

Textbook Discussion Questions
Chapter 6: Europe and the Modern World

What Is Europe?

1. In what ways can Europe be defined?
2. After World War II, Europe divided politically into two camps: Western Europe and Eastern Europe. How were the two halves aligned with the rest of the world? What alliances were created at this time?
3. What did the textbook say the economic definition of Europe has become synonymous with?
4. List the three major language groups in Europe and provide an example of a language that comes from each group.
5. What are some of the countries whose inclusion in “Europe” is debated? What features would tend to make them European? What would tend to exclude them from that definition?

Europe’s Contribution to Liberal Democracy

1. What are some of the institutions necessary for a liberal democracy?
2. The author of the chapter argues that, despite serious problems such as ethnic strife, global warming, and terrorism, nevertheless, “This should be an era of great confidence in the future of the world.” What reason does he cite?
3. How does American liberalism differ from European classical liberalism?
4. Why does the textbook say that Western peoples should think twice before claiming the unrivaled superiority of their cultural and political development?
5. The book describes several threats to liberal democracy in Europe after WWI. What were they?
6. What agreements have the member countries of the European Union consented to on paper? Which of these declarations have come to pass, and which are still contested?

Nationalism and National Conflict in Modern Europe

1. How are the terms “nation” and “state” connected? Though they are often used synonymously, how are they different in meaning?
2. Why does the author state that “Nation is a loaded term”?
3. How has nationalism been a source of lethal conflict in Europe in recent years?
4. Which do national myths appeal to: its citizens’ reason or their emotions? Why, in your opinion?
5. What national myths or other nationalistic ideologies can you recall from your education as a child? How did you come to see yourself as an American—or whatever nationality you claim, if you are from another country?

Wilson’s National Self-Determination: Poland and Yugoslavia

1. What was Woodrow Wilson’s idea of national self-determination?
2. For how long does the author say Poland ceased to exist as a state? What did a famous Polish poet, Adam Mickiewicz, exhort Poles to pray for at this time?
3. What difficulties arose from the creation of the state of Yugoslavia? When was “an uneasy peace” finally reached?

4. What do you think could or should be done to solve the ethnic tension in the world? What would be the greatest difficulty in implementing such a plan?

Basque, Irish Republican, and Islamic Terrorism

1. According to your textbook, when do nationalists turn to asymmetrical or guerilla-style warfare?
2. Who are the Basques? From whom did they seek their freedom? What led to diminishing terrorist attacks by Basque separatists?
3. What were the “Troubles”? How were they ended?
4. How have Europeans tended to deal with Islamic terrorism differently than the U.S.? Why? Which approach do you think is better? Why?