# Bread, Ballots, Borders

How the revolutions of 1848 linked hardship, rights, and national unity

**MWH.C.4.4** "Describe the common conditions (e.g., widespread protests and demands of working class; poverty and mass starvation) and democratic ideas (e.g., removal of monarchical power; universal suffrage…"

NAME _____ DATE _____

## 1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

**YOUR JOB** Underline two hardships that fueled protests, circle two demands for democratic change, and put a star beside one sentence linking the revolutions to later nation-states.

### What Brought Europe Into the Streets?

1 In early 1848, a worker in Paris might spend most of a day's pay on bread. Poor harvests had raised food prices across Europe, while an economic slump left many people without work. Factory workers and skilled craftspeople demanded jobs and fairer conditions. Students and middle-class reformers also took to the streets, angry that kings and their ministers could silence newspapers and shut ordinary people out of government. When crowds in Paris forced King Louis-Philippe to give up his throne in February, the news traveled quickly. Protests soon erupted in Vienna and across the German and Italian states.

2 Although protesters disagreed about many things, they shared demands for political change. In France, revolutionaries declared a republic and introduced voting rights for all adult men. Elsewhere, reformers called for constitutions to limit a monarch's power, elected assemblies to represent citizens, and a free press to debate public decisions. In Vienna, demonstrations drove the powerful minister Metternich from office. In the German states, representatives met in Frankfurt to draft a constitution for a united Germany. These changes and proposals challenged the idea that a ruler's family, rather than the people, should decide a country's future.

3 The revolutions did not immediately create the nations protesters imagined. Monarchs and armies defeated many movements, and the Frankfurt assembly's plan for a united Germany failed when the Prussian king refused its crown. Still, the upheavals showed that demands for bread, work, and political rights could unite people across social groups. They also made national unity a public goal: many Germans and Italians argued that people sharing a language and political community should govern together instead of living under divided rulers. Later leaders built unified German and Italian states, though those states did not grant everyone equal political rights.

## 2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did poor harvests and the economic slump help fuel protests in 1848?

2. How did workers' demands differ from those of students and middle-class reformers?

3. Choose two democratic changes from the passage. How would each reduce the power of monarchs or their ministers?

4. The Frankfurt assembly's plan failed. How did the revolutions still help set the stage for later nation-states?

## 3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a short newspaper editorial as if you lived in a German state in 1848. Describe two hardships, call for two democratic changes, and explain how shared demands might help people work toward a united state without claiming that unity has already been won.

ANSWER KEY

# Bread, Ballots, Borders

HIGH SCHOOL · MWH.C.4.4

## PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two hardships that fueled protests, circle two demands for democratic change, and put a star beside one sentence linking the revolutions to later nation-states. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

## PART 2 · ANSWERS

| # | QUESTION | ANSWER |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | How did poor harvests and the economic slump help fuel protests in 1848? | **Poor harvests raised food prices, while the slump left many people without work. These hardships led workers and others to demand change.** |
| 2 | How did workers' demands differ from those of students and middle-class reformers? | **Workers demanded jobs and fairer conditions. Students and middle-class reformers opposed censorship and their exclusion from government.** |
| 3 | Choose two democratic changes from the passage. How would each reduce the power of monarchs or their ministers? | **An elected assembly would give citizens representatives who could make decisions instead of leaving them to rulers. A free press would let people openly criticize rulers' decisions.** |
| 4 | The Frankfurt assembly's plan failed. How did the revolutions still help set the stage for later nation-states? | **The revolutions made national unity a public goal. Many Germans and Italians argued that people sharing a language and political community should govern together, an idea later leaders acted on.** |

## PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Poor harvests have made bread too expensive for many families, and the economic slump has left workers without jobs. We call for an elected assembly and a free press so people can have a voice in public decisions. People in other German states face these troubles too. If we work together, we can seek a constitution that limits rulers across the German states. A united state may come later, but we have not won one yet.

Accept any two hardships and two democratic changes supported by the passage. For the editorial, look for a plausible link between shared demands and later national unity, without treating unification as an immediate result of 1848.