

Age of Reasons and Revolutions: Absolutism

SPAIN'S EMPIRE AND EUROPEAN ABSOLUTISM

Key Terms and People

Divine right idea that a ruler receives the right to rule from God

Philip II Spanish king who took control of Portugal but failed in his invasion of England

Absolute monarch king or queen with complete control

Before You Read

In the last lesson, you read about global trade resulting from the colonization of the Americas.

In this lesson, you will learn about changes occurring in Europe in the 1500s and 1600s

After You Read

Answer the questions that follow, in complete sentences, using the information from this guided reading.

A POWERFUL SPANISH EMPIRE

How did Spain's power increase and then decrease?

Charles V of Spain ruled the Holy Roman Empire and other European countries. In 1556, he left the throne and split his holdings. His brother Ferdinand received Austria and the Holy Roman Empire. His son, [1], got Spain and its colonies.

Philip II then took control of Portugal when the king of Portugal, his uncle, died without an heir. Philip also got its global territories in Africa, India, and the East Indies. When he tried to invade England in 1588, though, he failed. The defeat made Spain weaker. However, Spain still seemed strong because of the wealth—gold and silver—that flowed in from its colonies in the Americas.

GOLDEN AGE OF SPANISH ART AND LITERATURE

How did works from the golden age of Spanish art and literature reflect the values and attitudes of the period?

Spain's great wealth allowed monarchs and nobles to become patrons of artists. Two of the greatest artists of the 16th and 17th century were El

Greco and Diego Velázquez. El Greco's work reflected the religious faith of Spain during this period. The paintings of Velázquez reflected the pride of the Spanish monarchy

In literature, Miguel de Cervantes wrote *Don Quixote de la Mancha*, which ushered in the birth of the modern European novel. The novel tells the story of a Spanish nobleman who reads too many books about heroic knights.

THE SPANISH EMPIRE WEAKENS

What weakened the Spanish Empire?

Spain's new wealth led to some serious problems. The prices of goods constantly rose. Unfair taxes kept the poor from building up any wealth of their own. As prices rose, Spaniards bought more goods from other lands. To finance their wars, Spanish kings had to borrow money from banks in foreign countries. The silver from the colonies began to flow to Spain's enemies.

In the middle of these troubles, Spain lost land. Seven provinces of the Spanish Netherlands rose in protest against high taxes and attempts to crush Protestantism in the Netherlands. These seven

provinces were Protestant, whereas Spain was strongly Catholic. In 1579, they declared their independence from Spain and became the United Provinces of the Netherlands. The ten southern provinces (present-day Belgium) were Catholic and remained under Spanish control.

THE INDEPENDENT DUTCH PROSPER

Why did the Dutch prosper?

The United Provinces of the Netherlands was different from other European states of the time. It was a republic, not a kingdom. Each province had a leader elected by the people.

The Dutch also practiced religious tolerance, letting people worship as they wished. Dutch merchants established a trading empire. They had the largest fleet of merchant ships in the world.

They were also the most important bankers in Europe.

ABSOLUTISM IN EUROPE

What is absolutism?

Though he lost his Dutch possessions, Philip II continued to hold tight control over Spain. He wanted to control the lives of his people. Philip and others who ruled in the same way were called [2]. They believed in holding all power. They also believed in [3]. This is the idea that a ruler receives the right to rule from God.

Widespread unrest in Europe in the 17th century led to an increase in absolute rule, or absolutism, and its restrictions. Absolute rulers used their increased power to impose order. They wanted to free themselves from the limitations imposed by the nobility and government bodies.

4. Who was Philip II?

5. Who were some of the artists and writers of Spain's golden age?

6. Give two reasons for the success of the Dutch in trading.

THE REIGN OF LOUIS XIV

Key terms and People

Louis XIV French king who was an absolute ruler

Jean Baptiste Colbert chief minister of finance under Louis XIV

Cardinal Richelieu chief minister of France who reduced the power of the nobles

Intendant official of the French government

Skepticism belief that nothing could be known for certain

Edict of Nantes order that gave Huguenots the right to live in peace in Catholic France

War of the Spanish Succession war fought by other European nations against France and Spain when those two states tried to unite their thrones

Before You Read

In the last lesson, you were introduced to the idea of absolutism.

In this lesson, you will read about absolute power in France.

After You Read

Answer the questions that follow, in complete sentences, using the information from this guided reading.

RELIGIOUS WARS AND POWER STRUGGLES; WRITERS TURN TOWARD SKEPTICISM

What changes were occurring in France?

France was torn by eight religious wars between Catholics and Protestants from 1562 to 1598.

In 1589, a Protestant prince, Henry of Navarre, became King Henry IV. He changed religions, becoming a Catholic to please the majority of his people. In 1598, he issued an order called the [7]. It gave Huguenots—French Protestants—the right to live in peace and have their own churches in some cities.

Henry rebuilt the French economy and brought peace to the land. He was followed by his son, Louis XIII, a weak king. However, Louis had a very capable chief minister, [8]. Richelieu ruled the land for Louis and increased the power of the crown.

The cardinal ordered the Huguenots not to build walls around their cities. He also said nobles

had to destroy their castles. As a result, Protestants and nobles could not hide within walls to defy the king's power. Richelieu gave extra power to government workers who came from the middle class—reducing the power of the nobles.

French thinkers had reacted to the religious wars with horror. They developed a new philosophy called [9]. Nothing could be known for certain, they argued. Doubting old ideas was the first step to learning the truth, they said. Two important French skeptics were Michel de Montaigne and René Descartes. These writers argued that all beliefs should be questioned.

LOUIS XIV COMES TO POWER

How did Louis XIV rule?

In 1643, [10] became king at the age of four. Cardinal Mazarin, who succeeded Richelieu as minister, ruled for Louis until he was 22. Louis became a powerful ruler who had total control of France. He was determined to never let nobles challenge him.

He kept the nobles out of his councils. He gave more power to government officials called [11] and made sure that they answered only to him. He also worked hard to increase the wealth of France. His minister of finance, [12], tried to build French industry. Colbert wanted to persuade French people to buy French-made goods and not those from other countries. He urged people to settle in the new French colony of Canada in North America. The fur trade there brought wealth to France.

THE SUN KING'S GRAND STYLE; LOUIS FIGHTS DISASTROUS WARS

What changes did Louis make?

Louis XIV enjoyed a life of luxury at his court. He built a huge and beautiful palace at Versailles near Paris. He promoted art that glorified himself and strengthened his absolute rule. He made opera and ballet more popular and supported writers like Molière. Nobles had to depend on Louis's favor to advance in society.

Louis made France the most powerful nation in Europe. France had a larger population and a bigger army than any other country. However, Louis made some mistakes that later proved costly. After winning some wars against neighboring countries, he became bolder and tried to seize more land. Other nations allied to form a group called the League of Augsburg to stop France in the late 1680s. The high cost of these wars, combined with poor harvests, produced problems at home in France.

The final war fought in Louis's time was fought over succession to the throne of Spain and lasted from 1700 to 1713. [13], France and Spain attempted to set up united thrones. The rest of Europe felt threatened and joined in war against them. Both France and Spain were forced to give up some of their American and European colonies to England. England became the new rising power. France's staggering debt, high taxes, and abuses of power would eventually lead to revolution.

14. How did the monarchy get stronger in France?

15. How did Louis XIV make sure he kept his power?

16. How did Louis XIV bring disaster to France?
