

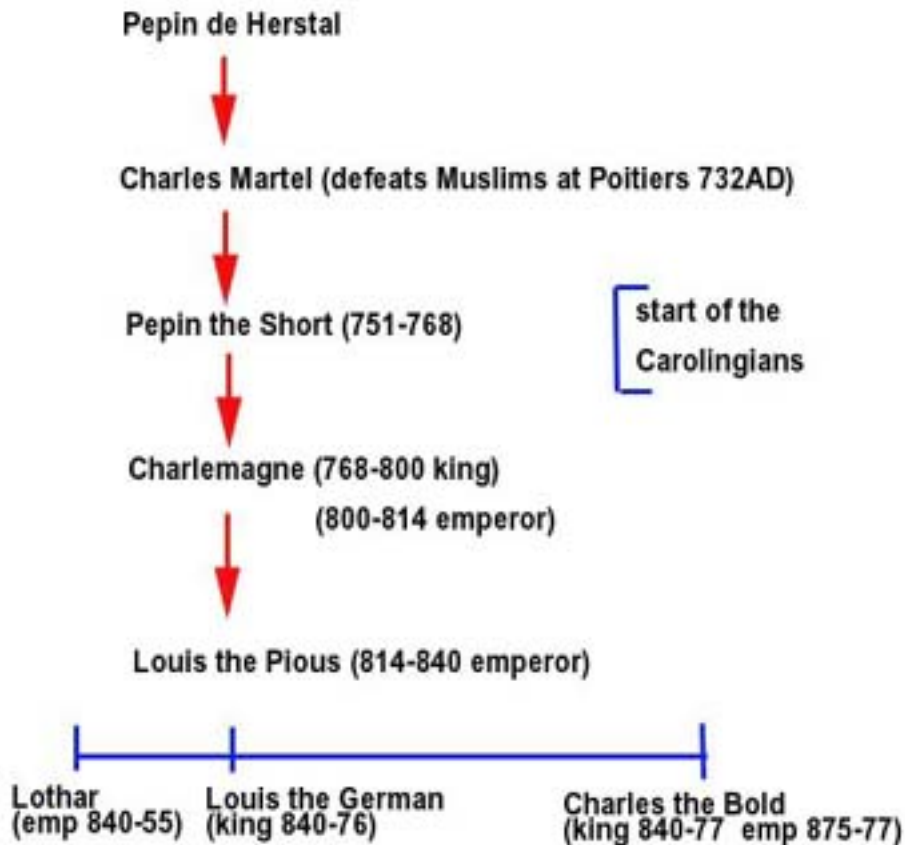
Name	Class
Date	Teacher

Charlemagne

Introduction

In 476 the Western Roman Empire collapsed. Gaul was gradually conquered by Clovis, leader of the Franks (481–511). He gradually converted most of Gaul to Christianity.

At his death in 511 the kingdom was divided between his sons (a Frankish custom). These kings form the Merovingian dynasty (name of Clovis's grandfather). Clovis's descendants ruled until 751 when the dynasty was replaced by the Carolingian dynasty.



Charlemagne (768–814) was the most powerful of the Carolingians. In 800 he was crowned emperor by the pope. We will find out more about him later. However, after Charlemagne's death his empire was quickly destroyed. In 843 the kingdom was divided into three at the Treaty of Verdun. Charles the Bald kept Western France, Lothaire kept the title of emperor and the middle part of the kingdom, and Louis the German kept what is now known today as Germany.

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After this period there were new invasions: in the north from the Vikings (from Denmark and Norway), in the south from the Muslims and in the east from the Hungarians. By 900 western Europe was impoverished.

