Chapter Preview

1. Extending Spanish Power
2. France Under Louis XIV
3. Triumph of Parliament in England
4. Rise of Austria and Prussia
5. Absolute Monarchy in Russia

Chapter Review and Assessment

European Nation-States, 1700

By 1700, powerful European monarchs had set aside the feudal past and built strong, centralized nation-states. Most of these rulers held absolute power.

1556
Philip II becomes king of Spain. Under Philip, Spain is the wealthiest and most powerful state in Europe.

1556
Akbar the Great becomes emperor of India.

1618
Religious conflict between German Protestants and Catholics sparks the Thirty Years’ War.

1642
The English Civil War begins, pitting the king’s troops against the armies of Parliament.

1607
British colonists found Jamestown.
SECTION 1 Extending Spanish Power

Reading Focus
- How did Spanish power increase under Charles V and Philip II?
- How did the arts flourish during Spain's golden age?
- Why did the Spanish economy decline in the 1600s?

Vocabulary
- absolute monarch
- divine right
- armada

Taking Notes
As you read this section, prepare an outline of the contents. Use Roman numerals to indicate major headings. Use capital letters for the subheadings and numbers for the supporting details. Print out the example to help you get started.
Philip II extended Spain's power and helped establish a golden age.

Setting the Scene

“It is best to keep an eye on everything,” Philip II of Spain often said—and he meant it. As king of the most powerful nation in Europe, he gave little time to pleasure. Instead, he plowed through a mountain of paperwork each day, making notes on even the most trivial matters. Once the Spanish ambassador to England wrote about an unfamiliar kind of insect he had seen in London. “Probably fleas,” Philip scribbled on the letter.

Philip's determination to “keep an eye on everything” extended far beyond trivia. It helped him build Spain into a strong centralized state. By the late 1500s, he had concentrated all power into his own hands. Over the next 200 years, other European monarchs would pursue similar goals.

Charles V and the Hapsburg Empire

By the 1500s, Spain had shaken off the feudal past and emerged as the first modern European power. Under Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand, Spain had expelled the last Muslim rulers and enforced religious unity. In 1492, Isabella financed Columbus's voyage across the Atlantic, leading to the Spanish conquest of the Americas.

Wearing Two Crowns In 1519, Charles V, grandson of Ferdinand and Isabella, inherited a huge empire. The new king faced a nearly impossible challenge. He not only inherited the crown of Spain but was also the heir of the Austrian Hapsburgs. The sprawling Hapsburg empire included the Holy Roman Empire and the Netherlands.

Ruling two empires involved Charles in constant warfare. As a devout Catholic, he fought to suppress the Protestant movement in the German states. After years of religious warfare, however, Charles was forced to allow the German princes to choose their own religions.

His greatest foe was the Ottoman empire. Under Suleiman, Ottoman forces advanced across central Europe to the walls of Vienna, Austria. Although Austria held firm, the Ottomans occupied much of Hungary. Ottoman naval forces also challenged Spanish power in the Mediterranean.

An Empire Divided Perhaps the Hapsburg empire was too scattered and diverse for any one person to rule. Exhausted and disillusioned, Charles V gave up his titles and entered a monastery in 1556. He divided his empire, leaving the Hapsburg lands in central Europe to his brother Ferdinand, who became Holy Roman emperor. He gave Spain, the Netherlands, southern Italy, and Spain's overseas empire to his 29-year-old son Philip.
Philip II and Divine Right

Like his father, King Philip II was hard-working, devout, and ambitious. During his 42-year reign, he sought to expand Spanish influence, strengthen the Catholic Church, and make his own power absolute. Thanks in part to silver from the Americas, he made Spain the foremost power in Europe.

Unlike many other monarchs, Philip devoted much time to government work. He seldom hunted, never jousted, and lived as sparsely as a monk. His isolated, somber palace outside Madrid reflected the King's character. Known as the Escorial (ehs kohr ee uhl), it served as a church, a residence, and a tomb for members of the royal family.

As did Ferdinand and Isabella, Philip further centralized royal power, making every part of the government responsible to him. He reigned as an absolute monarch, a ruler with complete authority over the government and the lives of the people. Like other European rulers, Philip asserted that he ruled by divine right. That is, he believed that his authority to rule came directly from God.

Partly as a result of the concept of divine right, Philip saw himself as the guardian of the Roman Catholic Church. The great undertaking of his life was to defend the Catholic Reformation and turn back the rising Protestant tide in Europe. Within his own lands, Philip enforced religious unity. He turned the Inquisition against Protestants and other people thought to be heretics.

The Wars of Philip II

Philip fought many wars as he attempted to advance Spanish Catholic power. At the battle of Lepanto in 1571, Spain and its Italian allies soundly defeated an Ottoman fleet in the Mediterranean. Although Christians hailed this as a great victory, the Ottoman empire remained a major power in the Mediterranean region.

