the restored Bourbons.

(c) What other problems did Louis XVIII face when he became King?

- Many Republicans did not want a Bourbon monarchy
- Many Bonapartists did not want a Bourbon monarchy
- When Louis fled to Belgium during the Hundred Days, it was a humiliation
- He needed Allied troops to restore him to the throne not once, but twice
- The terms of the Second Treaty of Paris, imposed after the Hundred Days, were harsh
- The results of the 1815 election, leading to the *chambre introuvable*, were a problem
- The White Terror and the Ultra purge of officials represented another difficulty.

(d) The successes and failures of Louis XVIII's domestic and foreign policies 1815–20

These years were characterised by comparative success for the regime, when Louis was in quite good health. These were the successes:

- The King appointed capable ministers such as Richelieu and Decazes who put government finances on a sound footing
- He changed the franchise and called fresh elections to defeat the *chambre introuvable*
- A modest economic recovery took place, helped by the return to peacetime conditions
- The indemnity was paid off in 1818, which led to the withdrawal of the occupying army
- France was accepted as member of Quintuple Alliance, no longer an outcast.



Teaching and Learning Activity

Draw up a balance sheet for the early part of the reign of Louis XVIII between 1815 and 1819. One column should be headed “successes” and the other “failures”. Then compose a paragraph to summarise your findings, making a judgement on how well the restored King had ruled in these years.



(e) The change in direction of Louis XVIII's domestic and foreign policies 1820–24

Louis had so far successfully kept the Ultras and their demands at bay, but was unable to do so after 1820, when his nephew, Artois, was assassinated. The Ultras made use of this to cause panic among the upper classes, already alarmed by the success of the Left in the elections of the previous year. There was a shift to the Right, as Louis XVIII:

- increasingly withdrew from leading the country as his health failed;
- allowed his brother Artois to make policy;
- had to appoint the Ultra Villèle as chief minister;
- introduced the Law of the Double Vote;
- brought back censorship;
- suspended personal liberty;
- allowed plans to be drawn up to compensate the émigrés; and
- allowed the Church more say over education.

Table: A comparison of Louis XVIII's policies in the first and second half of his reign

1815–20	1820–24
Louis attempted to observe the Charter	More inclined to ignore the Charter
Kept Ultras out of government, appointing Richelieu and Decazes as ministers	Forced to appoint the Ultra Villèle as chief minister
Laine Law enfranchised mainly older, middle class voters	Law of Double Vote allowed for 172 extra deputies to be elected by the richest 25%
Press laws were gradually relaxed after 1815	Press freedom significantly restricted after Berry's murder
Despite a religious revival, Louis did not show extra favour to Catholic Church	The Government allowed the powers of the Catholic Church over education to be extended



Teaching and Learning Activity

How far would you agree with the view that the reign of Louis XVIII was one of two halves, divided by the murder of his nephew, the Duc de Berry?



Glossary for Louis XVIII

ancien régime	the pre-revolutionary era in France, characterised by a powerful monarchy, nobility and Church
bien nationaux	national goods: land confiscated from émigrés or the Church during the Revolution
bourgeoisie	the middle classes
chambre introuvable	the Chamber of Deputies elected in 1814, so Ultra that Louis said they were more royalist than he was
émigrés	those nobles who had fled France during the Revolution
Empire	the period 1804–15, when former army general Napoleon Bonaparte ruled France as Emperor
French Revolution	the period 1789–99, when France abolished the monarchy and removed privileges from the nobles and the Church
Hundred Days	the period between March and June 1815, when Napoleon returned to the throne and Louis XVIII fled
pays légal	a minority consisting of wealthy landowners, merchants, bankers and industrialists, who monopolised political life
Restoration	the period 1815–30, when the restored Bourbons, Louis XVIII and Charles X, ruled
Ultras	the extreme Royalist group headed by the Comte d'Artois



B. The Reign of Charles X 1824–30



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(a) Overview of Charles X's reign

Charles X was to be the last Bourbon King of France. Even before he came to the throne he had achieved unpopularity:

- as the leader of the Ultras, he was unpopular with the bourgeoisie for his opinions on the Charter, which he despised; and
- for the clerical policies introduced during Louis XVIII's reign, but were Charles' work.

Charles once said: "I would rather hew wood than be a king under the conditions of the king of England." He never overcame this negative image and followed a series of unpopular policies, which, compounded by an economic downturn which had begun in 1826, led to his overthrow in a Parisian revolution.

**Table: The main reasons for the overthrow of Charles X in 1830.**

POLICIES	THOSE THEY ANTAGONISED
Giving greater influence to the Church	Anti-clericals, bourgeoisie, liberals
Compensation to those who had lost land	Bondholders, some disappointed <i>émigrés</i>
Attempts to control the press	Journalists, liberals
Allowing the economic slump to take its course	Peasants, artisans, factory workers, small businessmen
Taking no action to relieve social problems	Urban poor, radical writers
Disbandment of the National Guard	National Guardsmen (bourgeoisie)
Choice of Ministers: Martignac and Polignac	Liberals, Ultras
Decision to introduce the Ordinances in 1830	Liberals, most of <i>pays légal</i>
Failure to make full preparations for the issuing of the Ordinances	Printers, journalists, the poor and radicals

(b) The domestic policies of Charles X

(i) Clericalism

The King wanted to restore power and privileges to the Church. At the time there was a religious revival in France and many Catholics would have welcomed this, but there was also a strong anti-clerical tradition among the bourgeoisie and the urban poor. The King's traditional coronation at Reims greatly alarmed anti-clericals, as did the growing influence of the Church over education, the sacrilege laws and the belief, even though it was wrong, that Charles X was taking his orders from the Jesuits.



