

## French History

### The French Revolution: (1789-1799)

- During this time France removed the monarchy and became a republic.
- It started with the storming of the Bastille prison in 1789.
- King Louis XVI was imprisoned and later executed.
- France became a republic
- Then began a 'Reign of Terror,' when many people were executed by guillotine.
- Eventually Napoleon took control and became Emperor of France.
- Many of the ideas behind the French Revolution—liberté, égalité, fraternité spread throughout Europe.

### The French Resistance:

- During the Second World War, Nazi Germany conquered and occupied France.
- Some French people formed a secret movement to resist the Nazis and fight back.
- The French Resistance was a network of groups fighting to free France.

## French Cultural Icons

**The Eiffel Tower:** Opened in 1889. 330 m tall tower. The most visited tourist attraction in the world.

**The Arc de Triomphe:** Completed in 1836, this 50m tall arch was commissioned by Napoleon to commemorate his victories in battles.

**The Beret:** A soft flat round hat traditionally made of wool. Once, commonly worn by many French men. .

**The Croissant:** A rich, buttery bread, shaped into a crescent. Usually enjoyed at breakfast time.

**Tintin:** A character from a series of very popular French language comic books written by Herge. Later made into cartoons and films.

**The Louvre:** The most visited art gallery in the world. Home to the Mona Lisa and the Venus de Milo.

**The Catacombs of Paris:** A burial tomb in Paris, using a large network of tunnels and chambers.

## Famous French People

**Henri Matisse:** (1869-1954) artist, impressionist, famous for 'painting with scissors.'

**Claude Monet:** (1840-1926) artist, impressionist, famous for his large scale painting of waterlilies.

**Josephine Baker:** (1906-1975) singer, actress, spy, civil rights activist.

**Georges Seurat:** (1859-1891) artist specialising in pointillism.

**Edith Piaf:** (1915 -1963) was a French singer known as 'The Little Sparrow.' One of the country's most widely known international stars.

**Marie Curie:** (1867-1954) scientist, discovered radium, won 2 Nobel prizes for chemistry and physics.

**Claude Debussy:** (1862-1918) classical music composer, famous for 'Au Clair de la Lune.'

## The Geography of France

France is a large country in Western Europe, which share **borders** with:

Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany, Switzerland, Italy and Spain.

The **Mediterranean Sea** lies to the south, and the **Atlantic Ocean** lies to the west.

Major rivers are the **Seine** and the **Loire**.

France's highest mountain is **Mount Blanc** in the **Alps**. The **Pyrenees Mountains** lie between France and Spain.

68 million people live in France.

The capital city is Paris.

The currency is the Euro.

France is divided into 101 departements: 5 are overseas and include Martinique and Guadeloupe.

French is recognised as an official language in 29 countries.

# French Culture Knowledge Organiser