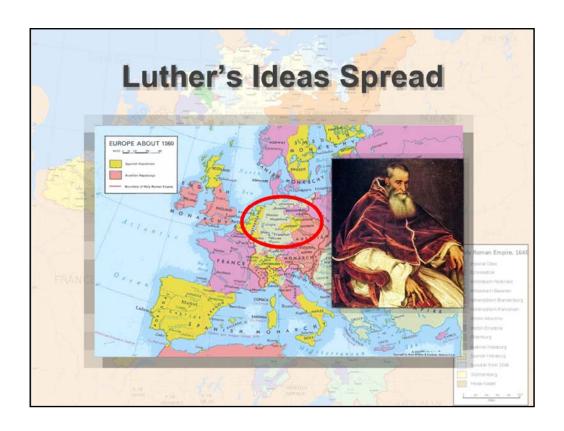


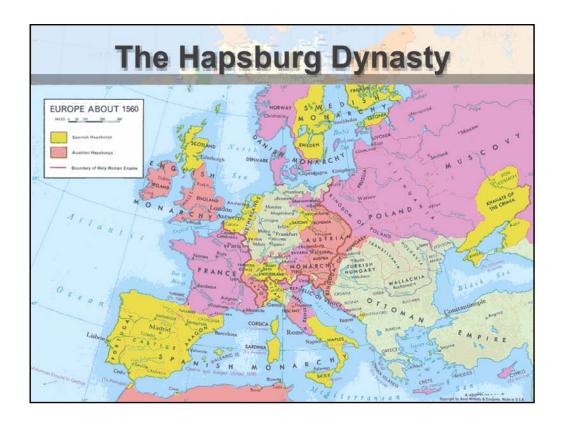
The Protestant Reformation began when Martin Luther published his 95 Theses in 1517. Several years later, Luther also translated the Bible into German. Both of these works quickly spread across Germany and parts of Europe as a result of the printing press, which had been invented sixty years earlier. Luther's teachings were especially popular in Germany, and his followers were called Lutherans. In particular, common people, who wanted more freedom from the Catholic Church's authority, embraced his ideas.





Luther's ideas also became popular with the princes of Northern Germany, who were part of the Holy Roman Empire. These princes wanted to sever their ties with the Catholic Church in order to gain more power and wealth. As more and more German princes converted to Lutheranism, the Pope lost power in Northern Europe. Tensions arose between Catholics and Protestants in the Holy Roman Empire, and the two sides came closer to armed conflict.





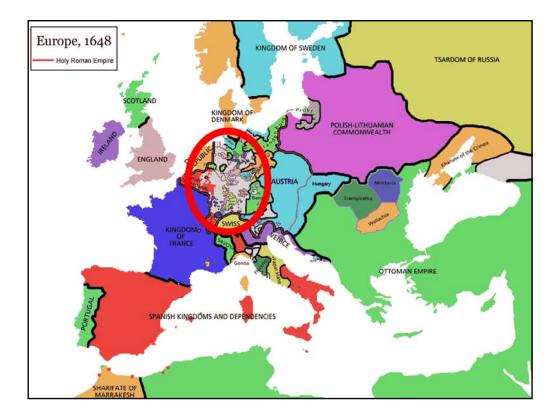
The Holy Roman Empire was a loose collection of largely independent states. Its emperor came from the Hapsburg Dynasty, which also ruled over Austria and Spain. The Hapsburgs were devoutly Catholic and supported the Pope in opposition to the Protestants. This map shows the extent of the Austrian and Spanish Hapsburg rule in 1560. When tensions between the Catholics and Protestants started the Thirty Years' War, the Hapsburg forces fought in support of the Catholics and the Catholic Church.





In 1618, after many years of minor skirmishes between the two sides, full-scale conflict erupted between Catholics and Protestants in the Holy Roman Empire. This war, the Thirty Years' War, had three major phases. The first phase of the conflict started when the Hapsburg monarch, Ferdinand II, limited certain freedoms that Protestants had within the Holy Roman Empire. Protestants revolted against the Hapsburgs, but the Hapsburg's forces easily crushed the rebellion to end the first phase of the war.



