

Chapter Outline: The Reformation

The following annotated chapter outline will help you review the major topics covered in this chapter.

I. The Early Reformation

A. The Christian Church in the Early Sixteenth Century

1. People of all social groups devoted an enormous amount of their time and income to religious causes and foundations.
2. Many people were also highly critical of the Roman Catholic Church and its clergy, whose prestige had been damaged by the papal conflict with the German emperor Frederick II, the Babylonian Captivity, the Great Schism, and the fifteenth-century popes' concentration on artistic patronage and building up family power.
3. People's anticlericalism was concentrated primarily on three problems: clerical immorality, clerical ignorance, and clerical pluralism.
4. Although many priests, monks, and nuns lived pious lives of devotion and service, others neglected the rule of celibacy, drank or gambled, were barely literate, and did not understand the meaning of the words of Mass.
5. Many clerics held several benefices (or offices) simultaneously but seldom visited the benefices, let alone performed the attendant spiritual responsibilities.
6. Instead, they collected revenues from the benefices and hired a poor priest to fulfill the spiritual duties of a particular local church.
7. The clergy were exempt from defending the city and paying taxes, and city governments were determined to integrate them into civic life by reducing their privileges and giving them public responsibilities.

B. Martin Luther

1. Much of the church's dramatic changes in the sixteenth century flowed out of the personal religious struggle of a German university professor and priest, Martin Luther (1483–1546).
2. Luther graduated from the University of Erfurt with the intention of studying law and then pursuing a legal career and public office.
3. Instead, a sense of religious calling led him to join the Augustinian friars, be ordained a priest in 1507, and earn a doctorate of theology, after which he served as professor of the Scriptures at the University of Wittenberg from 1512 until his death in 1546.
4. Martin Luther was a very conscientious friar, scrupulous in his observance of religious routine but anxious about sin and his ability to meet God's demands.
5. Luther's study of Saint Paul's letters in the New Testament led him to the belief that salvation and justification come through faith, which is a free gift of God's grace, not the result of human effort, and that God's word is revealed only in Scripture, not in the traditions of the church.
6. At the same time that Luther was engaged in scholarly reflections and professorial lecturing, Pope Leo X authorized the sale of a special Saint Peter's indulgence to finance his building plans in Rome.
7. An indulgence was a piece of parchment, signed by the pope or another church official, that substituted a virtuous act (done by Christ, the apostles, or the saints in their lives) from the treasury of merit for penance or time in purgatory.
8. Luther was severely troubled that many people believed they had no further need for repentance once they had purchased indulgences.
9. In 1517, in a letter to Archbishop Albert stating his "Ninety-five Theses on the Power of Indulgences," Luther argued that indulgences undermined the seriousness of penance, competed with the preaching of the Gospel, and downplayed the importance of charity in Christian life.
10. Luther's theses were quickly printed, first in Latin and then in German translation, and Luther was ordered to come to Rome.
11. Instead, Luther engaged in formal scholarly debate with Johann Eck, a representative of the church, at Leipzig in 1519, where he refused to take back his ideas and continued to develop his calls for reform.

12. He published these ideas in pamphlets, and his theological issues became interwoven with public controversies about the church's wealth, power, and basic structure.
13. The papacy responded with a letter condemning some of Luther's propositions, ordering that his books be burned, and giving him two months to recant or be excommunicated.
14. When Charles V held his first diet, or assembly, as emperor in 1521 in the city of Worms and summoned Luther to appear, Luther refused to recant.
15. Throughout central Europe, other individuals began to preach and publish against the existing doctrines and practices of the church, drawing on the long tradition of calls for change as well as on Luther.

C. Protestant Thought

1. The Swiss humanist, priest, and admirer of Erasmus, Ulrich Zwingli (1484–1531), was convinced that Christian life rested on the Scriptures, which were the pure words of God and the sole basis of religious truth.
2. Like Luther, he went on to attack indulgences and clerical celibacy, and then went even further in criticizing the Mass and monasticism.
3. In his gradual reform of the church in Zurich, Zwingli had the strong support of the city authorities, who resented the privileges of the clergy.
4. The followers of Luther, Zwingli, and others who called for a break with Rome came to be called Protestants, a name derived from a group of reforming German princes who protested the decisions of the Catholic majority at the Diet of Speyer in 1529.
5. Protestants held that salvation comes by faith alone, irrespective of good works or the sacraments: God, not people, initiates salvation.
6. For Protestants, authority rested in the Bible alone, which meant that, of the church's sacraments, only baptism and the Eucharist have scriptural support.
7. Protestants held that the church is a spiritual priesthood of all believers, not a hierarchical institution headed by the pope in Rome, and argued that every person should serve God in his or her individual calling.
8. The Colloquy of Marburg, summoned in 1529 to unite Protestants, reached agreement on almost every issue except an important one concerning the Eucharist, or communion.
9. Luther believed that Christ is really present in the consecrated bread and wine as a result of God's mystery, whereas Zwingli understood Christ to be present in spirit among the faithful but not actually in the bread and wine.