Web Video

For a painting of Charles X's coronation, see www.wga.hu/html/g/gerard/6coronat.html



Teaching and Learning Activity

Make a chronological list of the reforms which benefited the Church between 1824 and 1830. What was the link between Charles X's clerical policies and his dismissal of the National Guard in 1827?



(ii) Compensation for the émigrés

Compensation for the émigrés had been agreed in principle during Louis XVIII's reign, but now a final settlement was reached under Villèle in 1825, those who had lost land being given varying sums, the total exaggerated into a "milliard" (1000 million francs) by those investors angered that the indemnity was found by cutting the rates of interest paid on some state bonds.



Teaching and Learning Activity

Role play

In groups of four, participants should discuss the positive and negative aspects of the compensation scheme. One student should represent the dispossessed émigrés, another those who had purchased the land during the revolution, and the third should speak for those who had invested in government bonds. The fourth should represent the government, arguing that this was the only sensible compromise.

(iii) Charles X and the press

- The most important opposition newspapers during Charles X's reign were the *Journal des Débats*, which supported the Doctrinaires, and *National*, which was important in rallying the opposition during the Revolution of 1830
- The King was attacked by the liberal press, especially for his religious policies. With a total newspaper circulation of 100,000, only a tiny minority were readers, but they were the *pays légal*, and as such very important. Charles X was, to his frustration, frequently lied about and slandered in the press
- Charles X tried to curb or win over the press in several different ways, none of them successful.

(iv) The economic policies of Charles X

In an age of laissez-faire Charles X had few, if any, economic policies. He was unfortunate in that his reign witnessed a serious economic downturn in its last five years. When the Bank of France raised interest rates there was a stock market crash. Banks collapsed and many industrial enterprises failed, throwing many thousands out of work. The industrial recession lasted into the 1830s. This coincided with an agricultural slump. Poor grain and potato harvests from 1827 to 1829 meant that the price of wheat rose by 50%. In Paris many small businesses collapsed, but the desperate situation was made worse as thousands of peasants flocked to the capital seeking non-existent work. The freezing winter of 1829–30 saw desperate conditions in which many were close to starvation. The city was a powder keg and it only took the political crisis of the summer of 1830 to set it off.



Teaching and Learning Activity

Find out list more statistics to illustrate the economic downturn of the period 1826–30 and the social distress it caused.

(v) The King's choice of ministers

Villèle was, on the whole, a satisfactory chief minister. He produced the compromise over the compensation issue and had carried on the work of Decazes in reforming government finances. But the large Ultra majority in the Chamber of Deputies was deceptive. The Ultras themselves were hopelessly divided between clericals, royalist hardliners who



wanted the Charter abolished, and moderates, led by Chateaubriand, who was a deadly enemy of Villèle. Early in 1828 Villèle resigned after adverse election results.

Martignac, a moderate royalist, became the new head of the government, but Charles X would not give him a free hand. Nonetheless, he tried to restore a measure of press freedom and increase state control over education. Under attack from both Left and Right, he was defeated in the Chamber.

Polignac, the King's favourite, was appointed as prime minister in August 1829. An Ultra, he was an out and out reactionary who had no sympathy with the Charter. His appointment united those on the Left and on the Right who wanted to see a government largely representative of the Chambers. Elections held in the summer of 1830 failed to produce a majority for the King, who began to plot a coup d'état.

(vi) The Ordinances of St Cloud

The King, determined that the choice of ministry should be his rather than that of the deputies, opted to use his emergency powers to restrict the franchise to the richest part of the electorate. On 25 July 1830 he:

- Dissolved the new Chamber of Deputies;
- Called fresh elections;
- Removed the right to vote from 75% of the electorate; and
- Insisted on prior government approval before the publication of all journals and newspapers.

These new laws were known as the Ordinances of St Cloud. But they roused his enemies to fury, and three days later barricades went up in the streets of Paris and, as rioters and revolutionaries seized the streets, opposition politicians went about the business of forming a new government without reference to Charles X. The King had no choice but to abdicate.

One of Charles X's mistakes was that he failed to prepare in advance for the Ordinances:

- He should have arrested opposition leaders in advance
- He should have occupied opposition newspaper offices
- He should have put troops in important public buildings
- He should have used the National Guard to defend the regime, but had disbanded them
- The bulk of his troops wear off fighting in Algiers.



Teaching and Learning Activity

What were the details of the franchise at the outset of the Bourbon restoration? Make a list of the various changes in the voting system up to 1830.

Question for discussion:

The historian Roger Magraw has claimed that "1830 was a bourgeois revolution provoked by the spectre of an aristocratic revival." How far would you accept this view?



(c) Cultural developments in France 1815–30

The writers Lamennais and Balzac were both at this time ardent supporters of the Catholic revival.

Stendhal (*The Red and the Black*) was seen as an early realist novelist.

Gericault painted “*The Raft of the Medusa*” as an attack on corrupt establishment.

Delacroix’s “*The Massacre at Chios*” encouraged French sympathy for Greek independence.

