The Reformation

Beginning of Protestant Christianity
The Protestant Reformation (Starting in 1517)

The Reformation was a religious revolt against the authority and certain doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church.

The Reformation established many protestant sects. (A Protestant is generally considered to be a Christian who is not of the Roman catholic or Eastern Orthodox faiths.)

In western Europe the Reformation shattered Catholic religious unity and led to Christian diversity.
Causes of the Reformation

1. Political. Some rulers resented the Church courts and the Church claim of supremacy over civil authority. Except in Italy, nationalist-minded persons, who were growing in number, considered the pope a foreign ruler.
Causes

2. **Economic.** Some ruler’s envied the Church’s wealth and desired to confiscate the vast Church properties. Some business people viewed the Church tithe as a heavy burden and the Church prohibition of interest on loans as a restriction on economic enterprise. Nationalist-minded persons resented the flow of Church taxes from their countries to the papacy in Rome.
Causes

3. **Intellectual.** The Renaissance, by its ferment of new ideas, helped contribute to the Reformation. The Renaissance emphasis on individual expression encouraged some persons to seek a direct relationship between the individual and God. The Renaissance questioning attitude led some educated persons to doubt Church religious powers and authority. These persons prepared the way for religious dissent by challenging Church teachings on astronomy, history, and Bible interpretation.
Causes

Church Abuses.
Some persons were critical of the following Church practices, which seemed unworthy of religious leaders:

a. Worldliness-the luxurious and materialistic life of certain popes and high clergy.
b. Nepotism-appointing relatives to Church offices regardless of ability.
c. Simony-selling appointments to Church offices.
Causes

Abuses cont.

d. **Sale of Indulgences**- accepting money for Church pardons, called indulgences, without requiring true repentance. These pardons were granted to reduce punishment in the hereafter for certain sins.
Causes

5. Decline of Church Prestige. Some persons lost respect for the Church because of the

a. Babylonian Captivity (1309-1377, a period during which the popes lived at Avignon, France under the domination of French kings, and

b. The Great Schism (1378-1417), a period during which rival popes-at Avignon and at Rome-each claimed to be the true pope and struggled for Church supremacy.
Spreads Like Fire

Knowledge of these causes, basic to the reformation, could be spread widely, quickly and inexpensively in western Europe after 1450, following the invention of printing with moveable type.
Martin Luther Starts the Reformation-1517

1. Luther’s Background. Martin Luther (1483-1546), born into a poor German family, received an excellent education and entered a Catholic monastic order. At age 25 Luther was appointed professor of Christian theology at the University of Wittenberg.
2. Luther Attacks the Church.

Luther condemned the sale of indulgences and denounced papal agents selling them in Germany. (The funds obtained were to be used for building St. Peter’s Cathedral in Rome.)

In 1517 Luther nailed to the door of the Church in Wittenberg a statement of his religious beliefs, the Ninety-five Theses. The theses aroused tremendous popular support, further encouraging him to attack the Church.
Luther

denied the pope’s supremacy,
proclaimed the Bible as the final authority in religious matters,
translated the Bible into German,
urged each individual to read and understand the Bible, and
criticized a number of Catholic practices.
Luther: Faith and Excommunication

Luther developed the doctrine of justification by faith, that faith alone ensures salvation.

Excommunicated by the pope, Luther faced punishment from Charles V, king of Spain, in his capacity as Holy Roman Emperor.
Luther Finds Support

3. North German Rulers Support Luther.
Powerful northern German rulers welcomed revolt against Rome.
In addition to having religious reasons, they desired to seize Church properties, weaken the Holy Roman Emperor, and end their submission to a non-German pope.
Consequently, they protected Luther against punishment. Throughout northern Germany, these rulers accepted Luther’s ideas as the basis of a new Christian religion, Lutheranism.
Luther’s Activities

In establishing the new religion. Luther replaced Latin with the vernacular German in Church services, wrote catechisms for Church members, encouraged congregations to sing hymns, wrote hymns (most notably, “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God”), approved marriage by the clergy, rejected the organization of any clerical(priestly) hierarchy, and recognized the position of the church as subordinate to and an agent of civil authority.
Scandinavia Rapidly Accepts Lutheranism

Scandinavian rulers in Norway, Sweden and Denmark were converted to Lutheranism, established it as the official state religion, and confiscated Catholic Church properties.

By the end of the 16th century, Scandinavia had become almost entirely Lutheran.
John Calvin (1509-1564)

A French religious reformer, fled from catholic France to safety in Geneva, Switzerland.

Author of The Institutes of the Christian Religion, Calvin became a leading Protestant spokesman.

He taught the doctrine of **predestination**, that only those elected beforehand by God would achieve salvation.

He founded a simple form of worship, frowned upon such pastimes as dancing and cardplaying, and extolled a serious, moral and hardworking life.

Those persons predestined for salvation, he held, could be identified by the virtue of their moral lives.
Calvinism Spread Quickly

a. In Switzerland Calvinism became the Swiss Reformed Church.
b. In Holland Calvinism became the prevailing faith, the Dutch Reformed Church.
c. In Scotland Calvinism became the official state religion, the Presbyterian Church.
d. In France Calvinism became the faith of a small, influential, middle-class group, the Huegenots.
e. In England Calvinism became the religion of the Puritans. During the 17th century, a number of Puritans migrated to the New World colony of Massachusetts, where they introduced Calvinism as the Congregational Church.
Henry VIII, king of England (1509-1547), at first a loyal Catholic, broke with the Church because

1. The pope refused to grant him a divorce from his Spanish wife, Catherine of Aragon, and

2. Henry desired for the crown the extensive Church properties in England.

He induced Parliament to pass the Act of Supremacy (1534), which instituted the Anglican Church of England, independent of Rome and under the leadership of the English ruler.
Henry VIII

Henry’s actions won the support of the nationalist-minded English, who considered the pope to be a foreign ruler, and of many people who opposed certain Church practices.

