

JOAN OF ARC: THE MAID OF ORLÉANS

THE 19-YEAR-OLD PEASANT
WHO SAVED A NATION



In 1429, a teenage girl who could not read or write convinced a King to give her an army. She was not a knight, a noble, or a man. She was a peasant from a village on the edge of a war-torn kingdom. In just over a year, she changed the course of European history.



Timeline Sword

1413 – 1430

1412 – 1431

1423 – 1429

1430 – 1431



A Kingdom in Ruin

The Situation Before 1412

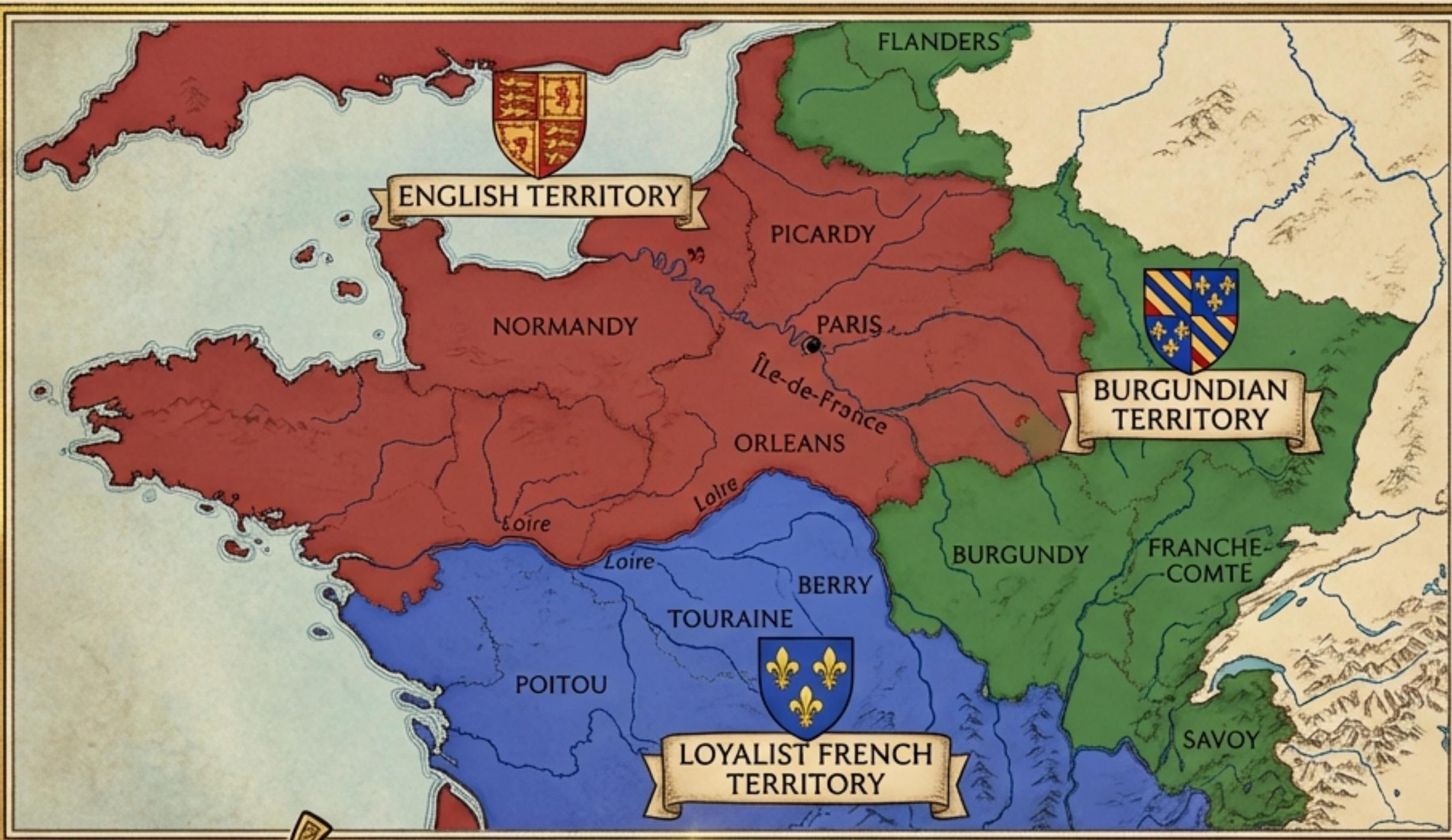
Body Text

By the time Joan was born, the Hundred Years' War between France and England had already lasted 90 years.