Adam and Hérold both wrote popular operas.

It might be useful to note that religious issues can also form part of cultural developments.



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DELACROIX'S PAINTING OF
“LIBERTY LEADING THE
PEOPLE”

(d) Economic developments in France 1815–30

- Agriculture predominated, with much subsistence farming, and peasants were often also day labourers
- Poor grain harvests had serious effects
- Population rose by 2.5 million in the period 1815–30, but with no rise in productivity
- Too many small and family firms were reluctant to innovate
- High tariff walls led to complacency
- There was a modest post-war recovery after 1815, despite the burden of indemnity
- There was a harvest failure and economic slump in 1817, before the economy recovered
- Industry lagged behind that of Britain, but was still the most advanced in continental Europe:
- in the period 1815–25 overseas trade doubled, there was road and canal expansion, steamboats appeared on French rivers and the number of silk looms in Lyon doubled
- The depression of 1826–32 followed harvest failures: food prices doubled, while wages dropped by one third
- A sharp increase in interest rates in 1825 led to bank failures
- There were also many bankruptcies and high unemployment in both rural and urban areas.



Glossary for Charles X

Absolute monarchy	A system of government where the ruler is not limited by law, does not have to work with parliament and can rule as he pleases
clerical	to do with the Church
constitutional monarchy	a system of government where the ruler is limited by laws and is obliged to rule with an elected parliament
Divine Right	where a monarch believes that he is only answerable to God, not to his subjects
franchise	the right to vote in an election, or the criteria required to do so



2. The Reign of Louis Philippe 1830–48

Louis Philippe was the son of the Duke of Orléans, a cousin of Louis XVI, and had been a supporter of the French Revolution in its earlier, more moderate, days. He was elected King of the French as a means of avoiding a republic. His natural constituency was the wealthy middle classes, but in time other classes lower down the social scale began to demand the vote as well. Their campaign, as well as his unadventurous and, for many, disappointing foreign policy, combined with a serious economic downturn to bring about revolution and the overthrow of the bourgeois monarchy in 1848.

(a) Why did Louis Philippe become King of France in 1830?

- Those who had seized control on the streets of Paris assumed that they were paving the way for a republic
- Prominent liberal politicians wanted to try again to establish a constitutional monarchy
- Louis Philippe's backers mounted an effective propaganda campaign on his behalf
- They were frightened that a republic would threaten the rights of property owners
- They remembered the extremes to which the First Republic had gone, especially the Terror
- The Duke of Orléans had been a supporter of the Revolution in its early days and had even fought in the Revolutionary armies
- He offered a more liberal version of the Charter
- His appointment was basically a compromise. "His raison d'être was to stand between France and a republic" (Alfred Cobban).

(b) What domestic problems did Louis Philippe face in the early years of his reign?

- Some Legitimists still hoped for a Bourbon restoration
- Republicans felt that they had been cheated out of their revolution
- Louis Philippe inherited the economic slump of 1826–32, which had helped to bring down Charles X
- As a consequence there was continuing distress among the urban poor, and in Lyon there were major disturbances among the silk workers in 1832 and 1834, both requiring the use of troops to defeat them
- There was a rising by Bonapartists, republicans and some Legitimists in Paris after General Lamarque's funeral in 1832. There were 800 government casualties before the rising was crushed
- There were at least six assassination attempts on the King during the early years of his reign.

(c) Louis Philippe's domestic policy

(i) 1830–40

Louis Philippe wanted to keep power in his own hands in the 1830s, and appointed largely weak ministries, for example the Molé government of 1836. Although he had introduced local councils, they were elected on a very narrow franchise and were largely controlled from central government. Censorship was abolished in 1830, but newspapers could be



fined and editors imprisoned for ridiculing the government. By 1840 Louis Philippe finally seemed secure on his throne. Legitimism was no longer a threat, republicanism, thanks to the banning of popular associations and non-jury trials, was driven underground, and the threat from Bonapartists seemed so slight that the King was happy to oversee the return of Napoleon's remains for reburial in Les Invalides. The National Guard, which had shown some signs of independence in the early 1830s, had been reorganised, and was now a stalwart defender of the Orléanist régime.

(ii) 1840–48

The government of Soult, appointed in 1840, gave Louis Philippe, in the shape of Foreign Minister Guizot an administrator, with whom he could happily share power. "Official candidates" were shamelessly supported in supposedly free elections, resulting in comfortable majorities for the government. Complacency set in, despite the government's inability to curb the vicious caricatures of Daumier and Grandville. The scale of victory in the 1846 election confirmed Guizot in his determination to make no concessions to those members of the bourgeoisie seeking some extension of the franchise. Thiers and Barrot joined forces to attack Guizot, using electoral reform as their weapon. The Teste and Praslin scandals highlighted corruption in high places, and encouraged the opposition. In 1847 political banquets began to be organised, publicising the campaign to extend the vote. When the government banned a banquet in January 1848, even the sacking of Guizot by the King proved to be insufficient to save his throne, and on 24 February 1848 Louis Philippe abdicated.

(d) Louis Philippe's foreign policy

(i) Aims

- Louis Philippe feared that, if he pursued an aggressive foreign policy, the major European powers – Britain, Austria, Prussia, and Russia – would band together against France to impose their will
- The French King was conscious of the suspicions of the European powers of a ruler who only occupied the throne as a result of revolution
- Louis Philippe wanted to avoid war because he believed that peacetime conditions were essential for French prosperity
- Louis Philippe wanted friendship with Britain, because Britain and France were both constitutional monarchies, and because the eastern powers would not attack France if it had the backing of Britain.