D. The Appeal of Protestant Ideas

1. Educated people and many humanists were much attracted by Luther's idea of a simpler personal religion based on faith and of the centrality of the Scriptures in the liturgy and in Christian life.
2. The Protestant insistence that everyone should read and reflect on the Scriptures attracted literate and thoughtful city residents.
3. Scholars in many disciplines have attributed Luther's fame and success to the invention of the printing press, which rapidly reproduced and made known his ideas.
4. Equally important was Luther's incredible skill with language, as seen in his two catechisms and in the hymns he wrote.
5. Luther's dialect of German became the standard written version of the German language because of his translation of the New Testament into German in 1523.
6. Both Zwingli and Luther knew that it was essential to gain the acceptance of the political authorities in order for reforms to become permanent.
7. Luther worked closely with political authorities in his territory, demanding that German rulers reform the papacy and its institutions and instructing all Christians to obey their secular rulers.
8. Individuals may have been convinced of the truth of Protestant teachings by hearing sermons or reading pamphlets, but a territory became Protestant when its ruler, whether a noble or a city council, brought in a reformer or two and took action against the church.

E. The Radical Reformation and the German Peasants' War

1. While Luther and Zwingli worked with political authorities, some individuals and groups sought instead to create a voluntary community of believers separate from the state, as they understood it to have existed in New Testament times.
2. Religious radicals were often pacifists and refused to hold office or swear oaths, and both Protestant and Catholic authorities felt threatened by the social, political, and economic implications of their religious ideas, and by their rejection of a state church.
3. Crop failures in 1523 and 1524 aggravated the poor economic condition of many German peasants who, aggrieved by nobles' burdensome rents, made demands they believed conformed to the Scriptures, citing Luther and other radical thinkers.
4. Although Luther initially sided with the peasants, his aim of freedom from Roman church authority did not include opposition to legally established secular powers.
5. Convinced that rebellion would hasten the end of civilized society, Luther wrote the tract *Against the Murderous, Thieving Hordes of the Peasants*.
6. More than seventy-five thousand peasants were killed as the nobility ferociously crushed the revolt of the German Peasants' War of 1525 and strengthened their own authority.

F. Marriage and Sexuality

1. Luther and Zwingli both believed that a priest's or nun's vows of celibacy went against human nature and God's commandments, and that marriage brought spiritual advantages.
2. Luther married a former nun, Katharina von Bora (1499–1532), and Zwingli married a Zurich widow, Anna Reinhart (1491–1538); they and the wives of other Protestant reformers created a new and respectable role for themselves, that of the pastor's wife.
3. Protestant reformers believed that a proper marriage reflected both the spiritual equality of men and women as well as the social hierarchy of husbandly authority and wifely obedience.
4. Protestants followed the scholastic theologians' idea that women were to be subject to men and should be cheerful, not grudging, in their obedience.
5. Because Protestants saw marriage as a contract in which each partner promised the other support, companionship, and the sharing of mutual goods, marriages that did not have these elements might only be remedied by divorce, a marked difference from Catholic doctrine.
6. Protestants, who also believed marriage was the only proper remedy for lust, uniformly condemned prostitution, closing brothels and setting harsh punishments for prostitution.
7. The Protestant Reformation clearly had a positive impact on marriage, but its impact on women was more mixed.
8. The Reformation generally brought the closing of monasteries and convents, which eliminated many literary, artistic, medical, or administrative avenues for women who could not or would not marry.

