*France after the Congress of Vienna*

**The Bourbon restoration: (1814–1830)**

This period of time is called the Bourbon Restoration. Louis XVIII was the younger brother of Louis XVI, and reigned from 1814 to 1824. On becoming king, Louis issued a constitution known as the Charter which preserved many of the liberties won during the French Revolution.

The right to vote in elections was restricted to only the wealthiest men. When Louis XVIII died, he was succeeded by a younger brother, Charles X, who reigned from 1824 to 1830. Charles was not as liberal as his brother, and believed that he was king because God had chosen him to be, and therefore, he deserved absolute power. He was very unpopular with the French people.

**Louis-Philippe (1830–1848)**

Protest against the absolute monarchy was in the air. Charles X had unilaterally changed the electoral laws and muzzled the press. Opposition to the absolute monarchy was immediately expressed in the streets of Paris during the "three glorious days" (Les Trois Glorieuses) of 26–29 July 1830. Charles X was deposed and replaced by King Louis-Philippe. This event is traditionally regarded as a rising of the bourgeoisie against the idea of an absolute monarchy.

Louis-Philippe's reign (1830–1848) was dominated by the haute bourgeoisie (upper middle class) of bankers, financiers, industrialists and merchants. During this period, an atmosphere of protest and revolt was all around in France, particularly among the middle and lower class. On 22 November 1831 in Lyon (the second largest city in France) the silk workers revolted and took over the town hall in protest of recent salary reductions and working conditions. This was one of the first instances of a workers revolt in the entire world. On 28 October 1836, Prince Louis-Napoleon, (son of Napoleon's brother, Louis, King of Holland) attempted to overthrow King Louis-Philippe in a coup d'état. It failed, and in August 1840, Prince Louis Napoleon tried another coup with hired soldiers. It failed as well.

Because of the constant threats to the throne, Louis-Phillipe began to rule with a stronger and stronger hand. Soon political meetings were outlawed. These decisions were met with outrage. Demands were made for the abdication of Louis-Philippe and for establishment of a representative democracy in France.

**Second Republic (1848–52)**

Louis Napoleon Bonaparte was elected president on 10 December 1848 by a landslide. His support came from a wide section of the French public. Louis Napoleon presented himself as "being all things to all people." One of his major promises to the peasantry and other groups was that there would be no new taxes.

**Second Empire, 1852-1871**

As 1851 opened, Louis Napoleon was not allowed by the Constitution of 1848 to seek re-election as President of France. Instead he proclaimed himself President for Life following a coup in December that was confirmed and accepted by a public vote.

Louis Napoleon took the title of Emperor Napoleon III in 1852 and held it until his downfall in 1870. The era saw great industrialization, urbanization (including the massive rebuilding of Paris by Baron Haussmann) and economic growth. Despite promising a peaceful reign in 1852 of a peaceful reign, the Emperor could not resist the temptations of glory in foreign affairs. In Europe, Napoleon failed again and again. His most significant defeat was the Franco-Prussian War.

**Franco-Prussian War (1870-71)**

The Franco-Prussian War broke out in 1870 between France and the German states. German nationalism united the German states, with the exception of Austria, against Napoleon III. The French Empire was defeated decisively at Metz and Sedan. Emperor Louis Napoleon III surrendered himself and 100,000 French troops to the German troops. The Treaty of Frankfurt allowed the newly formed German Empire to annex the French provinces of Alsace and Lorraine.

**The Third Republic 1871–1914**

Following the defeat of France in the Franco-Prussian War (1870–1871), a new French National Assembly was elected to consider the German terms for peace. Elected on 8 February 1871, this French National Assembly accepted the terms of the Treaty of Frankfurt and established the Third Republic. This democratic government would remain in France until World War II.