

# Absolute Power



Absolute monarchs (remember: monarch = king) ruled in Europe in the 1700s. They dominated everywhere EXCEPT England and Holland. Both England and Holland DID NOT give total power to their kings. They had parliaments.



## Rewrite

1. England and Holland were Absolute monarchies.
2. All of Europe was ruled by Absolute monarchies.

## Complete

3. What made England and Holland different? (Hint: They had...)

The most famous Absolute monarchs are:

(scroll down)

## Louis XIV from France



Louis XIV called himself the “Sun King.”

He had a “waking up” ceremony called la leve. He was given breakfast in bed, shaved and combed, and then walked in a parade from his bedroom thru the Hall of Mirrors every day.



Peter the Great = Russia

Peter the Great wanted Russia to be like the rest of Europe.

So, one thing he did, was to make people cut their beards. He also made people smoke more. And drink more British beer.



## Frederick the Great = Prussia

Frederick the Great was from a tiny part of “Germany” called Prussia. He loved the army so much that his little part of “Germany” will control the rest of Germany with his army in 50 years!

## Complete

1. Tell me one thing about Louis XIV:
2. Tell me one thing about Peter the Great:
3. Tell me one thing about Frederick the Great:

## Rewrite

4. Louis XIV was from Prussia.
5. Peter the Great was from France.
6. Frederick the Great was from Russia.

People gave away their freedom to the Absolute rulers because they wanted stability and safety. The 30 Years War happened right before these guys got power. There was chaos and death. The 30 Years War killed more people than any other European war.



Mass gravesite from 30 Years War

There were two classes of people in Europe. Peasants were poor farmers. Nobles were rich landowners. Both people wanted stability. The peasants wanted to be safe from each other. And the nobles wanted to be safe from the peasants.

So, the Absolute monarchs were able to centralize their power. Centralize means to take power away from other people. The king was the central power. They had enough \$\$\$ from trade to build big armies and palaces for the first time ever.



## Rewrite

1. There were three classes of people in Europe at this time.
2. The peasants were rich.
3. The nobles were poor farmers.

## Complete

1. What is centralization of power?

Here's how centralization works. Before Absolutism, the king was in charge because the nobles allowed him to be in charge. If he made the nobles angry, the nobles would replace him with a new king.



Nobles = rich people

Now, the king builds a huge army. He takes over land. He knocks down the walls around towns and destroys nobles' castles. The king is in charge and he lets the nobles live if they are loyal to him.



The king would knock down the walls of towns and make the nobles serve him. This is in Spain. The king of Spain let these walls stay up.

## Complete

1. Who had the power before absolutism? (King or nobles)
2. Who had the power during absolutism? (King or nobles)
3. How did the king take power from the nobles? (What did he build?)
4. What did the king destroy to make sure the nobles didn't have power?

The king then did three things:

-He invited all of the nobles to be part of his government. They now worked for him. They were part of his bureaucracy. When someone works for you, they won't give you any problem.

-He raised taxes like crazy. Increased taxation gave him lots of money. He built armies and palaces with all that money.

-He told everyone he had divine right. This means that God has chosen the king. So, he can say: "I don't answer to anybody but God. Only God can judge me."

## Complete

1. Why did the king invite nobles to be part of his bureaucracy?
2. What is divine right?
3. Why did the king increase taxes? (What could he buy?)

Louis XIV, the Sun King, centralized power. Here's how:

He moved all government offices to his home. And it was a great home! Versailles palace. Google "Versailles palace" and check out the home page. It's the greatest palace in the world.



He spent billions of dollars on this place. Then, he forced nobles to live with him there. They had to serve him and wait on him. It was like the Hollywood of France. Everyone wanted to be seen here.



Peter the Great centralized power. He moved the capital of Russia from Moscow to a new place. He called the place St. Petersburg. This St. Petersburg was close to Europe, so he could trade for beer and tobacco and the latest fashions.



St. Petersburg was on the water, which is better for trade.

Remember that Peter the Great wanted Westernization. The West = Europe.  
He wanted Russians to be more like Europeans.  
He imported lots of tobacco and beer.



Russian Imperial Stout is considered one of the best beers nowadays.

He called the nobles to his palace and cut their beards off. Why?  
Because no Europeans had beards at this time.



## Rewrite

1. Louis XIV did not let nobles into Versailles.
2. When nobles came to Versailles, they could do what they want.
3. Versailles was cheap to build.
4. Peter the Great wanted Russians to be different from Europeans.
5. Westernization means being different than Europe.

## Complete

1. Why did Louis XIV invite nobles to Versailles?
2. Why did Peter the Great cut the nobles beards?
3. What is centralization of power?
4. What is Westernization?



## Peter the Great of Russia

### Westernization

- **FORCED western (European) ways on Russians**
  - nobility had to wear European clothes.
  - men had to cut off their beards.
  - women ordered to attend parties.
  - children ordered to learn math & geometry or they could not marry.
  - St Petersburg
  - Forced nobility to serve him

## Frederick the Great of Prussia

Prussia is small. They are Protestant. They are controlled by the Hohenzollern family. They are surrounded by the Catholic Empire of the Habsburgs.

- **Attacked neighboring countries, like Austria, to gain more land.**
- **Built up an army of 40,000 men (4<sup>th</sup> largest in Europe at the time).**
- **Raised taxes to pay for military.**