BIOGRAPHY

Charlemagne

What would you do if you ruled much of Europe?

When did he live? 742–814

Where did he live? Charlemagne, or Charles the Great, ruled most of what are now France and Germany. He lived mainly in his capital, Aachen, near the modern city of Cologne, Germany.

What did he do? Through his wars of conquest, Charlemagne united many of the tribes of central and western Europe into a single empire.

Why is he important? While Europe was still reeling from the collapse of Rome, Charlemagne brought people together. He helped Europeans realize that they shared common bonds, such as Christianity, that linked them. In other words, he helped people see themselves as Europeans, not members of tribes.

Drawing Conclusions How did this change in view affect later European society?

KEY EVENTS

- **771** Charlemagne becomes king of the Franks.
- **773** Charlemagne becomes an ally of the pope after rescuing him from invaders.
- **794** Charlemagne makes Aachen his capital.
- **800** Pope Leo III names Charlemagne emperor.

This painting shows Charlemagne being crowned by the pope in AD 800.