II. The Reformation and German Politics

A. The Rise of the Habsburg Dynasty

1. The course of the Reformation was shaped by the election of the Habsburg prince Charles V (r. 1519–1556) as emperor of the Holy Roman Empire and by the political relationships surrounding it.
2. The Holy Roman emperor Frederick III acquired a small amount of territory and a great deal of money with his marriage to Princess Eleonore of Portugal in 1452.
3. Frederick's son Maximilian married Europe's most prominent heiress, Mary of Burgundy, in 1477, a union that merged the rich and powerful duchy of Burgundy to the Austrian house of Habsburg, already the strongest ruling family in the empire.
4. Further unions between Maximilian's children and the children of Ferdinand and Isabella meant that their grandson Charles V (1500–1558) fell heir to a vast and incredibly diverse collection of states and peoples, each governed in a different manner and held together only by the person of the emperor.

B. Religious Wars in Switzerland and Germany

1. Almost everyone believed that the presence of a faith different from that of the majority represented a political threat to the security of the state; few believed in religious liberty.
2. Luther's appeal to national feeling influenced many rulers otherwise confused by or indifferent to the complexities of the religious matters.
3. Some German rulers were sincerely attracted to Lutheran ideas, but more important to many other rulers was that the rejection of Roman Catholicism and adoption of Protestantism would mean the legal confiscation of lush farmlands and rich monasteries, as well as greater independence from the emperor.
4. Charles V was a vigorous defender of Catholicism, so it is not surprising that the Reformation led to religious wars.
5. In Switzerland, some of the thirteen cantons remained Catholic while others became Protestant, and in the late 1520s the two sides went to war.
6. After Zwingli was killed on the battlefield in 1531, both sides agreed to a treaty that allowed each canton to determine its own religion and ordered each side to give up its foreign alliances, a policy of neutrality that has been characteristic of modern Switzerland.
7. To halt the spread of religious division, Charles V called an Imperial Diet in 1530, where the Protestant princes presented the Lutheran statement of faith, later called the Augsburg Confession, to the emperor.
8. When Charles refused to accept it and ordered all Protestants to return to the Catholic Church, the Protestant territories in the empire formed a military alliance.
9. At first the emperor could not respond militarily because he was in the midst of a series of wars with the French: the Habsburg-Valois wars (1521–1559).
10. When fighting did begin in 1546, Charles was initially successful, which alarmed both France and the pope, who did not want Charles to become more powerful.
11. Finally, in 1555 Charles agreed to the Peace of Augsburg, which permitted the political authority in each territory to decide whether the territory would be Catholic or Lutheran.
12. There was no freedom of religion within the territories, and dissidents had to convert or leave.
13. Religious refugees became a common feature on the roads of the empire.
14. With no further hope of uniting his empire under a single church, Charles V abdicated in 1556 and moved to a monastery, transferring power over his holdings in Spain and the Netherlands to his son Philip and his imperial power to his brother Ferdinand.

III. The Spread of Protestant Ideas

A. Scandinavia

1. The first area outside the empire to officially accept the Reformation was the kingdom of Denmark-Norway under King Christian III (r. 1536–1559).
2. Powerful urban groups often flaunted their wealth by commissioning works of art in early Renaissance Italy.
3. In northern Norway and Iceland, which Christian also ruled, reactions were more violent, and Lutheranism was only gradually imposed on a largely unwilling populace.
4. In Sweden, Gustavus Vasa (r. 1523–1560) came to the throne during a civil war with Denmark.
5. Gustavus then took control of church personnel and income, and Protestant ideas spread, though the Swedish church did not officially accept Lutheran theology until later in the century.

B. Henry VIII and the Reformation in England

1. England's break with Rome arose out of King Henry VIII's (r. 1509–1547) desire for a new wife, though ultimately his own motives also combined personal, political, social, and economic elements.
2. Henry's marriage to Catherine of Aragon had produced only one living heir, a daughter, Mary, so in 1527 Henry appealed to the pope to have the marriage annulled so that he could marry Anne Boleyn, who he hoped would give him a son.

