E. A Story of Nations

1. In the time of Charlemagne, Europe was not yet organized into nations. This would take centuries, as the borders between various countries became fairly permanent, and the people within separate kingdoms developed communities "far away" from each other.
2. The evolution of each separate nation, such as France, Germany, Italy, Spain, etc. is a complex story with many parts. For the time being, what we will work with is the separate nationhood of France and Germany because of the failed **Frankish Union (800-43 AD).**
3. France and Germany are the countries at the heart of the story of the *Europe of Nations*, the two great rivals in the *World Wars,* and the two indispensable partners that make up the **European Union** today.
4. If we focus on these two for starters, we can call our basic, first pass through history "European History 1.0."

F. France in the "Driver's Seat"

1. During the thousand years after Charlemagne, France was the stronger of the two.
2. After the split from Germany (843 AD), France was the first nation in the heart of Europe to develop a stable, powerful monarchy. It went through four stages:
   a) **charismatic monarchy**: All countries are founded by great leaders, who are physically and mentally strong. Their strength of personality—*charisma*—allows them to command respect and achieve leadership.
   b) **hereditary monarchy**: Once a charismatic leader has helped his people achieve a triumph over any rivals and claim some area for themselves, the quest for a stable life begins. This requires the peaceful transition of power over time. In this arrangement, the king passes on the throne to his heir, and a tradition of one family's descendants maintaining the right to kingship is created.
   c) **bureaucratic monarchy**: The reliance of a ruling dynasty on friends and family is not a stable formula for government. History if full of rulers who die without an heir, and betrayals within and between families. In monarchies that succeed, a transition is made towards professional governance by creating a "bureaucracy" (which comes from the French word "bureau," which means "office.") Professional government workers keep the government functioning over time, even when a ruling family line ends or is replaced.
   d) **absolute monarchy**: When a monarchy evolves to an efficient, lasting bureaucracy, including tax collection and militarization, it can become an absolute government. This means its power is unchallenged. Of course, as the saying goes "absolute power corrupts absolutely," so such a regime usually undoes itself by oppressing its people leading to a revolution.
3. France's ruling family was the first to evolve through these stages and reach an absolute monarchy over a major nation, and thus, because of its oppressive corruption, the first country to reach a revolution against monarchy: the *French Revolution.*

4. It was because of this evolution that a new charismatic leader arrived to shape history and bring about the transition to the modern Europe of nations.
5. His name was Napoleon Bonaparte. Napoleon ruled France from **1799 to 1815**. During his reign he completely conquered Germany, temporarily making himself and emperor over most of Europe.

G. The Second Charlemagne

1. One of the reasons why Napoleon conquered Europe was he wanted to be a second Charlemagne. Napoleon was fascinated by history. He believed that conquerors like Charlemagne were the most important people in history.
2. To make himself into a new Charlemagne, Napoleon copied the first unifier of Europe in many ways. One famous thing Napoleon did is lead a French army over the Alps into Italy, as Charlemagne had once done in order to reach Rome. A famous painting of this exploit by the artist Jacques-Louis David shows him leading the expedition over the mountains, with his name inscribed on the rocks next to Charlemagne's.
3. Like Charlemagne, Napoleon united Europe by force. After conquering Italy, he went on to conquer all of Germany.
4. Napoleon also tried to conquer Russia, but his invasion of that country proved to be a great miscalculation, and a great European alliance ultimately defeated him at the famous Battle of Waterloo of **1815**.
5. Like Charlemagne before him, Napoleon thus *temporarily* united Europe by force. And like Charlemagne before him, he failed.
6. This greatly reinforced the separateness of France and Germany in particular. The Germans were especially embarrassed and angry about being conquered. Thus, their culture became highly focussed on its resentment of neighboring France.
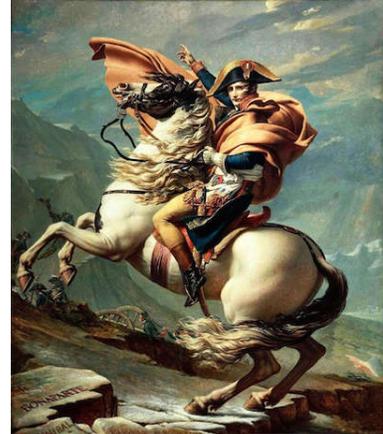
Jacques-Louis David's *Bonaparte Crossing the Alps* depicts Napoleon taking his place among Europe's great conquerors by including an inscription "Karolus Magnus" (Charlemagne) on the mountain rocks.

H. *Super*nationalism After Napoleon

1. National*ism* is a way of thinking of where a person sees themselves as a member of a nation. What then *is* a nation?
2. A nation, according to Jewish nationalist Theodor Herzl, is a "historical group of recognizable cohesion, held together by a common enemy."
3. If Herzl is right, then nations are created by the hatred of groups for each other.
4. Unfortunately, this does describe the history of Europe, because the history of the different people—the French, the Germans, the Spanish, the Italians, the Hungarians, etc.

—involves them evolving separately, in a time where everything was "far away," developing their own language and traditions to bind them together as a community, and then fighting wars for a thousand years after Charlemagne to satisfy the ambitions of their kings.

5. Especially after Napoleon's conquests, this led to *ultra*nationalism, which involves an exaggerated sense of belonging to a nation, along with a negative view of other nations (especially France, because of Napoleon).

6. It is not uncommon for ultranationalism to become *super*nationalism. Supernationalism involves the same exaggerated sense of identification of self with the nation, but also the willingness to hurt people of other nations. In the worst form, this leads to people refusing to see those of other nations as human beings.

7. Napoleon's conquests caused a lot of anti-French ultranationalism throughout Europe, which was redirected by certain charismatic leaders into supernationalism.

8. The first of these supernationalists was Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany. This kaiser (the German title for "caesar" or "emperor") wanted to make Germany the greatest nation in the world, and was fully willing to use war as a means to overwhelm other nations, which he resented so much—especially France, which had conquered Germany under Napoleon, and Britain, which has built the largest empire in the world.