(ii) Successes and failures

However, these aims, though supported by the commercial classes, ran contrary to the growing mood of nostalgia for the French conquests of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic years. The desire for *gloire* (glory) conveniently ignored the last years of Napoleon's reign, which saw defeat after defeat, but the magnificent tomb constructed as Napoleon's last resting place, and Thiers' new history of the Empire helped to fuel the demand for a more proactive foreign policy. The perception of Louis Philippe's foreign policy as timid and subservient to Britain damaged the King's image and is considered to have played some part in his downfall.



DATE	WHAT LOUIS PHILIPPE DID	WHAT HIS CRITICS THOUGHT
1830	When the Belgians broke away from their Dutch rulers, many felt that France should annex the territory. Louis Philippe did not do so, even refusing to advance the claims of his son as King of the new country.	They refused to accept that Britain would never have tolerated annexation, and characterised the King's decision as a climb-down.
1840	Mehemet Ali, the ruler of Egypt and protégé of France, had turned against his master, the Sultan, conquering Syria and was threatening Constantinople. The great powers backed the Sultan, but Thiers, the French Prime Minister, rashly promised that his country would do everything necessary to support Ali. The threat was unrealistic and would have led to war. Louis Philippe was obliged to disown Thiers and remove him from office.	The King's critics ignored the fact that France was on its own in supporting Mehemet Ali and that Thiers had acted rashly in threatening war. The critics regarded France's spectacular climb-down as the betrayal of an ally and a diplomatic defeat at the hands of Britain.
1830–1848	Algeria was gradually conquered by France and a settler population began to grow.	This represented military success, but, because it was in North Africa, was not considered important by Louis Philippe's critics.
1844	When an English missionary was expelled from Tahiti by the French, Louis Philippe apologised in response to British protests. In 1847 a French protectorate of Tahiti was recognised.	His critics complained about another climb-down to the British in 1844, but gave the King little credit for the success of 1847.
1846	France and Britain each wanted Queen Isabella of Spain to marry a relative of their own royal family. As a compromise she married a Spaniard, but there were doubts about whether he could father an heir to the throne, and on the same day Isabella's sister was married to one of Louis Philippe's sons.	This opened up the interesting prospect of a future French ruler of Spain, but if some were pleased that Louis Philippe had at last secured a diplomatic success at the expense of the British, those who valued friendship with Britain were angered at this intrigue.

(e) Economic developments in France 1830–48

(i) Successes

- The total length of canals in France doubled between 1830 and 1848
- More roads were built and existing ones improved
- The capacity of steam driven machinery increased by 600 per cent during the period, coal production tripled, that of iron ore doubled, but compared with Britain and Prussia this was a weak showing.



(ii) Failures

- France lagged behind its near neighbours in almost all aspects of the economy between 1830 and 1848
- Although agricultural production increased between 1830 and 1848, methods remained backward and living standards low
- Industrialisation was taking place, but slowly, and the typical unit of production was the workshop rather than the factory. In 1848 Paris had 65,000 industrial undertakings, but only 7,000 of them had 10 or more employees
- Productivity probably fell between 1830 and 1848, with a detrimental effect on workers' conditions
- The French Government followed *laissez-faire* policies and boosting industry or alleviating the condition of the urban poor was not one of its priorities
- Louis Philippe's governments were slow to see the potential of railways, but as they found themselves falling behind other countries, they made efforts to encourage railway development. In 1842 a partnership between government and businessmen began, with the state buying the land for railways and investors paying for the rails and the rolling stock
- This led to frantic speculation in railway shares, the so-called "railway mania", but it ended in tears as the boom collapsed, damaging other industries and investment as it did so.

(iii) The economic slump 1845–48

- In 1845 both the grain and potato harvests failed in France; this was repeated in 1846 and bread prices rose sharply
- The high cost of food meant that there was little income left over to buy other articles, the building trade and textiles being especially hard hit
- The collapse of the railway boom had a knock-on effect, with many bankruptcies affecting both banks and businesses
- The resulting shortage of credit meant that building works virtually ceased.
- Unemployment followed, adding to the misery of an urban population already suffering from the high food prices.

(f) Cultural developments 1830–48

Many writers and artists of this period were concerned with the problems of society:

- Balzac wrote a series of novels attacking an Orleanist world dominated by money
- Victor Hugo and Lamartine were formerly Royalists but had become supporters of liberalism
- Cartoonists such as Daumier ridiculed officials, bankers and Louis Philippe
- Early socialist writers like Proudhon argued that "Property is theft"
- Ingres was a painter of portraits and historical scenes who was a forerunner of modernism
- Daguerre was a pioneer of photography
- Berlioz and Chopin produced some of their best compositions during this period.



