Absolute Monarchs in Europe, 1500–1800
Several countries in Europe come under the control of absolute monarchs, and Parliament challenges the monarch's authority in Great Britain.

Absolute Monarchs in Europe, 1500–1800

Section 1
Spain’s Empire and European Absolutism
During a time of religious and economic instability, Philip II rules Spain with a strong hand.

Section 1
Spain’s Empire and European Absolutism

A Powerful Spanish Empire
- Philip II begins ruling Spain and its possessions
- Philip II’s Empire
  - Philip seizes Portugal in 1580
  - Gold and silver from Americas make Spain extremely wealthy
- Defender of Catholicism
  - Philip defends Catholicism against Muslims, Protestants
  - Spanish fleet helps defeat Ottomans at Lepanto in 1571
  - Spanish Armada defeated by British in 1588

Golden Age of Spanish Art and Literature
- El Greco and Velázquez
  - El Greco uses unusual style to convey religious themes
  - Works of Velázquez show Spanish court life
- Don Quixote
  - In 1605, Don Quixote by Miguel de Cervantes is published
  - Novel marks birth of modern European novel

The Spanish Empire Weakens
- Inflation and Taxes
  - Inflation weakens Spain’s economy
  - Taxes on lower class prevents development of middle class
- Making Spain’s Enemies Rich
  - Spaniards buy goods abroad, making Spain’s enemies rich
  - Philip declares bankruptcy three times due to weak economy
- The Dutch Revolt
  - Protestants in Netherlands win independence from Spain in 1579
The Independent Dutch Prosper

**A Different Society**
- Netherlands is a republic and practices religious toleration

**Dutch Art**
- In 1600s, Netherlands becomes center of European art
- Rembrandt and Vermeer are famous Dutch painters

**Dutch Trading Empire**
- Dutch merchants engage in world trade
- Dutch have world's largest trading fleet
- Dutch replace Italians as Europe's bankers

Absolutism in Europe

**The Theory of Absolutism**
- Rulers want to be absolute monarchs—rulers with complete power
- Believe in divine right—idea that monarchs represent God on earth

**Growing Power of Europe's Monarchs**
- Decline of feudalism, rise of cities help monarchs gain power
- Decline in Church authority also increases power

**Crises Lead to Absolutism**
- The 17th century is period of great upheaval
- Monarchs impose order by increasing their own power

Section 2

**The Reign of Louis XIV**

After a century of war and riots, France was ruled by Louis XIV, the most powerful monarch of his time.

**Religious Wars and Power Struggles**

**Henry of Navarre**
- Henry ascends to French throne in 1589 and adopts Catholicism
- Issues Edict of Nantes—a declaration of religious toleration

**Louis XIII and Cardinal Richelieu**
- Cardinal Richelieu—Louis XIII's minister who rules France
- Increases power of the Bourbons by limiting Huguenots' freedom
- Also weakens power of the nobility

**Louis XIV Comes to Power**

**A New French Ruler**
- Louis XIV—the most powerful ruler in French history

**Louis, the Boy King**
- Hatred of Mazarin—young Louis’s minister—leads to riots

**Louis Weakens the Nobles’ Authority**
- Louis takes control in 1661
- Appoints intendants—government agents—to collect taxes

**Economic Growth**
- Jean Baptiste Colbert—finance minister—helps economy grow
- In 1685, Louis cancels Edict of Nantes; Huguenots flee France

**Writers Turn Toward Skepticism**

**A New Attitude**
- Skepticism—the idea that nothing can be known for certain

**Montaigne and Descartes**
- Montaigne explores ideas about life’s meaning in essays
- Descartes uses observation and reason to create new philosophy
The Sun King’s Grand Style

A Life of Luxury
- Louis lives very well, with every meal a feast

Louis Controls the Nobility
- Louis keeps nobles at palace to increase his power over them
- Builds magnificent palace at Versailles

Patronage of the Arts
- Versailles is a center of arts during reign of Louis XIV
- Purpose of the arts is to glorify Louis

Louis Fights Disastrous Wars

Attempts to Expand France’s Boundaries
- Louis fights wars in 1660s, 1670s to expand France
- In 1680s, many countries unite against him in League of Augsburg
- France is weakened by poor harvests, warfare, high taxes

War of the Spanish Succession
- War of the Spanish Succession begins in 1701
- Attempts to prevent union of the French and Spanish thrones
- Ends in 1714; France and Spain lose some possessions

Louis’s Death and Legacy
- Louis dies leaving mixed legacy
- Rule makes France a major military and cultural power in Europe
- His wars and palace leave France with heavy debts

Central European Monarchs Clash

The Thirty Years’ War

Rising Tension
- Tension rises between Luthers and Catholics in central Europe

Bohemian Protestants Revolt
- In 1618, Protestants revolt against Catholic Hapsburg rulers
- Result is Thirty Years’ War—conflict over religion, land, power

