

## Age of Absolutism

### Enduring Understandings

1. Prussia emerged as an important European power during the age of absolutism due to strong political, military, and economic leadership on the part of the Hohenzollern family.
  - Fredrick William est. Prussia as a great power and oversaw the military, while encouraging industry and trade
  - Fredrick William I established a highly militaristic society and the most efficient bureaucracy in all of Europe
  - Fredrick II instituted numerous important enlightened reforms
2. Absolute monarchs were responsible for many innovations in their nations, even though the basic social structures did not change.
  - Russia and Prussia were able to modernize their nations and increase militarily while social structures remained relatively unchanged (
3. Absolute monarchs used many different methods to maintain their control.
  - Louis XIV was able to maintain control by weakening the nobility through methods such as the intendant system and also through the use of the Palace of Versailles
  - Prussian rulers such as Fredrick William used serfdom to please nobles for their support of the crown (Junkers in the Prussian army)
  - Almost all the absolutist leaders used a powerful military to reinforce their power
4. The Relationship between the nobility and the monarchs varied from nation to nation.
  - While nobles in the west were weakened (France and Louis XIV), in the east, nations such as Prussia gave them high positions in order to gain their support
5. Austria, Prussia, France, Russia, and England became the strongest powers during the age of absolutism
  - Austria successfully centralized their vast holdings and secured it
  - Prussia rose to be the strongest military power and had the most efficient bureaucracy
  - France became the undisputed superpower of Europe
  - Russia dramatically improved industrially and militarily to be within the European mainstream
6. Mercantilism became the dominant economic system of absolute monarchies.
  - Due to the large amount of commercial wars, nations, especially France and England, were in need of larger revenues. They acquired such wealth through increased exports and less imports. Therefore, the state exercised heavy control of economic life in order to do so, a key factor of mercantilism.

### Essential Questions

1. Was “divine right” a legitimate basis for political power?
  - No, because it did not factor in the capability and qualification of the ruler
  - Did not consider the consent of the people (Parliament and James I/Charles I)
2. Why did Europe fail to experience peace in the decades following the Treaty of Westphalia?
  - Because even though the conflicts over religion were ended, the prevalence of commercial and power motivated disputes increased
    - Anglo Dutch Wars (commercial interests)
    - Dutch Wars of Louis XIV (competition in trade)
    - War of Spanish Succession (balance of power)
3. How did mercantilism affect European and New World Economies?

- Mercantilism allowed large influxes of wealth for countries such as Spain, Portugal, France, and England through the exploiting of commerce in colonies to benefit the mother country
  - It sparked new industries
  - Created the emergence of joint-stock companies and also stock markets
  - Sparked massive foreign trade
4. Why did Austria, Prussia, France, Russia, and England emerge as the strongest powers during the age of absolutism?
- Effective centralization and securing of holdings
    - Austria
  - Successful trade and financial policies that allowed their nations to thrive economically
    - Mercantilism
    - England's East India Company
  - Strong military powers
    - France
    - Russia
    - Prussia
5. What methods did absolute monarchs to maintain their control use?
- Weakened nobility by giving lower classes higher positions (France – Louis XIV)
    - Intendant system
    - Palace of Versailles (keep close eye on nobles)
  - Strong standing armies to create less reliance on noble or mercenary armies
  - Suppression of national assemblies (Parliament and James I/Charles I)
  - Bureaucracies being made up of officials appointed by and solely accountable to the ruler
  - Control over the church
  - Secret police to weaken opposition
6. Is absolute power every justified?
- Yes, when the methods of such rule results in beneficial change
    - Russia (Peter the Great) and Prussia (Fredrick William, Fredrick I) experienced positive industrial and military gains in result of such absolute rule

## **Constitutionalism**

### **Enduring Understandings**

1. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century the Dutch had many commercial and cultural accomplishments.
- Dutch had commercially dominated the seas with the Dutch East and West India Company.
  - In the 17<sup>th</sup> century Amsterdam was the center of financial and commerce center of Europe.
  - The Dutch culturally led the way for science and technology in agriculture.
    - Dutch enclosed fields, rotated crops, employed heavy use of manure for fertilizer, and planted a wide variety of crops.
    - Became world leaders for reclaiming wetlands through drainage.

- Were the first country to perfect paper currency and created a central bank.
2. Britain experienced a century of turmoil under the Stuarts in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century.
- Stuart Family: James I -> Charles I -> Charles II -> James II
  - During this period all rulers were having problems trying to figure out ways combine parliamentary power with monarchs power.
    - James I
      - Taxes and the way the church should go would but put him at odds with parliament and would lead to parliament dissolving
    - Charles I
      - Needed taxes and parliament would not give him any so he dissolves it into the thorough
      - Re-convened parliament because he needed more taxes but parliament said they would only if he would agree to some terms but Charles said no and disbands. (Short Parliament)
      - Charles desperate for money agrees to the demands of parliament and agrees to meet ever 3 years.
    - Charles II
      - Parliament wanted to strengthen the Anglican Church and Charles was Catholic, which led to him dissolving parliament.
    - James II
      - Wanted to re-catholicize England which led to the Glorious Revolution
3. Many political, economic, social, and religious factors led to the English Civil War and the Glorious Revolution.
- Factors leading to English Civil War-
    - Political: Since James I, Parliament and monarchs have had many disagreements over issues causing resentment.
    - Economic: James I wanted to raise taxes but Parliament would not let him.
    - Social: Parliament wanted to show monarchs that their power (power of the purse) was greater than the monarchs.
    - Religious: James I did not please parliament because they wanted to move away from the Episcopal church
  - Factors Leading to the Glorious Revolution-
    - Political: People wanted political stability after the parliament and monarchy disputes.
    - Economic: Parliament wanted more power concerning taxes over monarchy
    - Social:
    - Religious: The birth of a catholic heir to the throne of England made parliament want to instill someone else, and the reissue of the declaration of indulgences made Parliament at odds with James II.
4. Dutch and English commercial conflicts ended in disaster for the Dutch
- Because of the three Angle- Dutch wars Dutch shipping and commerce were damaged
    - English seized New Amsterdam, which was essential for Dutch commerce.

## Essential Questions

1. How did the Dutch and English come into conflict in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, & what were the results?

- How: Both were great powers in the sea with the British East India Company and the Dutch East India Company and fought for power commercially and financially.
- Results: The Dutch were damaged with shipping and commerce and turned to banking. Essentially, they were destroyed economically.

2. Should religion play a role in politics?

- Because of the Stuart Dynasty, it is clearly shown that because of religion the monarch and parliament could not agree.
  - James I couldn't figure out whether to turn church Episcopal or Presbyterian, which led to resentment.
  - Charles II had problems agreeing with parliament whether to strengthen the Anglican Church (parliament) or Catholicism.
  - James II reissued the declaration of indulgences granting freedom of worship causing hate from parliament.

3. Should a king or ruler be "above the law"?

- No, because of rulers trying to go above parliament it caused political turmoil like in the Stuart Family.
  - Charles I tried to go above the law with the period of the thorough, where he ruled by himself w/o parliament, led to his beheading.

4. What gives a ruler sovereignty?

- Divine right for a while gave rulers sovereignty, but after certain incidents like the beheading of Charles I doubt began to foment in people.
- Stability would give sovereignty.
  - Political peace between monarchs and parliament would give the people a sense of sovereignty like William of Orange and Mary.

5. What is justice?

- The quality of being fair or administering fair repercussions
  - Charles I was put to trial in the English civil war and received justice for dissolving parliament so much.