3. Pope Clement VII—under pressure from Charles V, who was the nephew of Catherine of Aragon and thus was vigorously opposed to an annulment—took no action on Henry's appeal.
4. Henry used Parliament to remove the English church from papal jurisdiction and to make himself the supreme head of the church in England.
5. Some opposed the king and were beheaded, among them Thomas More, the king's chancellor and author of *Utopia*.
6. When Anne Boleyn failed twice to produce a male child, Henry VIII charged her with adulterous incest and had her beheaded in 1536.
7. His third wife, Jane Seymour, gave Henry the desired son, Edward, but she died in childbirth.
8. Although the English church retained such traditional Catholic practices and doctrines as confession, clerical celibacy, and transubstantiation, Henry dissolved the English monasteries because he wanted their wealth.
9. The redistribution of these lands strengthened the upper classes and tied them to both the Tudor dynasty and the new Protestant Church.
10. New bureaucratic machinery was needed to manage the formerly monastic lands, so Henry's chief minister, Thomas Cromwell, reformed and centralized the king's household, the council, the secretariats, and the Exchequer.
11. Most clergy and officials accepted Henry's moves, but in 1536 popular opposition in the north led to the Pilgrimage of Grace, a massive rebellion that proved the largest in English history.
12. The "pilgrims" eventually accepted a truce, but their leaders were arrested, tried, and executed.
13. Loyalty to the Catholic Church was particularly strong in Ireland.
14. Most of the Irish people remained Roman Catholic even after the Irish parliament severed ties with Rome and established the Church of Ireland, thus adding religious antagonism to the English-Irish ethnic hostility that had existed for centuries.

C. Upholding Protestantism in England

1. During the reign of Edward VI (r. 1547–1553), Archbishop Thomas Cranmer simplified the liturgy, invited Protestant theologians to England, and prepared the first *Book of Common Prayer* (1549).
2. Mary Tudor (r. 1553–1558), the devoutly Catholic daughter of Catherine of Aragon, rescinded the Reformation legislation of her father's reign and restored Roman Catholicism.
3. Following Mary's death, Elizabeth (r. 1558–1603), Henry's daughter with Anne Boleyn, who had been raised a Protestant, inaugurated the beginnings of religious stability.
4. Elizabeth shrewdly chose a course between the extremes of the Catholics who wanted a Roman Catholic ruler and the Puritans who wanted all Catholic elements of the Church of England eliminated.
5. Referring to herself as the "supreme governor of the Church of England," she required her subjects to attend services in the Church of England but did not interfere with their privately held beliefs.
6. The Anglican Church, as the Church of England was called, moved in a moderately Protestant direction—conducting services in English, allowing clergy to marry—but with a hierarchical structure and elaborate services.
7. In 1587, Mary, Queen of Scots, Elizabeth's Catholic cousin and next in line to the throne, became implicated in a plot to assassinate Elizabeth, a conspiracy that had the full backing of Spain's Philip II.
8. When the English executed Mary, the Catholic pope urged Philip to retaliate, which he attempted to do by sending a vast fleet across the English Channel to attack England.
9. On May 9, 1588, the Spanish Armada met an English fleet of ships that were smaller, faster, and more maneuverable and carried greater firing power.
10. A combination of storms and squalls, spoiled food and rank water, and inadequate Spanish ammunition gave England the victory and enhanced English national sentiment.
11. The defeat of the Spanish Armada prevented Philip II from reimposing Catholicism on England by force, but the war between England and Spain dragged on for years.

D. Calvinism

1. As a young man John Calvin (1509–1564) studied law, which had a decisive impact on his mind and later his thought.
2. In 1533 he experienced a religious crisis and, as a result, converted to Protestantism.
3. Calvin believed that God had specifically selected him to reform the church, and beginning in 1541, he worked assiduously to establish a Christian society in Geneva ruled by God through civil magistrates and reformed ministers.
4. The cornerstone of Calvin's theology, embodied in *The Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1536), was his belief in the absolute sovereignty and omnipotence of God and the total weakness of humanity.
5. Calvin ascribed to the theological principle called predestination: Men and women cannot actively work to achieve salvation; rather, God in his infinite wisdom decided at the beginning of time who would be saved and who damned.
6. Instead of leading to pessimism, predestination served as an energizing dynamic for the Calvinist, who believed the redemptive work of Christ had saved him or her.
7. In his reform of Geneva, Calvin understood the importance of institutions, and he established the Genevan Consistory, a body of laymen and pastors that was charged with regulating citizens' conduct, which it did with severity.
8. Between 1542 and 1546 alone, seventy-six persons were banished from Geneva by the Consistory, and fifty-eight were executed for heresy, adultery, blasphemy, and witchcraft.
9. Calvinism became the compelling force in international Protestantism, spreading throughout the continent of Europe
10. John Knox (1505?–1572) dominated the reform movement in Scotland and was determined to establish a state church there and structure it after the model of Geneva, where he had studied and worked with Calvin.
11. Knox persuaded the Scottish parliament to end papal authority and instead establish governance by presbyters, or councils of ministers.
12. The Presbyterian Church of Scotland was strictly Calvinist in doctrine and emphasized preaching.