Web Video

For a short lecture on the left-wing opposition to Louis Philippe, see:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=okPcqX5OUzE>



Glossary for Louis Philippe

bourgeois monarchy	the period 1830–48, when Louis Philippe, supported by the middle classes, ruled France
émigration intérieur	the withdrawal of the nobility from government and public life
laissez-faire	the belief that governments should not intervene in the economy
Legitimists	supporters of the Bourbons
Orléanists	supporters of Louis Philippe



3. The Second Republic 1848–52

After Louis Philippe was overthrown, a republic was declared, largely to pacify the revolutionary mob. A group of republicans, headed by Lamartine, declared themselves the provisional government of France, a decision announced from the balcony of the Hôtel de Ville and noisily acclaimed by the spectators. The revolution of 1848 was seen as the dawning of a new era, yet within four years the Second Republic had collapsed, to be replaced by a second Bonaparte.

(a) The establishment of the Second Republic and the problems it faced

(i) The National Workshops

The cause	→	the poverty and dreadful social conditions facing the poor
The solution	→	work creation schemes known as the National Workshops
The authors	→	the Red Republicans, socialists led by Ledru-Rollin
The problems	→	no constructive work, insufficient funds, taxpayers alarmed
The decision	→	Workshops closed down
The reckoning	→	The June Days



Teaching and Learning Activity

Role play exercise

In groups, argue for and against the National Workshops, their closure, the rebellion of the poor and the reaction of the authorities. Parisian workers, incomers from the provinces, middle-class taxpayers and members of the government, both Red Republicans and more conservative figures, should each explain and try to justify their particular part in these events.

(ii) The establishment of the Republic

- The provisional government had decreed that France should have a Constituent Assembly and elections were held in late April. Crucially, all adult males had the right to vote, producing an electorate of almost 9 million
- The Red Republicans and their socialist allies gained only a small percentage of the seats, while the great majority of the 880 deputies were essentially conservative. Half of those elected had been monarchists, but, in the prevailing climate of 1848, called themselves Republicans.



Teaching and Learning Activity

Why did twice as many electors vote for more right-wing candidates?

(iii) The Constitution

- Wanted to recreate principles of the first Republic



- Single chamber assembly to be elected by male suffrage
- Power to be shared between Assembly and President
- President to be elected by male Suffrage.

(iv) The outcome of the Presidential Election, December 1848

Candidate	Total vote	% of vote
Louis Napoleon Bonaparte	5,434,226	74.8
General Cavaignac	1,448,107	19.9
Ledru-Rollin	370,119	5.1
Lamartine	17,910	0.2

(v) The reasons for Louis Napoleon Bonaparte's overwhelming victory

- The touch of stardust conferred by the name "Bonaparte"
- Fond (if rose-tinted) memories of the First Empire
- Bonaparte's argument that France needed orderly, firm government under a strong leader "above party"
- His professed interest in improving the lot of the poor
- Away from Paris during the June Days, he was not tainted by accusations of revolutionary socialism or repressive brutality
- Some politicians and businessmen thought that they could manipulate him as President
- He appeared as a guarantor of private property
- He said that he would end anti-clerical policies
- He ran a sophisticated election campaign, the only candidate to do so.



Teaching and Learning Activity

Discuss which groups in France supported the policies and promises of Louis Napoleon Bonaparte.

(b) The fall of the Second Republic

Between 1848 and 1852 Louis Napoleon worked tirelessly to transform the Republic into the Empire. He followed policies which cemented his support and changed the Constitution twice, each time consulting the public after the event, and each time attracting a huge majority. Here is a summary of what he did:

- Filled official positions with his own men, who thus owed him a debt of loyalty
- Undertook official tours throughout the country to build up a personal loyalty
- Won Catholic support by sending General Oudinot to defeat the Roman Republic and restore the Pope (1849)
- Sacked Prime Minister Barrot to set up a government of his own choosing



- Introduced the Falloux Law (1850), which conceded significant powers over education to the Catholic Church
- When the legislative assembly showed no inclination to change the Constitution so that the president could serve a second term, Louis Napoleon organised a coup d'état on 2 December 1851
- In August 1852 a second plebiscite agreed to the changing of the Republic into an Empire.

In explaining why the Second Republic did not survive, two issues need to be discussed:

- The weaknesses inherent in the Republic, and the problems it faced during its short life; and
- The attraction and rise to power of Louis Napoleon Bonaparte.



Web Article

For a useful article which deals with the early days of the Second Republic, see:

www.age-of-the-sage.org/history/1848/french_revolution_1848.html



Glossary for the Second Republic

Constituent Assembly	an elected body whose job was to draw up a constitution
droit au travail	the right to work, as advocated by Louis Blanc and pursued by the Red Republicans
June Days	the bloody fighting which followed the closure of the National Workshops
Loi Falloux	a law passed in 1850 restoring a measure of Church control to education
National Workshops	public works in Paris, set up in 1848 to give work to the unemployed
manhood suffrage	the right of all adult men to vote in elections



4. The Second Empire 1852–70



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Napoleon III

During the 18 years of its existence, Napoleon III's regime, at first an authoritarian Empire, gradually moved in a more liberal direction. Some industrialisation took place, the railway network was developed, free trade was introduced and much urban redevelopment work carried out. Abroad, at first the Second Empire was, in military terms, successful, but Napoleon III's policies could not live up to his grandiose ambitions, and a disastrous war against Prussia brought about the overthrow of the Emperor.

(a) Napoleon III's domestic policy

(i) Aims

Napoleon III wanted a state where there was a strong executive power (himself) and an absence of inter-party bickering. The people would be consulted on major change via plebiscites. He wanted to bring greater prosperity to France through industrialisation and better transport links. He also professed concern for the poor, wishing to improve their lot. Throughout the 1850s Napoleon III established and presided over an "authoritarian Empire" or, as Alfred Cobban put it, "a dictatorship that rested on universal suffrage".