- The English controlled most of northern France, including Paris.
- The Burgundians (French allies of the English) attacked from within.
- The Crown was in chaos. King Charles VI was mentally ill, and his son, the 'Dauphin' Charles, was uncrowned and losing hope.

Key Insight Box

The French people were demoralized. They believed the war was lost.



Before 1412

The Girl from Domrémy

c. 1412 – 1424

Body Text

Joan was born around January 6, 1412, in Domrémy, a village on the border of Champagne and Lorraine.

- Family: Daughter of farmers. She spun wool and tended to animals.

- Education: She was illiterate ("did not know A from B") but deeply religious.



Before 1412

c. 1412 – 1424

The Voices in the Garden

Body Text

At age 13, Joan began hearing voices and seeing a "great light" in her father's garden. She identified them as St. Michael the Archangel, St. Catherine, and St. Margaret.

The Mission: The voices gave her a terrifying command: She must leave home, drive the English out of France, and see the Dauphin crowned King at Reims.



Did You Know? Science & History

Historians and doctors have debated these visions for centuries. Some modern researchers suggest medical conditions like "Idiopathic Partial Epilepsy with Auditory Features," while others point to her specific knowledge of complex politics as proof of her sanity. To Joan, the voices were undeniably real and divine.



Before 1412

1425 (Age 13)

Crossing the Threshold

Body Text

In May 1428, she traveled to the stronghold of Vaucouleurs. The commander, Robert de Baudricourt, initially mocked her, telling her cousin to "take her home to her father and give her a good whipping."

The Turning Point: Joan persisted. She correctly predicted a French defeat at the Battle of the Herrings days before the news arrived. Convinced, Baudricourt granted her an escort.



The Disguise: For her dangerous 11-day journey through enemy territory, Joan cut her hair short and put on men's clothes. This was a safety measure against assault, but it would later be used against her in trial.

c. 1412 - 1424

1425 (Age 13)

1428 - February 1429

“The Test at Chinon”



Joan arrived at the Royal Court in Chinon. Legend says Charles VII disguised himself in the crowd to trick her, but Joan immediately identified him and bowed at his feet.

- **The Secret:** She reportedly told the King a secret only he and God knew, which won his trust.
- **The Examination:** Trust wasn't enough. Joan was sent to Poitiers to be examined by theologians. They questioned her for weeks to ensure she wasn't a witch. Their verdict: She was a “good Christian” and “humble virgin.”



January – March 1429

February – March 1429

April – May 1429

April – June 1429

“The Maid of Orléans”



The Crisis: Orléans had been under English siege for months. If it fell, the rest of France would follow.

The Action: Joan arrived on April 29 in white armor on a black horse. She didn't just boost morale; she led the charge.

The Wound: On May 7, during the assault on the fortress of Les Tourelles, Joan was shot with an arrow between her neck and shoulder. She pulled it out herself, wept, prayed, and returned to the fight.

The Victory: On May 8, the English retreated. The siege was lifted in just 9 days.

January - March 1429

April - May 1429

April - Feb 1429

April - March 1429



The Week of Miracles



Strategy: Unlike the cautious French generals, Joan demanded immediate attack. She led the "Loire Campaign" to clear the road to Reims.



Meung-sur-Loire



Beaugency



A crushing defeat for the English. 2,000 English soldiers were killed; the French lost barely 100. It was the reverse of Agincourt.