E. The Reformation in Eastern Europe

1. Most Czechs in Bohemia in the fifteenth century had adopted the ideas of Jan Hus, and the German emperor had been forced to recognize a separate Hussite church.
2. In 1533 he experienced a religious crisis and, as a result, converted to Protestantism.
3. Luther's ideas took root in Germanized towns in Poland-Lithuania but were opposed by King Sigismund I (r. 1506–1548) as well as by ordinary Poles, who held strong anti-German feeling.
4. The Reformed tradition of John Calvin, with its stress on the power of church elders, appealed to the Polish nobility.
5. Doctrinal differences among Calvinists, Lutherans, and other groups prevented united opposition to Catholicism, and by 1650 Poland was again staunchly Roman Catholic.
6. Hungary's experience with the Reformation was even more complex: Lutheranism was spread by Hungarian students who had studied at Wittenberg, but its status as "the German heresy" was an issue until the Ottoman sultan Suleiman crushed the Hungarians in 1526 and divided the Hungarian kingdom into three parts.
7. In the face of Turkish indifference to the religious conflicts of Christians, many Magyar (Hungarian) nobles accepted Lutheranism.
8. The majority of people in Hungary were Protestant until the late seventeenth century, when Hungarian nobles recognized Habsburg (Catholic) rule and Ottoman Turkish withdrawal in 1699 led to Catholic restoration.

IV. The Catholic Reformation

A. Papal Reform and the Council of Trent

1. The papal court of Pope Paul III (pontificate 1534–1549) became the center of the reform movement rather than its chief opponent, as he and his successors supported improvements in education for the clergy, the end of simony, and stricter control of clerical life.
2. In 1542 Pope Paul III established the Holy Office, with jurisdiction over the Roman Inquisition, which had the power to arrest, imprison, and execute suspected heretics.
3. Local authorities afforded them no protection in a culture where tradition sanctioned the practice of slavery.
4. The decrees of the Council of Trent reaffirmed the seven sacraments, gave equal validity to the Scriptures and to tradition as sources of religious truth and authority, and tackled disciplinary matters such as pluralism, simony, and the sale of indulgences.
5. For the first time, great emphasis was laid on preaching and instructing the laity, especially the uneducated. For the first time, great emphasis was laid on preaching and instructing the laity, especially the uneducated.
6. The Council of Trent stipulated that for a marriage to be valid, the marriage vows had to be made publicly before a priest and witnesses.
7. The doctrinal and disciplinary legislation of Trent strengthened Roman Catholic faith, organization, and practice.

B. New Religious Orders

1. The Ursuline order of nuns, founded by Angela Merici (1474–1540), attained enormous prestige for the education of women.
2. The Society of Jesus, or Jesuits, founded by Ignatius Loyola (1491–1556) played a powerful role in strengthening Catholicism in Europe and spreading the faith around the world.
3. After being wounded in battle, Loyola spent a year in seclusion, prayer, and asceticism, gaining insights that went into his great classic, *Spiritual Exercises* (1548).
4. Loyola gathered a group of six companions and in 1540 secured papal approval of the new Society of Jesus, whose goal was “to help souls.”
5. The Society of Jesus developed into a highly centralized, tightly knit organization that vowed special obedience to the pope.
6. With flexibility and the willingness to respond to the needs of time and circumstance, the Jesuits achieved phenomenal success, carrying Christianity to India and Japan before 1550 and to Brazil, North America, and the Congo in the seventeenth century.
7. The Jesuits brought southern Germany and much of eastern Europe back to Catholicism.
8. Jesuits also exerted great political influence in their role as confessors and spiritual directors to kings.

V. Religious Violence

A. French Religious Wars

1. In 1559, France and Spain signed the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis, which ended the long conflict known as the Habsburg-Valois wars.
2. True peace was elusive, however, and over the next century religious differences led to riots, civil wars, and international conflicts.
3. In a treaty with the papacy known as the Concordat of Bologna, King Francis I (r. 1515–1547) secured for the French crown the right to appoint all French bishops and abbots, ensuring a rich supplement of money and offices.
4. With this control over appointments and a vested financial interest in Catholicism, French rulers had no need to revolt against Rome.
5. Calvinism drew converts from among reform-minded members of the Catholic clergy, industrious city dwellers, and artisan groups.