(ii) The constitution of 1852

- Napoleon III was Emperor for life
- The bicameral parliament did not propose and had no absolute veto on legislation
- The upper house, the Senate, consisted of the Emperor's nominees, military chiefs and the cardinals of the Roman Catholic Church
- The lower house, the *Corps Législatif*, only met for three months of the year, while its elections were heavily influenced by government officials
- More important than the assembly was the *Conseil d'État*, chosen and controlled by the Emperor.



(iii) Napoleon III actions 1852–60

- Over 25,000 were arrested
- 10,000 were exiled
- Strict control of newspapers was imposed
- No national party organisations were allowed
- Every political meeting had to be attended by a government official.

He also took steps to build up loyalty:

- He doubled the salary of the prefects in each department
- He enabled local government patronage
- He said that he would support the Catholic Church
- He increased army officers' pay.

In these ways Napoleon III established “authoritarian” control over France. Despite this, he remained true to his belief that party politics was divisive and made no attempt to build up a Bonapartist party. Government appointments were made, not on the basis of previous political affiliations, but on the willingness of the men concerned to accept the existing regime, so long as they displayed the required ability.



Teaching and Learning Activity

Research and make notes on the measures taken to control newspapers after 1852.

Write a paragraph on the categories of people who supported Napoleon III.

(iv) The liberalisation of the regime in the 1860s

In the 1860s Napoleon III began to make liberal concessions and by the end of the decade his rule became known as the “liberal Empire”.

- 1861 The *Corps législatif* was given rights to debate the government's legislative proposals
- 1861 The *Corps législatif* was allowed to suggest amendments to the budget
- 1861 Newspapers were permitted to report on parliamentary debates
- 1867 Both houses were given the right to question ministers on their policies
- 1868 Restrictions on newspapers were relaxed
- 1868 Public meetings were permitted
- 1870 The Senate was given a suspensive veto
- 1870 The *Corps législatif* was allowed to introduce its own laws
- 1870 Ministers were answerable to Parliament; henceforth they could only operate with majority support in each house
- 1870 Ollivier, a declared Republican, was appointed as Prime Minister.

The reforms of 1870 were put to the electorate in a plebiscite, and overwhelmingly approved.



Teaching and Learning Activity

Historians debate whether Napoleon III had always wanted to bring about cautious political reform, while retaining ultimate power in his own hands, or whether he was forced into making concessions by a series of adverse election results. Research the election results of the 1860s, noting not only the numbers who voted against the government, but also the distribution of the vote (urban as opposed to rural).

(b) Napoleon III's economic policy

Although the Second Empire witnessed a significant growth in industry, the majority of French workers continued to be employed in small workshops rather than factories. Most French people still lived in the countryside, mainly peasant small holders who made little effort to modernise their farming practices. Much French investment was placed abroad. There was an economic boom during the 1850s, with little unemployment, although prices rose steadily and in the expanding towns, living conditions for many were unacceptable. The 1860s saw unemployment rise again and there was much discontent among workers towards the end of the decade.



Teaching and Learning Activity

Draw a table to illustrate the growth of heavy industry (coal, iron and steel), as well as cotton and silk production in the period 1852–70. The table should also include production figures for grain, as well as its price.

(i) Banking

In 1852 the *Crédit Foncier*, which sought to provide finance for farm mortgages, was set up with government approval. Napoleon III was greatly influenced by the ideas of St Simon and wanted to expand credit supply by breaking the monopoly of the ultra-cautious traditional banks. Thus, in the same year, the *Crédit Mobilier*, which accepted deposits from the small savers and put them towards industrial development, was founded under the Pêreire brothers. Initially successful, the bank ran into difficulties in 1856, struggling on until it closed in 1871. It had done much to promote industrial development, but its collapse reflected badly on the regime.

(ii) Free Trade

Napoleon III, recognising that French industry, which was protected by high tariff barriers, lagged behind its competitors and he believed that free trade would provide a boost. In 1860 the Cobden – Chevalier treaty was signed with England, and this was followed by similar agreements with Belgium and the German *Zollverein*. Many French industrialists resented this policy of lower tariffs, fearing that they could not compete.

(iii) Infrastructure

- Railways: Napoleon III wanted a railway network to cover the country. Financial help was offered to encourage railway building in areas of lower population density where large profits were unlikely. By 1870 there were nearly 18,000 kilometres of track, a tenfold increase on the figure in 1848. This growth had given a boost to the iron and steel industries, as well as coal mining.



- Roads: between 1852 and 1870 there was a major programme of roadbuilding; not only major roads were improved, but also local roads which linked agricultural areas to railheads.
- Urban redevelopment took place in Lyon, Marseilles and, on a huge scale, Paris, with old slums torn down and replaced by wide boulevards.

Hausmann made the centre of Paris the widely admired city it is today, but his work also attracted criticism.