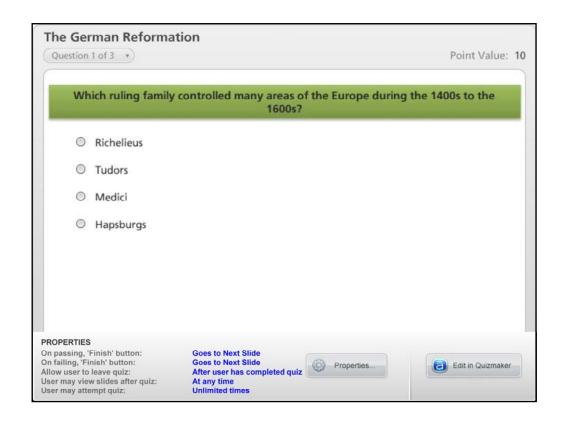


The second phase began when Sweden entered the war to aid the Northern German princes, who had joined the fight against the Hapsburg Dynasty. This resulted in victories for the Lutherans. The final phase of the war began when France entered the war against the Hapsburg's. Although France was a Catholic country under the leadership of Cardinal Richelieu, its leaders saw the Hapsburg's, who controlled Spain and Austria, as a greater threat than the Protestant faith. The war was no longer simply one of religion. It was now a political war as well. France's whole goal during the conflict was to strengthen its position and to weaken the Hapsburg Dynasty.

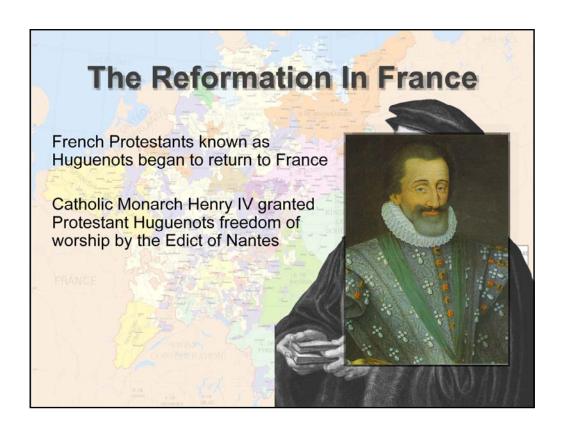
A series of treaties, known as the Peace of Westphalia, officially ended the war. During the war, much of the German countryside was destroyed. Through the treaties, many of the German states were broken up to reduce their political power. The Holy Roman Empire, the Pope, and the Hapsburg family were weakened by the long war. France emerged as one of the most powerful kingdoms in Europe after the conflict.

[Map of Peace of Westphalia courtesy Roke.]









The Protestant Reformation had an impact in France. Protestant followers of John Calvin migrated from other parts of Europe back into France. These people were known as Huguenots. Friction between the Catholics and Huguenots became a major problem, and violence erupted in French cities. As a result, the French King, Henry IV, issued the Edict of Nantes, which granted Huguenots freedom of worship. King Henry IV was raised as a Huguenot, but converted to Catholicism to become king. As a result, he was able to gain support from both sides for his edict, which made France peaceful and stable again.



## Cardinal Richelieu Louis XIII delegates much of his power to Cardinal Richelieu Richelieu's main goal was to strengthen France against Huguenots and Hapsburgs Richelieu brings France into war on the side of the Protestants – changed war into a political conflict

After the death of Henry, his son, Louis XIII, became king at a very young age. He was a relatively weak ruler who delegated much of his power to Cardinal Richelieu, his secretary of state and a French religious figure.

Richelieu's main goal was to strengthen France against what he saw as its two main threats—the Huguenots and the Hapsburgs. To combat the Huguenots, he revoked the Edict of Nantes, denying them the freedom to practice their religion. Many Huguenots left France and immigrated to North America. Despite the fact that Richelieu was a Catholic, he led France to fight on the side of the Protestants in the Thirty Years' War. This event changed the focus of the war from a religious conflict to a political conflict.



