

Rise of Austria and Prussia

Between 1618 and 1648, the nations of Europe fought each other in the **Thirty Years' War**. What started as a fight between Catholics and Protestants soon became a political battle. Armies burned villages and destroyed cities. One third of the population of the Germanic speaking states died. When the Thirty Years' War finally ended, France had gained large territorial areas from both Germany and Spain. The Netherlands and Switzerland became independent states. The war left the Germanic region divided into more than 360 states. The **Hapsburg (Habsburg) family**, rulers of the Holy Roman Empire lost a great deal of land and power.

After the Thirty Years' War, two main powers emerged. Although the war weakened the Hapsburgs of Austria, they still wanted a strong empire. They conquered Bohemia, Hungary, and parts of Poland and Italy. However, the Hapsburgs were unable to completely control their empire. Around the same time, the **Hohenzollern family** built a powerful Protestant nation called **Prussia**.

By 1750, Austria, Prussia, France, England, and Russia were the strongest nations in Europe. These nations tried to maintain the balance of power. Two or more nations formed alliances to keep another nation from becoming too powerful. To maintain this balance of power, nations often reverted to war.



AUSTRIA UNDER THE HAPSBURGS FAMILY (HAPSBURGS)

- Works to build a unified state
- Conquers Bohemia, Hungary, and parts of Poland and Italy
- Maria Theresa becomes a powerful ruler
- Wins support of the people
- Organizes the government
- Improves tax collection
- Taxes the Nobles and the Clergy
- Defends the empire against Prussian invaders.

PRUSSIA UNDER THE HOHENZOLLERN FAMILY

- United Territories across Germany
- Establishes a strong government
- Takes power away from the nobles
- Hohenzollerns become Absolute Rulers
- Create one of the strongest armies in Europe
- Frederick II becomes the most powerful of the families' rulers
- Frederick II attacks Austria and seizes Silesia
- Fights many wars seizing large territorial areas for Prussia



Maria Theresa of Austria



Frederick II of Prussia
(Frederick the Great)