Hausmann: For and Against

FOR	AGAINST
He removed old, narrow streets	Many thousands of small tradesmen were displaced and forced to move beyond the centre of Paris
He built wide avenues to a geometric plan	Some claim that this was to prevent the erection of barricades by rioters or revolutionaries
He constructed 136 kilometres of new streets in Paris	This was often only one street deep; there were still slums behind the facade
The clean water supply increased by 400 per cent	
He built a new system of sewers	The sewers only catered for rainwater
Under his guidance the Opera House, largest theatre in the world at that time, was built	
Public parks like the Bois de Boulogne were constructed	
Railway stations were built, including the Gare du Nord and Gare de l'Est	
Some 20 percent of workers in Paris at the time were estimated to be involved in the building trade	
	There were many criticisms of the methods used to pay for improvements which were verging on illegality

(c) Cultural developments in France 1852–70

- Millet painted scenes of agricultural life
- Courbet was interested in social issues and often portrayed the peasantry
- Doré, an engraver, often portrayed the life of the poor in the cities
- Flaubert produced literary realism, including Mme Bovary
- Auguste Comte was a philosopher and pioneer of positivism.



(d) The foreign policy of Napoleon III

“L’Empire, c’est la paix” (The Empire means peace). This was an unfortunate slogan to adopt at the beginning of Napoleon III’s reign, as he fought four wars, and the regime ended after defeat in the last of these.

(i) Aims

- Napoleon III wanted to revise the Treaty of Vienna of 1815, which had not only restricted France’s borders, but was a hurtful reminder of the first Napoleon’s defeat
- One of the ways of doing this was to support nationalism, for example in Italy or Poland, which would undermine the other great powers on the continent
- Napoleon III wanted glory (*la gloire*) for France, partly as a patriot and partly because of his Bonaparte inheritance
- He was, despite this, not an out-and-out warmonger.



Teaching and Learning Activity

There are clearly contradictions in the aims set out above. Discuss, in groups, about whether such conflicting aims could be reconciled, or whether Napoleon might have to choose between them.

(ii) The Crimean War

In 1854, Orthodox Russia was the official protector of the (Christian) holy places in the Middle East, then under Turkish control. Napoleon III sought to advance the claims of Catholic France to usurp that position, encouraged by the Sultan, who feared Russian ambitions towards the Ottoman Empire. The Emperor’s aims were to consolidate the Catholic vote in France, enhance French prestige in Europe, and, if it did come to war, to break the Quadruple Alliance by pitting Russia against its former allies.

The Crimean War (1854–56) fulfilled all of these aims. France, Britain and Turkey successfully invaded the Crimean peninsula, and the subsequent peace conference was held in Paris, in recognition of France’s restoration to the ranks of the great powers. Russia, bitter that Austria had not come to its aid, now moved closer to France. From the French and British point of view the invasion of the Crimea was often clumsy and inefficient, but this was largely forgotten in the euphoria of victory.

(iii) North Italian War

France became involved in this conflict because Napoleon had intimated that he “wanted to do something for Italy”, and because it would further undermine the Vienna Settlement of 1815. The Habsburg Empire controlled the Italian peninsula, and the first aim of Italian nationalists was to drive it out of Lombardy and Venetia. At Plombières, in 1858, a deal was done between Piedmont and France, which stated that:

- Austria would be driven out of Lombardy and Venetia by force of arms
- France would only fight if Austria were seen to be the aggressor
- A confederation of Italy would be set up, with the Pope as president
- France would receive Nice and Savoy from Piedmont as its reward.

The war took place as planned in 1859. Austria was defeated twice, at Magenta and Solferino, but then Napoleon withdrew from the war, with only Lombardy taken. There



were three main reasons why he did so:

- He was horrified by the slaughter at Solferino and feared a longer war than he had anticipated
- Prussia, alarmed by French success, looked as if it might support the Austrians
- France would still get Nice and Savoy.

The balance sheet of this short war shows successes and failures for Napoleon III's foreign policy:

SUCCESSSES	FAILURES
He could claim that he was the victor.	The Italians were furious that he had abandoned the war with the job only half done and France had thus lost a potential ally.
He could claim that he had aided nationalism.	Events after the War of 1859 dismayed Napoleon. Italy became one country, a unified Kingdom, contrary to his expectations that it would remain a loose confederation, or at worst would be divided into a tripartite state.
He had wounded one of the Allies of 1815.	True, but a wounded Austria was easier for Prussia to defeat seven years later, paving the way for a German super-state on France's borders.
He received Nice and Savoy.	This offended some Italian patriots.
	French Catholics were disappointed when the Pope lost the Papal States, and a French garrison was obliged to garrison Rome to allow the Pope to hold on to Rome itself.

(iv) Colonial exploits

The nineteenth century French Empire began with Charles X's capture of Algiers and continued throughout the reign of Louis Philippe. During the Second Empire, French overseas territory doubled in size, with conquests in Cambodia, New Caledonia and Cameroon, and increasing French settlement in Algeria. These might be counted as successes, but there was certainly no success, let alone *gloire*, in Mexico.

(v) The Mexican Adventure

In 1861 France, Britain and Spain sent a task force to Mexico to force President Juárez to pay his debts, but the French troops stayed on as part of Napoleon III's dream of setting up a French, Catholic empire in the Americas. He initially succeeded, placing the Austrian Archduke Maximilian on the throne, but the Mexicans continued to resist, fighting a guerrilla campaign until, in 1866, French troops withdrew, leaving Maximilian to face capture and a firing squad. This was a disastrous campaign for the Emperor:

- Regular troops had been defeated by a guerrilla army
- France had been obliged to back down in the face of US threats to intervene
- The abandonment of Maximilian was a blow to hopes of a rapprochement with Austria
- Napoleon's grandiose plans had been exposed as delusional.



