The Age of Absolutism Vs. Limited Government in Europe 1600-1715

Essential Questions:
- What were the defining characteristics of an absolute monarchy?
- How did the Constitutional monarchy in England differ from France’s?
- What were the sources of political instability which threatened the reigns of European monarchs?

Power Centralized in One Absolute Monarch

- Protestant Reformation: weakened the power of the Catholic Church and its leaders, thus Prives
- Belief in Divine Right: belief that a monarch gets his or her power from God
- Belief in government having total or unlimited power = absolutism
Europe during the Age of Absolutism

The Thirty Year’s War and the Path to Absolute Power

- **The Thirty Years Wars** was largely caused by religious conflict between Catholics and Protestants.
- Most of the war was fought in Germany and involved most European powers, with the exception of England.
- **Treaty of Westphalia** (1648)—ended the war, recognized Calvinism as among the official religions, and divided up the Holy Roman Empire into more than 300 separate states.
- Changed the way countries dealt with one another – national sovereignty was respected for the first time.
- England and France emerged as the two dominant powers of the 17th Century and led the revolutions in science, philosophy and political theory.
- England and France, however, developed two different types of government.
Absolute Monarchs

From: France

Cardinal Richelieu
is advisor for French king Louis XIII.

Wants to weaken the Hapsburg
rulers of HRE, French enters 30 Years War on side of Protestantism.

Louis XIV wants to consolidate all power in himself. L'etat c'est moi = Laws by state.

1. Build Versailles.
2. Overrid Edict of Nantes.
3. Create Riga system (1st, 2nd, 3rd)

From: Russia

Peter the Great

At end of war, princes of German city-states become independent of Hapsburg family.

Russia is not like Western Europe.
1. Orthodox Church
2. Language not from Latin
3. Styles different

Peter the Great wants to westernize
Russia, Takes trip around W. Europe.

From: Prussia

Frederick the Great

War makes Prussians want strong military for protection.

Frederick the Great become ruler of Prussia. He wants to centralize all power in himself.

Keeps building up military to make Prussia stronger.

The Paths to Absolute Power

What limits were on their power?

No limits – they can do anything they want.
Absolutism in France

- **Absolutism** meant that the monarch had absolute power and control over his subjects.
- **Louis XIV**, the “Sun King,” epitomized the absolutist belief that the monarchy personified the state.
- Absolutism was created under **Cardinal Richelieu** who secularized France and fostered loyalty to the French state.

**Young Louis XIV**
Absolutism in France cont.

- **Cardinal Richelieu** centralized power by alienating the nobility
- The greatest threat to the monarchy was the nobility
- Monarchs created standing armies for the first time
- Louis XIV built the Palace of Versailles as a testament to his power and used it to gain control of the nobility.

**Government under Louis XIV**

- It is often seen as one of the first modern governments.
  - its system of councils to control the real ruling of the country
  - Intendants - royal officials in provinces gives central control of the entire country.
  - Its establishment of a standing army which Louis used in a series of expensive wars. This gives him great power.
Influence of Louis XIV's Government and Style

• Versailles and Louis' government were admired in Europe and it was copied everywhere; French became the language of many courts - eg Russia (ref. Tolstoy: *War and Peace*). Copycat Palaces built all over Europe: Vienna/Schonbrunn, St. Petersburg, Berlin.

Fiscal Policy--Mercantilism

• Important both in explaining how Europe came to expand overseas, and certain elements in the outbreak of the French Revolution.
• Jean-Baptiste Colbert (1619–1693) - Finance minister. Colbert's aim was to have a trade balance in France's favor.
• Mercantilism –to create a favorable balance of trade, especially with colonies
  - It centralizes economy + close government control.
  - Relieves the need for direct taxes. Problem: Nobles would not pay tax. This was not solved.
  - France remained under-taxed.
  - Expansion abroad - emphasis on exports and getting bullion into the country.
  - Trade is needed especially by absolutist governments as it enables indirect taxes to be raised - which are necessary without parliaments.
  - Expansion of Mercantile empires in India, North America and above all the West Indies.
King Louis XIV and the French Royal Debt

Using the information provided below, answer the following questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>U.S. National Debt (in billions of dollars)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>$7,574</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>$5,232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>$4,141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>$3,214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>$2,503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>$2,065</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Debt of the Royal Family, 1643–1715

A bar graph showing the debt of the Royal Family from 1643 to 1715 in 1980 U.S. dollars.

