In 1830, there was another revolution in France. The 'legitimate' Bourbon monarchy, which had been established in 1814-15, was overthrown, and Louis-Philippe came to power. He was regarded as a 'middle-class' king, and he ruled with a more restricted constitution. Rather than King of France, he was King of the French, owing his legitimacy to the people rather than God. The revolution soon spread to Belgium, Poland and Italy.

Belgium

The Kingdom of the Netherlands, created in 1815, had not worked. By the 1820s, there was considerable discontent among the Belgians who resented the enforced use of the Dutch language and submission to Dutch officials. They also protested over what they considered to be unfair taxation, and the whole issue was made worse by the fact that the southern Belgians were Catholic while the Dutch were Calvinists. In August 1830, a riot in Brussels turned into a full-scale revolt when Dutch troops tried to restore order. By September, most of Belgium was in revolt and a provisional government was set up. The King of the Netherlands' appeal for help from Concert of Europe was quite legitimate as the rebellion was undermining one of the settlements of 1815.

The gravest fear of the other powers was of intervention by the new 'liberal' French government in support of fellow Catholic Belgians. The eastern powers were horrified at this upset to the settlement and the effect of revolution generally. Since the Napoleonic wars had partly been fought to drive the French from this area, the prospect of armies once more travelling north was most alarming. Although their reasoning might be different, the British were just as concerned as the eastern powers. They did not want the Belgian ports falling into French hands. There was also the complication that Prussia might, based on the terms of the Vienna Settlement, feel obliged to go to the aid of the King of the Netherlands.

In August 1830, the French declared that they would intervene in Belgium if Prussia were to send troops to help the King of the Netherlands. The crisis the other powers so desperately wanted to avoid looked imminent.

How were the problems resolved?

By October 1830, the Belgians claimed their independence. To diffuse the situation, the Prussians and French agreed to a policy of non-intervention. In November, a conference of ambassadors took place in London, between British, French and Dutch representatives. They advised that the old frontiers of the United Provinces (Holland) and the Austrian Netherlands (Belgium) be re-established. The Dutch were, in any case, still hopeful of restoring control, while Russia, hostile to the revolution, was threatening to send an army to crush it.

Matters grew tense in the spring of 1831, when the French called up 80,000 men. However, Russia's inclination to act was curbed by the revolution in Poland from November 1830 to October 1831. Once again, Austria could not act alone, and Prussia was anxious to avoid confrontation with Britain.

Meanwhile, the arguments continued. It was obvious that the union could not be maintained, but the French argued that Belgium should not have a settlement it disliked forced upon it. Britain, for its part, was horrified by a French proposal that the Duke de Nemours, Louis-Philippe's second son, should be made king. Fortunately for international peace, Louis-Philippe chose to decline the offer and by April 1831 agreed to accept Leopold of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, uncle of the future Queen Victoria and a neutral candidate. He swore allegiance to the constitution in front of the Saint Jacob's Church at Coudenbergh Place in Brussels on 21 July 1831. This day became the Belgian national holiday.

However, Europe's fears were still to come about. The Dutch chose to reject the terms and abandoned the armistice in August 1831. The Dutch promptly defeated the Belgians, so the French army marched north and by 20 August had driven the Dutch from Belgium. This led to new articles of separation in October 1831.

The Dutch still remained hostile and another French force had to be sent, with the consent of powers in December 1832, to evict them from Antwerp. Not until May 1833 did the King of the Netherlands accept a truce, and even then he withheld his signature from the final treaty until May 1839 when the financial pressure grew too great. In this, a smaller Luxembourg was given to Holland and the neutrality of Belgium was guaranteed as permanent by the Great Powers. This was an important revision of the 1815 settlement, and remarkably was solved without a major war.
Poland

Events in Poland followed a very different path from those in Belgium. In November 1830, following the events in France, the Tsar prepared for intervention there by ordering a mobilisation in Poland. However, the Warsaw garrison, whose young officers and cadets had been attracted by liberal, nationalist ideas, was sympathetic to the changes in France. Joined by students from Warsaw and Vilna, they disobeyed Russian orders and rose in revolt against Russian rule. By January 1831 the Polish Diet had proclaimed the deposition of Nicholas I and had, in effect, declared war on Russia.

The rebels enjoyed some early successes because the Polish army outnumbered the Russian forces in Poland, but they failed to attract the peasants. These were more hostile to the Polish landowners who now led the rebellion, than to the Russians, who had treated them relatively leniently. Division in the rebel faction also weakened the opposition. So by late Spring 1831, the Russians had begun to restore control. By September, they retook Warsaw, and Poland was placed under military rule. The use of the Russian language was imposed and the separate Polish Diet, the army and universities were abolished.

The Poles had expected support from the west, particularly as their claims to independence had greater historical backing than those of the Belgians, whose wishes had been granted. However, their position in the east of Europe, away from British and French influence and where British sea power was of no relevance, meant they were deserted. The French felt some obligation, but the new regime could not afford to take risks. The Russian army was too formidable, so the French merely condemned the action and proposed a conference of powers to urge Russia to make concessions. Viscount Palmerston was sympathetic to the Poles, but Britain was too committed to the events in western Europe. So the Poles were, therefore, left to their own devices.

Italy

It was the French example, again, which inspired the 1831 risings in Modena, Parma and the Papal States. In the expectation of French help against Austria, liberals in Modena pressed for constitutional reform and some form of Italian union in February 1831. The revolt spread to nearby Parma, while a provisional liberal government established itself in the Papal States. However, the risings were uncoordinated and not supported by the masses. The rival Italian city states would not work together and the French were unwilling to help. When Metternich tried to find out the French position, he received a message suggesting that France was only prepared to defend its immediate neighbours, Belgium, Piedmont, the Rhineland and Spain, from intervention by other powers. Reassured, Metternich felt safe enough to send in Austrian troops. They successfully occupied Modena on 4 March 1831 and Bologna on 21 March.

Activity - Copy and complete the following table:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Revolutions of 1830-31</th>
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<tr>
<td>Dates</td>
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<td>Belgium</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
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(Right) Klemens Wenzel Nepomuk Lothar, Fürst von Metternich-Winneburg zu Beilstein

Known to history as Prince von Metternich