(vi) Revolt in Poland

An independent Poland did not exist at this time, having been partitioned between Russia, Prussia and Austria. In 1862, when revolt broke out in the Russian part of Poland, Napoleon, playing his nationalist role, protested to the Russians about their treatment of the rebels, and hinted that France might intervene on their behalf. This was nothing more than bluster: Napoleon could not and did not send troops east, and France's good relationship with an offended Russia was clumsily brought to an end.

(vii) Bismarck and Napoleon III

From 1864 to 1871, Otto von Bismarck, the Minister-President of Prussia, consistently outwitted a French Emperor increasingly enfeebled by illness.

- **1864** When Prussia and Austria fought and defeated Denmark in a dispute over the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein, Napoleon III protested on behalf of the Danes, but, as with Poland, did nothing
- **1865** Napoleon and Bismarck met at Biarritz, where Bismarck hinted that French neutrality in the event of an Austro-Prussian war would be rewarded with unspecified territorial compensation
- **1866** The Emperor proposed that French neutrality would lead to French recognition of Prussian expansion, as well as territorial compensation on the Rhine. Bismarck refused
- **1866** The Seven Weeks War resulted in victory for Prussia. Napoleon III was taken aback by the speed and decisiveness of Bismarck's victory
- **1866** Worried by the rise of Prussian power, Napoleon demanded Luxembourg as compensation for his neutrality
- **1867** By the Treaty of London France was obliged to withdraw its demand for Luxembourg
- **1867** Napoleon III failed to secure Italy and Austria as allies. Britain had been suspicious of France ever since Bismarck had leaked details of its demand for territorial compensation on the Rhine, in Luxembourg and Belgium
- **1868** The throne of Spain became vacant. Normally, French influence would have been predominant in nominating a monarch, but events dragged on in the absence of an Anglo-French agreement
- **1870** A mischief-making Bismarck pressed the Prussian King's relative, Leopold of Hohenzollern, to accept an offer of the crown. Faced with French outrage at his country's perceived meddling, Wilhelm turned down the offer on Leopold's behalf. The French public wanted more, and its ambassador demanded that his candidacy should be withdrawn for all time. The King of Prussia politely refused, but clever editing of the Ems telegram, sent to Bismarck to inform him of what had happened, suggested that France and its ambassador had been insulted. An angry France declared war on 19 July 1870.

The Franco-Prussian War was to be Napoleon III's final policy blunder. Rather than marching to Berlin, as the French had boasted, they found themselves fighting for survival in eastern France. Six weeks into the war, the Emperor and 84,000 men were forced to surrender at Sedan. With Napoleon a prisoner of the Germans, there was a power vacuum which was rapidly filled by Parisian republicans as the Second Empire came to an ignominious close.



Teaching and Learning Activity

How far can Napoleon III be blamed for the failure of his foreign policy in his dealings with Bismarck? Here are some possible arguments for the defence:

- His deteriorating health weakened him just when he needed to be at his most alert to deal with the wily Prussian leader
- Napoleon was far from alone in expecting an Austrian victory or a long drawn out, debilitating war in 1866. The other great powers were also taken aback by the scale of the Prussian triumph
- When the Emperor, realising the comparative weakness of the French army, proposed a form of conscription, he was roundly opposed by many Republicans, the generals and a large swathe of public opinion. He was obliged to withdraw the proposal and France faced the war in 1870 outnumbered
- The urge to fight in 1870 was to a large extent driven by public opinion. An affronted France displayed what has been described as “war fever”.

What criticisms would you level at Napoleon III?



Glossary for Napoleon III

Second Empire	the period 1852–71, when Napoleon III ruled France
Confederation	a union of states, loosely bound together
Conseil d'État	the Council of State, roughly speaking the Cabinet
Corps Législatif	the lower house in the French Assembly
Habsburg Empire	the Austrian Empire: today Austria, Hungary, part of Northern Italy, Slovenia, Czech Republic, Slovakia, parts of Romania, Croatia and Bosnia
liberal Empire	the period c. 1860–1870, when Napoleon III relaxed his authoritarian rule and offered greater powers to the Assembly
plebiscite	a vote of the electorate on a single issue
Suspensive veto	the right to postpone a proposal becoming law
Zollverein	a free trading association of German states which existed before German unification



Further Resources

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l7fyza_fTRI (on Haussmann and the rebuilding of Paris)

The full list:

www.historytoday.com/jonathan-fenby/return-king-bourbon-restoration

www.historytoday.com/harold-kurtz/talleyrand-part-i

www.historytoday.com/harold-kurtz/talleyrand-part-ii

www.historytoday.com/dw-brogan/french-restoration-1814-1830-part-i

www.historytoday.com/dw-brogan/french-restoration-1814-1830-part-ii

www.historytoday.com/nigel-aston/orleanism-1780-1830

www.historytoday.com/thomas-gretton/daumier-artist-all-time

www.historytoday.com/peter-j-beck/pages-history-daumier%E2%80%99s-political-eye

www.historytoday.com/robert-pearce/louis-philippe-and-1848-revolutions

www.youtube.com/watch?v=okPcqX50UzE

www.age-of-the-sage.org/history/1848/french_revolution_1848.html

www.youtube.com/watch?v=l7fyza_fTRI