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## Unification of Germany : 1848-71

1. Like Italy, Germany was also divided into a number of states. At the end of the Napoleonic wars (1792-1815) there were 38 independent states in Germany in which Prussia was the most powerful.
2. In 1815, the German states along with Austria were organised into a Germanic confederation.
3. In 1848 revolts occurred in every German state and the rulers were forced to grant democratic constitutions. To unite Germany and to frame a constitution for the united Germany, a constituent assembly met in Frankfurt.
4. The Frankfurt Assembly proposed the unification of Germany as a constitutional monarchy under the king of Prussia who would become the emperor of Germany. However, the king of Prussia declined the offer. Repression soon followed.
5. With the failure of the revolution of 1848 to unify Germany, one phase in the struggle for unification came to an end.
6. Now Germany was to be unified not into a democratic country by the efforts of revolutionaries but by the rulers into militaristic empire. The leader of this policy was Bismarck who belonged to a Prussian aristocratic family. He wanted to achieve the unification of Germany under the leadership of the Prussian monarchy.
7. Bismarck described his policy of unification as one of 'blood and iron'. The policy of blood and iron meant a policy of war.
8. He defeated Austria and dissolved the Germanic confederation. Thus Austria was separated from other German states. In place of old confederation, he united 22 states of Germany into North German Confederation in 1866.
9. The unification of Germany was completed as a result of Prussia.
10. France War (1870) in which the French emperor Louis Bonaparte was defeated and captured. This war enabled Bismarck to absorb the remaining German states into a united Germany.
11. The formal ceremony at which William I, the king of Prussia, took the title of German Emperor was not held on the German soil. It took place at Versailles in France, in the palace of the French kings.

12. After unification, Germany emerged as a very strong power in Europe.

