

IMPORTANT EVENTS OF 1750–1914

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| 1756 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Seven Years' War breaks out between Prussia and Austria, France, Sweden, Russia, and several small German principalities. The conflict quickly escalates into a colonial war between Great Britain and France in North America, India, and the Caribbean. |
| 1757 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Robert-François Damiens is tortured and executed for the attempted assassination of Louis XV.• A British force defeats a French army in India at the Battle of Plassey, opening the way for the eventual control of all of the region by the East India Company. |
| 1759 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The city of Quebec falls to the British. |
| 1761 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• François-Marie Arouet (more popularly known as Voltaire) becomes the defense attorney of Jean Calas, a French Protestant accused of murdering his son in order to prevent his marriage to a Catholic woman. Although Calas is found guilty and executed, Voltaire uncovers enough evidence to overturn the conviction in 1764. |
| 1762 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tsarina Elizabeth of Russia dies. The new tsar, Peter III, is an ardent admirer of Frederick II and disengages Russia from the Austro-French coalition before he is deposed by his wife, Catherine II (the Great). The Russian defection forces France and Austria to the peace table by the end of the year.• The British capture Havana, Cuba, and Manila, the Philippines, from the Spanish. |
| 1763 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Treaty of Hubertusburg ends the Seven Years' War in Europe without any significant changes in prewar boundaries on the Continent. Meanwhile, the Treaty of Paris ends the fighting between Britain and France, and the British obtain Canada, Senegal, Florida, and the West Indian island of Grenada; France cedes Louisiana to Spain. |
| 1768 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Russo-Turkish War begins; it ends in 1774 with Russia gaining a foothold on the coast of the Black Sea. |
| 1772 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Austria, Prussia, and Russia conduct the First Partition of Poland. In 1793 the Second Partition occurs, and by the Third Partition in 1795, Poland ceases to exist as a state. |
| 1775 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The American War of Independence begins; efforts on behalf of the American colonists, especially their naval building program, eventually bankrupt the French state. |

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| 1780 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Russia, Denmark, and Sweden form the League of Armed Neutrality to thwart British aggression on the high seas. |
| 1781 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• French minister of finance Jacques Necker publishes <i>Compte Rendu</i>, a record of governmental accounts. |
| 1787 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The French Assembly of Notables refuses to accept taxation reform. |
| 1788 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Whig politicians begin to challenge the “rotten borough” (an election district that has fewer inhabitants than other election districts with the same voting power) system in the British Parliament.• The British establish a penal colony at Port Jackson in New South Wales (present-day Sydney, Australia). |
| 1789 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A French mob storms the Bastille, and the French Revolution begins. |
| 1790 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• British statesman Edmund Burke writes <i>Reflections on the Revolution in France</i>, a conservative denunciation of the French Revolution. |
| 1791 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Louis XVI attempts to flee France rather than participate in a constitutional monarchy. |
| 1792 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• French Revolutionary forces defeat an invading Austrian-Prussian army at Valmy. |
| 1793 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Reign of Terror under the dictatorship of the Committee of Public Safety begins in France. Louis XVI is executed, and by the next year approximately twenty-eight thousand people are killed by the guillotine for alleged treason. |
| 1795 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The five-person Directory becomes the executive body of the French government. |
| 1799 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• General Napoleon Bonaparte, a Corsican by birth, takes control of the French government by becoming First Consul. |

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