1. What was the lowest debt figure for the French from 1643–1715? In which year did this debt level occur?

2. What was the highest debt figure for the French from 1643–1715? In which year did this debt level occur?

3. What was the highest debt figure for the U.S. from 1950–2000? In which year did this debt level occur?

4. How much did the French debt increase from 1699 to 1715?

5. How much did the American debt increase from 1950 to 2000?

6. Compare France's highest debt level to America's. Whose is higher? By how much?

7. What might explain France's sudden rise in debt between 1699 and 1715? Using your textbook identify any major events (their dates and their impact) that may explain such a drastic rise.

Versailles:
Home of the "Sun King"
Versailles and Ritual

• *Louis XIV* used to bring all the important nobility to his court." This deprived them of power - as did a very expensive lifestyle. [cf. Philip II and the Escorial]

- Note etail of manners and ritual. Different ways to open a door etcetera. Aim was to impress. Half Louis' income went on Versaille but it gave him power.

Louis XIV’s Carriage
The Bourbon Family Crest

L'ouis XIV as Apollo
L'ouis XIV as Apollo

by Jean Nocret, 1670

The Sun Symbol
Palais de Versailles

Palais de Versailles—The Orangery
Gardens at Versailles

Fountains, Fountains, and More Fountains!
And More Fountains!

And Even More Fountains!!!
The King’s Bed

The Queen’s Bed

Louis XIV and Religion

- The Position of the Church as State within a State
  - Divine Right was important in Louis' ideas.
  - It is important to realize the power of the Church in France. It was like a state within a state
  - largely independent of Rome
  - tax free
  - Church Courts had power over parts of life; for instance marriage and wills.
- Louis supported the Church fervently.
Organ in Louis XIV's Chapel

Louis XIV’s Opera Stage
Louis XIV Furniture

The Gallery of Battles
**Versailles Statistics**

- 2,000 acres of grounds
- 12 miles of roads
- 27 miles of trellises
- 200,000 trees
- 210,000 flowers planted every year
- 80 miles of rows of trees
- 55 acres surface area of the Grand Canal
- 12 miles of enclosing walls
- 50 fountains and 620 fountain nozzles
- 21 miles of water conduits
- 3,600 cubic meters per hour: water consumed
- 26 acres of roof
- 51,210 square meters of floors
- 2,153 windows
- 700 rooms
- 67 staircases
- 6,000 paintings
- 1,500 drawings and 15,000 engravings
- 2,100 sculptures
- 5,000 items of furniture and objects d’art
- 150 varieties of apple and peach trees in the Vegetable Garden

**Versailles Grande Gallerie**

- Daily routines at Versailles were exploited by Louis XIV
- The nobility competed against each other to perform menial tasks for the king
Palace Gardens

Louis XIV and the Arts

- Moliere, France’s greatest playwright in the 17th Century
- Mocked and alienated the aristocracy in his plays
- Received support and funding from Louis XIV
Baroque Art

- Stylistically complex
- Meant to evoke emotion by appealing to the senses
- Bernini’s sculptures captured figures in the state of intense emotion
- Rembrandt van Rijn rejected traditional arrangements for portraits by not giving equal prominence to each member of the group

When does France’s Absolute Monarchy End?

- During the period known as the Enlightenment in the 18th Century, several philosophers in England and France would develop ideas about the natural rights of citizens and the division of powers and responsibilities in government.
- Enlightenment ideas would inspire radicals in France to overthrow the monarchy under Louis XVI, marking the beginning of the French Revolution in 1789.
  - More details on this topic are to come….
Absolutism in Eastern Europe

- **Tsar Peter I** (Peter the Great) of Russia
- Modernized Russia through Westernization
- Taxed his subjects heavily to pay for his projects
- Killed 1000 members of streltsy when they tried to depose him
Each set of pictures represents a different absolute monarch. Write which monarch each set represents and tell why.