

CHAPTER

7

SECTION 1

Section Summary

THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES

After the Roman empire fell, Western Europe was cut off from advanced cultures in Asia, overrun by invaders, and divided. The period from 500 to 1000 is sometimes called the Dark Ages. However, it was a time when Greco-Roman, Germanic, and Christian traditions slowly blended to create a new, **medieval** civilization called the Middle Ages.

In the early Middle Ages, Germanic tribes, such as the **Franks**, divided Western Europe. In 486, **Clovis**, king of the Franks, conquered Gaul, later to become France. Clovis followed his own customs but also kept Roman customs and converted to Christianity. In the 600s, Islam began in Arabia. Muslims, or believers in Islam, created a huge and expanding empire. When a Muslim army crossed into France, **Charles Martel** and his Frankish warriors fought them at the **battle of Tours** in 732. Muslims ruled in Spain, but did not advance farther into Western Europe.

In 768, Charles Martel's grandson, also named Charles, became king of the Franks. He built an empire covering what are now France, Germany, and part of Italy, and he was known as **Charlemagne**, or Charles the Great. Later, the pope crowned him the new emperor of the Romans. Charlemagne worked, in his 46-year rule, to unite his kingdom by fighting off invaders, conquering peoples, spreading Christianity, and further blending Germanic, Roman, and Christian traditions. He set up an orderly government, naming nobles to rule locally. Charlemagne regarded education as another way to unify his kingdom. He brought back Latin learning across his empire and encouraged the creation of local schools.

After Charlemagne's death in 814, his sons battled for power and his grandsons split up the empire. About 900, nomads called **Magyars** settled in what is present-day Hungary. They overran Eastern Europe and moved into Germany, France, and Italy, but they were eventually pushed back. Also, in the late 700s the **Vikings** from Scandinavia began to invade towns along coasts and rivers in Europe. The Vikings were skilled sailors and explorers. They settled and mixed with local peoples in England, Ireland, northern France, and parts of Russia, bringing their culture with them.

Review Questions

1. Name three things that Charlemagne did to unify his kingdom.

2. What happened to Charlemagne's empire after his death?

READING CHECK

What traditions blended to form the new, medieval culture?

VOCABULARY STRATEGY

What is the meaning of *unify* in the underlined sentence? The word *uni-* is Latin for "one." Use this information on the origins of *unify* to figure out its meaning.

READING SKILL

Identify Main Ideas Find the sentence at the beginning of the Summary that represents the main idea of the whole section on the early Middle Ages. Write the sentence on the lines below.

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Focus Question: How did Germanic tribes divide Western Europe into small kingdoms?

A. As you read this section in your textbook, use the table below to identify main ideas for each red heading.

Early Medieval Europe	
Heading	Main Idea
Western Europe in Decline	
The Rise of the Germanic Kingdoms	
The Age of Charlemagne	
Europe After Charlemagne	

B. As you read "The Age of Charlemagne," use the table below to identify main ideas about Charlemagne's rule.

The Age of Charlemagne	
Heading	Main Idea
A New Emperor of the Romans	
Creating a Unified Christian Empire	
A Revival of Learning	