Europe Rechooses

Cooperation, national loyalty, and security after 1991

MWH.C.7.6.E "Describe European politics since the fall of the Soviet Union, including the expansion of the European Union and NATO, continued national loyalties..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline examples of EU or NATO expansion, circle examples of national loyalty, and write R beside Russia's actions and E beside European responses. Use your marks to trace how these forces shaped European politics.

New Choices, New Conflicts

1 When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, the political order of Europe changed. Former communist states could choose new partners, but two organizations offered different kinds of cooperation. The European Union (EU) links its members through shared economic rules and political decisions. In 2004, ten countries joined the EU, including Poland and three Baltic states that had belonged to the Soviet Union. NATO is a defense alliance whose members pledge to defend one another if attacked. Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic joined NATO in 1999; the Baltic states joined in 2004. These choices tied many countries in eastern Europe more closely to western Europe.

2 Membership in a larger group did not erase national loyalties. EU governments still argued over how much authority to give shared institutions, especially on borders, laws, and trade. In a 2016 referendum, voters in the United Kingdom chose to leave the EU; the country formally departed in 2020. Supporters of leaving often argued that British voters should have more control over national decisions. Yet the United Kingdom remained in NATO, showing that a country can reject one form of cooperation while keeping another. Across Europe, leaders must balance the benefits of joint action with citizens' desire to govern themselves.

3 Russia also became a major force in European politics. In 2014, Russia seized and annexed Crimea, a peninsula belonging to Ukraine. Most countries did not recognize the annexation. In 2022, Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine, turning a long conflict into a much wider war. European governments imposed sanctions on Russia and sent aid to Ukraine; NATO members strengthened defenses, but NATO did not enter the war as an alliance. Concern about security helped drive Finland to join NATO in 2023 and Sweden in 2024. These events exposed a central question: how can European countries defend their independence while working together?

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did EU and NATO expansion offer former communist states two different ways to connect with western Europe?

2. How did the United Kingdom's choice to leave the EU show that national loyalty remained important?

3. How did Russia's actions in 2014 and 2022 lead to responses from other European countries?

4. Compare the United Kingdom's EU decision with Finland's and Sweden's NATO decisions. What different concerns do these choices show?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

In 75 to 100 words, write a policy memo for a fictional European country considering NATO membership. Use at least two different historical developments from the passage to explain a reason to join and a reason citizens might object, and distinguish NATO from the EU.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline examples of EU or NATO expansion, circle examples of national loyalty, and write R beside Russia's actions and E beside European responses. Use your marks to trace how these forces shaped European politics. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did EU and NATO expansion offer former communist states two different ways to connect with western Europe?	**EU membership connected them through shared economic rules and political decisions. NATO membership connected them through a mutual defense pledge.**
2	How did the United Kingdom's choice to leave the EU show that national loyalty remained important?	**Supporters wanted British voters to have more control over national decisions, even if that meant leaving the EU.**
3	How did Russia's actions in 2014 and 2022 lead to responses from other European countries?	**After Russia annexed Crimea, most countries refused to recognize the annexation. After its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, European governments sanctioned Russia and sent aid to Ukraine, while NATO members strengthened defenses.**
4	Compare the United Kingdom's EU decision with Finland's and Sweden's NATO decisions. What different concerns do these choices show?	**The UK decision reflected a desire for more national control. Finland and Sweden joined NATO amid security concerns, showing a desire for collective defense.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

To the leaders of Riverton: Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea shows why a small country might seek allies against threats to its borders. Finland's decision to join NATO after the 2022 invasion suggests that collective defense can look more valuable when war spreads nearby. Some Riverton citizens might still oppose membership because NATO's pledge could commit their country to defend other members. They want voters to control decisions about military action. Joining NATO would be a defense choice, not a decision to join the EU or accept its shared economic rules.

Accept other passage-supported links between national control, collective defense, EU expansion, and Russia's actions. The memo should use at least two distinct developments and correctly distinguish NATO's defense role from the EU's economic and political cooperation.