The King Crowned



When asked why her banner was given a place of honor at the coronation, she replied:

"It had shared in the pain, it was only right it should share in the honor."

The army marched deep into enemy territory to reach Reims, the traditional city of coronation. Towns opened their gates without a fight.

Charles VII was crowned King of France. The mission given by the voices was accomplished.



Sword

January - March 1429

April - May 1429

June 1429

July 17, 1429

The Tide Turns



The Betrayal: The Burgundians sold her to the English for 10,000 livres. King Charles VII, whom she had crowned, made no attempt to ransom or rescue her.

Politics get in the way. The King hesitated and preferred truces. The assault on Paris failed, and Joan was wounded again.

Capture at Compiègne (May 23, 1430): During a skirmish the drawbridge to the town was raised, trapping her outside. She was pulled from her horse and captured.



Sword

January - March 1429

April - May 1429

June 1429

September 1429 - May 1430



The Trial of Condemnation

Held in Rouen, led by pro-English Bishop Pierre Cauchon. It was a political trial disguised as a religious one.

The Charges: 70 charges were eventually reduced to 12, focusing on Heresy and Cross-dressing.

January - May
1431

The Defense

Joan outsmarted the theologians. When asked if she was in God's grace (a trap: "yes" is pride, "no" is admission of guilt), she answered: "If I am may God put me there; and if I am, may God so keep me."

Verdict:

Condemned as a "relapsed heretic" for wearing men's clothes in prison.

January - May 1431

Martyrdom at Rouen



The Old Market Place in Rouen. Joan was tied to a tall pillar. She was only 19 years old.

May 30, 1431

She asked for a cross; an English soldier made her one out of two sticks. She kissed it and put it in her dress.

As the fire rose, she screamed "Jesus!" repeatedly.

Her ashes were thrown into the Seine River so no relics could be kept.



The Verdict Reversed



After the French won the war, Joan's mother, Isabelle Romée, petitioned the Pope to clear her daughter's name.

1456 (25 Years Later)



The Nullification Trial

The Church reinvestigated the case.

They found the original trial was tainted by fraud, malice, and procedural errors.

Verdict:

Joan was declared innocent and a martyr. The original verdict was burned.

Saint Joan



In 1920, Pope Benedict XV officially declared her a Saint.

1920 – Present

- Patron Saint of France and soldiers.
- National Symbol: Used by all sides in France as a symbol of patriotism.
- Feminist Icon: A woman who shattered the gender roles of the Middle Ages to lead an army.

Comprehension Quiz

Test Your Knowledge

1 How old was Joan when she began hearing voices?

2 What 3 saints did Joan claim to speak to?

3 Why did Joan cut her hair and wear men's clothes?

4 What sign did Joan give the King at Chinon to prove herself?

5 How long did it take Joan to lift the Siege of Orléans?

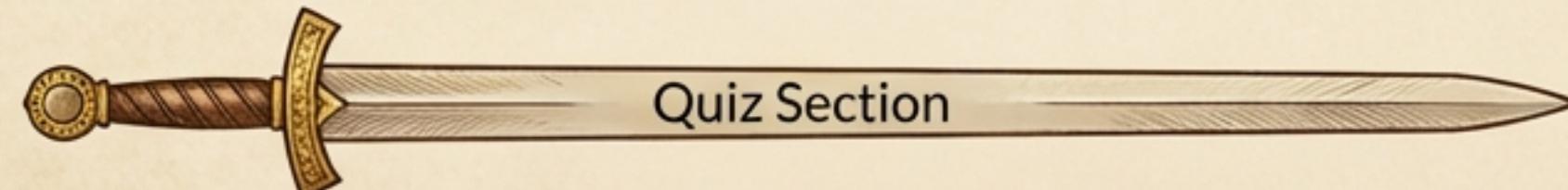
6 Where was Charles VII crowned King?

7 Who captured Joan at Compiègne?

8 What was the main legal charge used to sentence Joan to death?

9 What happened in 1456, 25 years after her death?

10 In what year was she made a Saint?



Quiz Section