6. The number of French Calvinists (called Huguenots) grew to perhaps one-tenth of the French population after the death of Henry II (r. 1547–1559).
7. Some of the French nobility took advantage of the monarchical weakness of Henry's sons and adopted Protestantism as a religious cloak for their independence.
8. Armed clashes between Catholic royalist lords and Calvinist antimonarchical lords, each believing that the others' books, services, and ministers polluted the community, occurred in many parts of France.
9. The marriage ceremony of the king's sister Margaret of Valois to the Protestant Henry of Navarre was intended to help reconcile Catholics and Huguenots, but it actually sparked the Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre on August 24, 1572, in which Huguenot wedding guests and other Protestants were killed.
10. Religious violence spread to the provinces, where thousands were killed, and led to a civil war that dragged on for fifteen years.
11. Agriculture in many areas was destroyed; commercial life declined severely; and starvation and death haunted the land.
12. A small group of moderates of both faiths, called politiques, believed that only the restoration of strong monarchy could reverse the trend toward collapse.
13. One of those politiques, Henry of Navarre, became Henry IV (r. 1589–1610) and converted to Catholicism.
14. In 1598 Henry IV issued the Edict of Nantes, which granted liberty of public worship to Huguenots in 150 fortified towns and helped restore internal peace in France.

B. The Netherlands Under Charles V

1. In the Netherlands, what began as a movement for the reformation of the church developed into a struggle for Dutch independence.
2. The provinces that compose present-day Belgium and the Netherlands were each self-governing, and each enjoyed the right to make its own laws and collect its own taxes.
3. In the Low Countries as elsewhere, corruption in the Roman church and the critical spirit of the Renaissance provoked pressure for reform.
4. Calvinism's intellectual seriousness, moral gravity, and emphasis on any form of labor well done appealed to urban merchants, financiers, and artisans, but Calvinism also tended to encourage opposition to political authorities that were judged to be ungodly.
5. Spanish authorities attempted to suppress Calvinist worship and raised taxes in the 1560s, which caused rioting and the destruction of thirty Catholic churches in Antwerp.
6. Philip II sent twenty thousand Spanish troops under the duke of Alva, who opened his own tribunal, the "Council of Blood," and executed fifteen hundred men in 1568.
7. Between 1568 and 1578 civil war raged in the Netherlands between Catholics and Protestants and between the seventeen provinces and Spain.
8. Eventually the ten southern provinces, the Spanish Netherlands (the future Belgium), came under the control of the Spanish Habsburg forces.
9. The seven northern provinces, led by Holland, formed the Union of Utrecht and in 1581 declared their independence from Spain.
10. Hostilities didn't end until 1609 when Spain agreed to a truce that recognized the independence of the United Provinces.

C. The Great European Witch-Hunt

1. Increasing persecution for witchcraft actually began before the Reformation in the 1480s, but it became especially common about 1560, and the mania continued until roughly 1660.
2. Religious reformers' extreme notions of the Devil's powers and the insecurity created by the religious wars contributed to this increase.
3. Both Protestants and Catholics tried and executed witches, with church officials and secular authorities acting together.
4. In the later Middle Ages, witches were no longer understood simply as people who used magical power

to get what they wanted, but rather as people used by the Devil to do what *he* wanted.

5. Witchcraft was thus spiritualized, and witches became the ultimate heretics, enemies of God.
6. Scholars estimate that during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, somewhere between 100,000 and 200,000 people were officially tried for witchcraft, and between 40,000 and 60,000 were executed; 75 to 85 percent of those executed were women.
7. In both classical and Christian traditions, women were associated with nature, disorder, and the body, all of which were linked with the demonic.
8. Legal changes from an accusatorial legal procedure to an inquisitorial procedure in which legal authorities rather than individuals actually brought the charges made people much more willing to accuse others.
9. Inquisitorial procedure involved intense questioning of the suspect, often with torture.
10. Most witch trials began with a single accusation in a village or town.
11. Once a charge was made, the suspect was brought in for questioning, and confession was generally followed by execution.
12. Larger witch-hunts, or witch panics, often occurred after some type of climatic disaster and were most common in the part of Europe that saw the most witch accusations in general: the Holy Roman Empire, Switzerland, and parts of France.
13. As new ideas about science and reason in the seventeenth century brought doubts about whether witches could make a pact with the Devil and about whether torture would ever yield truthful confessions, prosecutions for witchcraft became less common and were gradually outlawed.