Hapsburg Triumphs
- From 1618 to 1630, Hapsburg armies have many victories
- Troops plunder many German villages

Peace of Westphalia
- War ruins German economy, greatly decreases population
- Peace of Westphalia (1648) ends war
- Treaty weakens Hapsburgs, strengthens France
- Treaty introduces idea of negotiating terms of peace

Beginning of Modern States
- Treaty recognizes Europe as group of independent states
States Form in Central Europe

Economic Contrasts with the West
• Economy in central Europe still based on serfs, agriculture

Several Weak Empires
• Landowning nobles in central Europe block growth of kings' power
• Ottoman and Holy Roman empires are also weak

Austria Grows Stronger
• Hapsburgs in Austria take more lands, rule large empire

Maria Theresa Inherits the Austrian Throne
• Maria Theresa becomes empress of Austria, faces years of war

Prussia Challenges Austria

The Rise of Prussia
• Hohenzollern rulers of Prussia build Europe’s best army
• Call themselves kings and become absolute monarchs
• Nobles resist royal power, but king buys loyalty

Frederick the Great
• Frederick the Great becomes king of Prussia
• Enforces father’s military policies but softens some of his laws

War of the Austrian Succession
• In 1740, Frederick starts war against Austria to gain Silesia
• Maria Theresa resists Prussian power but loses Silesia in treaty
• As result of war, Prussia becomes a major power in Europe

The Seven Years’ War
• Austria allies with France against Britain and Prussia
• In 1756, Frederick attacks Saxony, launching Seven Years’ War
• France loses colonies in North America; Britain gains India

Section 4

Absolute Rulers of Russia

Peter the Great makes many changes in Russia to try to make it more like Western Europe.

Absolute Rulers of Russia

The First Czar

Ivan the Terrible
• In 1533, Ivan the Terrible becomes king of Russia
• Struggles for power with boyars—landowning nobles
• Seizes power and is crowned czar, meaning “caesar”

Rule by Terror
• In 1560, Ivan turns against boyars, kills them, seizes lands

Rise of the Romanovs
• Ivan’s heir is weak, leading to period of turmoil
• In 1613, Michael Romanov becomes czar

Peter the Great Comes to Power

The Rise of Peter
• Peter the Great becomes czar in 1696, begins to reform Russia

Russia Contrasts with Europe
• Land of boyars and serfs
• Cut off geographically from Europe
• Culturally isolated, little contact with western Europe
• Religious differences widen gap

Peter Visits the West
• In 1697, Peter visits western Europe to learn European ways
Peter Rules Absolutely

**Peter’s Goal**
- Goal of *westernization*—using western Europe as model for change

**Peter’s Reforms**
- Brings Orthodox Church under state control
- Reduces power of great landowners
- Modernizes army by having European officers train soldiers

Westernizing Russia
- Introduces potatoes
- Starts Russia’s first newspaper
- Raises women’s status
- Adopts Western fashion
- Advances education

Establishing St. Petersburg
- Peter wants a seaport that will make travel to West easier
- Fights Sweden to win port on Baltic Sea
- In 1703, begins building new capital called St. Petersburg
- Building city takes many years; many serfs die in process
- By the time of Peter’s death, Russia is a power to be reckoned with in Europe

Parliament Limits the English Monarchy

**James’s Problems**
- James I of Scotland becomes king of England in 1603
- Struggles with Parliament over money, Church reform

**Charles I Fights Parliament**
- James’s son, Charles I, becomes king in 1625
- Also fights with Parliament over money
- Parliament forces him to sign Petition of Right in 1628
- Petition limits Charles’s power, but he ignores it

English Civil War

**War Topples a King**
- In 1641, Parliament passes laws to limit king’s power
- Result is *English Civil War* (1642–1649) between Puritans, king
- In 1644, Oliver Cromwell becomes general on Puritan side
- After Puritans win, Charles faces trial and execution in 1649
Cromwell's Rule
- In 1649, Cromwell abolishes monarchy, House of Lords
- Becomes military dictator
- Suppresses rebellion in Ireland

Puritan Morality
- Puritans abolish activities they find sinful

Restoration and Revolution
Cromwell's End
- After Cromwell dies in 1658, government collapses
- Next year, Parliament asks son of Charles I to rule

Charles II Reigns
- Restoration—return of monarchy under Charles II
- Habeas corpus—law requiring king to charge prisoner with crime

James II and the Glorious Revolution
- Charles's Catholic brother James becomes king in 1685
- Glorious Revolution—bloodless overthrow of James in 1688

Limits on Monarch's Power
A New Type of Monarchy
- Protestants William and Mary become rulers of England
- Agree to constitutional monarchy—legal limits on royal power

Bill of Rights
- In 1689, Parliament drafts Bill of Rights
- Sets limits on royal power

Cabinet System Develops
- In 1700s, cabinet, a group of government ministers, develops
- Ministers link majority party in Parliament with monarch

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