

# UNIT 5

# THE

# CONTEMPORARY

# AGE



# 1. The Contemporary age. the 19th century

The Contemporary age started with the French Revolution in 1789 and still continues today.

The three most important events of the 19th century were: French revolution, Industrial revolution and changes in society.

## 2. War of independence



The War of Independence. This painting shows Captains Daoiz and Velarde fighting in Madrid against the French army.

At the beginning of the 19th century, the empire of the French emperor Napoleón Bonaparte extended through Europe.

- In 1808, Napoleon's army invaded Spain. This invasion caused the War of Independence against France. The Spanish won the war in 1814.

- In 1812, during the war, the **first Spanish Constitution** was written in Cádiz. It proposed the rights of the citizens, including the right to vote.

- **The reign of Fernando VII (1814 -1833)** began after the War of Independence. All rights and liberties of civilians were suspended. Fernando VII abolished the Constitution of Cadiz, and established an absolute monarchy. He persecuted the Liberals who tried to take power



### 3. Spain after Fernando VII

When Fernando VII died in 1833, Isabel II came to the throne. During her reign, the constitutional monarchy was consolidated. In other words, the power of the queen was limited by a constitution. Isabel II reigned from 1833 to 1868. During these years there was confrontation between the **liberals** (in favour of the rights and liberties of civilians) and **absolutists or conservatives** (against the rights and liberties of civilians).

- In 1873 the First Republic was formed. In a republic the head of state is elected by the citizens.
- In 1874 the monarchy returned with Alfonso XII. A new Constitution was written.



Celebration of the Constitution of Cadiz. The Constitution was approved on 19<sup>th</sup> March, 1812, the day of Saint Joseph. It became known as 'la Pepa', which is a nickname for 'Joseph'.

### 4. Society in 19th century

Society in the 19th century was divided into three social classes, based on wealth.

**The upper class** was the wealthiest. It was made up of aristocrats and the bourgeois.

**The middle class** consisted of less prosperous merchants, small landowners, and professionals, such as doctors, lawyers and engineers.

**The lower class** was the poorest. It was made up of factory workers, and peasants, who worked on the land of the large landowners. The servants who worked for the upper class, and beggars were also members of this class.



## 5. Spain from 1900 to 1975

Spain did not participate in the World Wars. But during this time there were many changes in Spain.

- Alfonso XIII was king during the first years of the 20th century. In 1931, he left the country and the Second Republic was formed.
- The Civil War began in 1936 when soldiers rebelled against the Republic. The war lasted until 1939. At the end of the war a military dictatorship, led by General Francisco Franco, was formed. It lasted until 1975. During the dictatorship there was no democracy, there were no political parties and no freedom of expression.



## 6. Spain from 1975 to today. Transition and democracy

The transition was the period of political changes that were made to move from the dictatorship of General Franco toward democracy. This process began in 1975 and ended in 1982.

In 1975, Juan Carlos I was named the King of Spain. There were many reforms: political parties were legalised and Spain became a democracy. In 1977, the first democratic elections were celebrated. This change from dictatorship to democracy is called the Transition.

- In 1978, the present Constitution was approved. It guarantees our rights and liberties and recognises democracy as our system of government.
- In 1986, Spain entered the European Economic Community which is now called the European Union.
- In 2002, Spain and many other countries of the European Union adopted the Euro as their common currency. They are known as the Euro Area.



Equipo de

King Juan Carlos I signing the Constitution.



Adolfo Suarez was named President of the Government by King Juan Carlos I.

A. Egea 2015

# ACTIVITIES



## 1 Fill in the blanks

The Contemporary age started with the \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ and still continues today.

The three most important events of the 19<sup>th</sup> century were: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

## 2.- Complete the text about the reign of Fernando VII. Use the words.

persecuted

coup

jail

Cuba

independence

Argentina

disorder

abolished

Fernando VII took power and \_\_\_\_\_ the Constitution of Cadiz. In its place, he established an absolute monarchy. The Liberals were against him, and tried to take power with a \_\_\_\_\_. They failed, and Fernando VII \_\_\_\_\_ them.

Many Liberals left Spain to avoid \_\_\_\_\_. Abroad, the American colonies struggled for \_\_\_\_\_. This was easier because there was such political \_\_\_\_\_ in Spain. \_\_\_\_\_ was the first colony to win independence, and by 1824, all except \_\_\_\_\_ were independent.

## 3.- Complete the table to describe 19th century society. Use the words.

peasants - aristocrats - small landowners - servants - doctors  
factory owners - factory workers - prosperous merchants - lawyers

Upper class	Middle class	Lower class

**4.- Complete the definitions.**

- a. In a dictatorship, supreme power is held by a \_\_\_\_\_ and the people cannot \_\_\_\_\_.
- b. In a republic, supreme power is held by a \_\_\_\_\_ and the people can \_\_\_\_\_.
- c. In a constitutional monarchy, supreme power is held by a \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_, but it is limited by a \_\_\_\_\_.

**5.- Complete the sentences about the Spanish Civil War.**

- a. General Francisco Franco led a coup against the \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_.
- b. This led to the Spanish Civil War which lasted until \_\_\_\_\_.
- c. The Spanish people were divided into \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
- d. The \_\_\_\_\_ supported General Franco, the \_\_\_\_\_ did not.
- e. The \_\_\_\_\_ won the war.
- f- Franco died on \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ became the head of state

**6.-Match the sentence parts to explain the transition to democracy after the dictatorship.**

a. Juan Carlos I appointed...

economic problems and terrorist attacks.

b. Suarez legalised political parties and unions and implemented...

the Central Democratic Union.

c. Suarez won the elections, standing for...

strikes and protests.

d. There were serious...

Adolfo Suarez as President of Spain.

e. The people were unhappy, so there were...

various reforms.