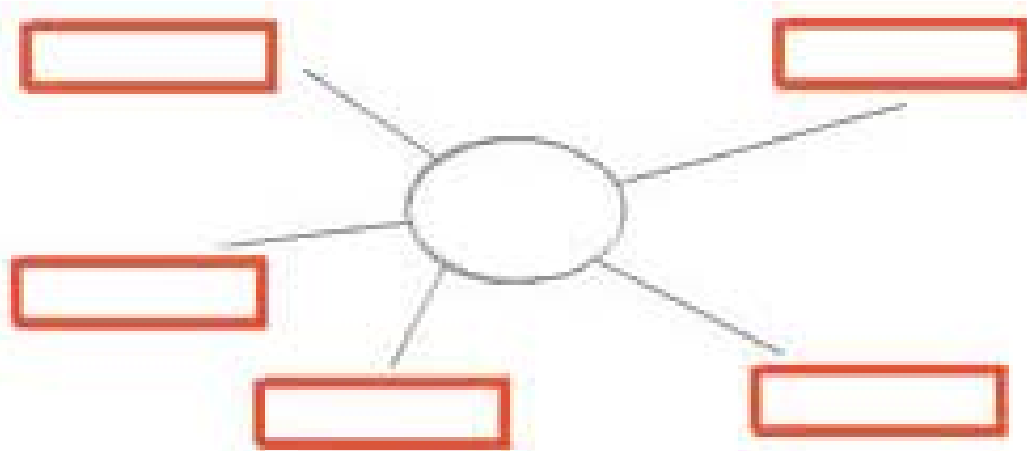


Task A

Charles was called Charlemagne or Charles the Great in Latin. The aim of this lesson is for you to explore a variety of information to try and answer the following question Does Charlemagne deserve the title "Charles the Great"

Stage One

Before you look at the evidence, try to think about what makes "great" king. Work with a partner and discuss the qualities that a great king should have. Once you have agreed write down your five qualities below



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Stage Two

Look at the list below showing some of Charlemagne's achievements (successes). Organise them into the following categories

MILITARY (M)	CULTURAL (C)	RELIGIOUS (R)
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1	He enlarged his kingdom by defeating many different tribes.	M
2	He was crowned emperor by the Pope in December 800.	
3	He protected Christian lands from attack by Muslim and Slav invaders.	
4	He developed an administrative system where the country was divided into 300 earldoms. Each was ruled by an earl who implemented his decisions.	
5	He spread Christianity to new areas.	
6	New churches were built facing east or Jerusalem.	
7	A magnificent palace was built for Charlemagne at Aix la Chapelle.	
8	He set up schools and encouraged the clergy to study holy texts and ancient writers.	
9	He set up a famous school at Aachen and encouraged the spread of writing.	
10	He sent officials (two by two), called missi dominici, throughout the kingdom to listen to legal cases, spread his law and set up schools.	
11	He hired great scholars such as Alcuin to work at Aachen.	
12	He won many battles.	
13	Alcuin and priests copied many old books and saved these classics from being lost.	
14	He defeated the Avars in 791	



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Stage Three



So far we have looked at Charlemagne's successes. Look at the statements below

1.	Charlemagne was not always successful in battle.
2.	Some of his changes were only partially successful.
3.	Charlemagne acted cruelly at times.
4.	Charlemagne did not manage to solve all the country's problems.
5.	Some of his achievements (successes) did not last long.

These statements challenge the idea that Charlemagne was great. However, we need to find some evidence to support them. Look at the sentences below and match them to the statements above.

		supports statement
A.	The Basques destroyed a large part of his army at Roncevaux in 778.	1
B.	The conquest of Saxony took over thirty years.	
C.	At the end of the 8th century many areas of the country were still empty and covered in forest.	
D.	In Saxony those who refused to convert to Christianity were killed.	
E.	He fought the Moors of Spain for 20 years but only managed to capture a small area of land beyond the Pyrenees.	
F.	He had wanted all boys to have an education but at the end of his reign only monks and priests had received schooling.	
G.	Trade was still very localised at the end of his reign.	
H.	At the Treaty of Verdun (843) his empire was divided into three and weakened	
I.	By 900 Western Europe was very poor.	
J.	He killed the Saxon chiefs.	3