After Henry was granted a divorce by the Anglican Church, he married a young English woman, Anne Boleyn. Their daughter later became Queen Elizabeth I.

During Elizabeth’s reign (1558-1603), Anglicanism became firmly entrenched as the English religion.
The Catholic Reformation

To defend itself against the Protestant movement, the Catholic Church took a number of actions known as the **Catholic Reformation**, or **Counter-Reformation**.

1. **Effective Leadership.** A succession of capable, energetic popes provided strong leadership for Church reform. From all the clergy they demanded devotion to duty and the highest religious standards.
Counter-Reformation

2. The Council of Trent (1545-1563).
This Church council
a. reaffirmed basic Catholic doctrines such as papal supremacy and exclusive Church authority to interpret the Bible;
b. prohibited Church abuses – nepotism, simony, and sale of indulgences;
c. required the clergy to renounce worldly pleasures;
d. authorized an Index, a list of heretical books forbidden to Catholics
Counter-Reformation

3. The Holy Inquisition. These Church courts vigorously combated heretics. In Italy and Spain the Inquisition helped stop the spread of Protestantism.

4. The Society of Jesus (the Jesuits). This religious order was founded in 1534 by Ignatius Loyola. Known as the Jesuits, the members became the leading spiritual soldiers in the fight against Protestantism.

By serving as priests and teachers, they helped preserve Catholicism in Poland, southern Germany, and Belgium. They also won new converts in India, China, Japan and North America.
Results of the Reformation

1. Immediate Effects

a. End of Religious Unity. The religious unity of western Europe had been destroyed. Henceforth, Europe was divided according to religion, as follows:

   1. Predominately Catholic were Italy, Spain, Portugal, France, Belgium, Ireland, southern Germany, Austria, Poland and Hungary.

   2. Predominately Protestant were England, Scotland, Wales, Holland, northern Germany, Switzerland, Denmark, Norway and Sweden.

The Protestant world at first consisted of the Lutheran, Calvinist and Anglican denominations. Later there arose other protestant sects such as Methodists and Baptists.
Religious Divisions in Western Europe
Immediate Effects

1b. Religious Wars.
In the 16\textsuperscript{th} and 17\textsuperscript{th} centuries. Europe endured a series of wars, caused partly by religious differences.

1) Civil Wars in Germany. Catholic and Lutheran rulers in Germany fought several civil wars. The Peace of Augsburg (1555) provided a compromise permitting German rulers to choose for themselves and their people either Catholicism or Lutheranism.
Immediate Effects

1b. Religious wars

2) Spanish Naval War Against England. Philip II of Spain desired to a) safeguard Spanish merchant ships and New World colonies against English raids, b) depose Elizabeth I, the Protestant queen of England, and c) restore Catholicism in England. To invade England, he organized a huge war fleet, the Spanish Armada. In 1588 the Armada was sighted off the English coast and destroyed by the English navy. Philip’s plans were ruined.
The Spanish Armada

12 July 1588
The Spanish Armada set sail

19 July
English saw the Armada arriving

English ships chased Spanish up the Channel

27 July
Spanish Armada anchored near Calais. English sent burning fireships into the Armada. The Armada captains panicked and sailed away

28 July
English ships attacked Spanish near Gravelines

The Spanish soldiers were left in the Netherlands

30 July
The Armada tried to sail back to Spain by going north around Scotland

August
Many Spanish ships were wrecked by storms along the west coast of Scotland and Ireland

September
Only half of the Armada returned to Spain

The route of the Spanish Armada
Immediate Effects

1b

3) Civil Wars in France. Protestant and Catholic claimants to the French throne engaged in a series of civil wars. In 1589, Henry of Navarre, a Protestant, became King Henry IV. Seeking to end religious strife, he a) adopted Catholicism, the predominant French religion, and b) issued the Edict of Nantes (1598), granting religious freedom to the Protestant minority, the Huegenots.
Immediate Effects

1b

5. Thirty Years’ War (1618-1648). This war, the bloodiest of the period, originated as a religious struggle in central Europe between Protestant and Catholic rulers.

Fought almost entirely in Germany and causing widespread economic ruin, the Thirty Years’ War ended in 1648 with the Treaty of Westphalia:

a. Calvinist as well as Lutheran and Catholic rulers in Germany gained the right to determine the religion of their people.

b. Holland and Switzerland, both Protestant, received recognition of their independence.

c. Strengthened Civil Authority. The state gained power at the expense of the Church. In Protestant countries the governments
   1. confiscated Catholic Church properties
   2. abolished Catholic Church courts
   3. assumed control of the new Protestant churches
Thirty Years’ War
Long-Term Effects

a. **Encouragement of Education.** Protestantism, stressing individual Bible reading in a person’s own language, encourage widespread teaching of reading.

b. **A Step Toward Religious Tolerance.** West European people, torn by religious groups during much of the Reformation, experienced great intolerance. Later, s people realized that intolerance their own as well as other faiths, governments permitted some religious diversity.