Revolt in the Netherlands During the last half of his reign, Philip battled Protestant rebels in the Netherlands. At the time, the region included 17 provinces that are today Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg. It was the richest part of Philip's empire. Protestants in the Netherlands resisted Philip's efforts to crush their faith. Protestants and Catholics alike opposed high taxes and autocratic Spanish rule, which threatened local traditions of self-government.

In the 1560s, riots against the Inquisition sparked a general uprising in the Netherlands. Savage fighting raged for decades. In 1581, the northern, largely Protestant provinces declared their independence from Spain and became known as the Dutch Netherlands. They did not gain official recognition, however, until 1648. The southern, mostly Catholic provinces of the Netherlands remained part of the Spanish empire.

Invading England By the 1580s, Philip saw England's Queen Elizabeth I as his chief Protestant enemy. First secretly, then openly, Elizabeth had supported the Dutch against Spain. She even encouraged English captains, known as Sea Dogs, to plunder Spanish treasure ships. Francis Drake, the
most daring Sea Dog, looted Spanish cities in the Americas. To Philip's dismay, instead of punishing the pirate, Elizabeth made him a knight.

To end English attacks and subdue the Dutch, Philip prepared a huge armada, or fleet, to carry a Spanish invasion force to England. In 1588, the Armada sailed with more than 130 ships, 20,000 men, and 2,400 pieces of artillery. The Spanish were confident of victory. “When we meet the English,” predicted one Spanish commander, “God will surely arrange matters so that we can grapple and board them, either by sending some strange freak of weather or, more likely, just by depriving the English of their wits.”

The “strange freak of weather,” however, favored the other side. In the English Channel, lumbering Spanish ships took losses from the lighter, faster English ships. Suddenly, a savage storm blew up, scattering the Armada. After further disasters at sea, the tattered remnants limped home in defeat.

While the defeat of the Spanish Armada ended Philip’s plan to invade England, it had little short-term effect on his power. In the long term, however, Spain’s naval superiority did dwindle. In the 1600s and 1700s, Dutch, English, and French fleets challenged—and surpassed—Spanish power both in Europe and around the world.

Spain’s Golden Age

The century from 1550 to 1650 is often called Spain’s siglo de oro, or “golden century,” for the brilliance of its arts and literature. Philip II was a patron of the arts and also founded academies of science and mathematics.

Painters Among the famous painters of this period was El Greco, meaning “the Greek.” Born on the Greek island of Crete, El Greco had studied in Renaissance Italy before settling in Spain. He produced haunting religious pictures, dramatic views of the city of Toledo, and striking portraits of Spanish nobles, done in a dramatically elongated style.

El Greco’s use of vibrant colors influenced the work of Diego Velázquez (vuhl lahs kehs), court painter to King Philip IV. Velázquez is perhaps best known for his vivid portraits of Spanish royalty.

Writers Spain’s golden century produced outstanding writers like Lope de Vega. A peasant by birth, he wrote more than 1,500 plays, including witty comedies and action-packed romances. In The Sheep Well, Lope de Vega shows King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella saving a village from the hands of a villainous feudal lord.

Miguel de Cervantes wrote Don Quixote, the first modern novel in Europe. It pokes fun at medieval tales of chivalry. Dressed in rusty armor, the madman Don Quixote rides out on his broken-down plowhorse in search of adventure. He battles a windmill, which he thinks is a giant, and mistakes two flocks of sheep for opposing armies. He is accompanied by Sancho Panza, a practical-minded peasant.

Don Quixote mocked the traditions of Spain’s feudal past. Yet Cervantes admired both the unromantic, earthy realism of Sancho Panza and the foolish but heroic idealism of Don Quixote.

Economic Decline

In the 1600s, Spanish power and prosperity slowly declined. Lack of strong leadership was one reason. The successors of Philip II were far less able rulers than he.
Economic problems were also greatly to blame. Costly overseas wars drained wealth out of Spain almost as fast as it came in. Then, too, treasure from the Americas led Spain to neglect farming and commerce. The government heavily taxed the small middle class, weakening a group that in other European nations supported royal power. The expulsion of Muslims and Jews from Spain deprived the economy of many skilled artisans and merchants. Finally, American gold and silver led to soaring inflation, with prices rising much higher in Spain than elsewhere in Europe.

Even though Spain continued to rule a huge colonial empire, its strength slipped away. By the late 1600s, France had replaced Spain as the most powerful European nation.
Under the absolute rule of Louis XIV, France became the leading power of Europe.

Setting the Scene

“I have had an idea that will … give much pleasure to the people here,” wrote Louis XIV, the young king of France. His plan was to throw a grand party. Each guest would receive a lottery ticket for a prize of jewelry—and every ticket would be a winner. At Louis’s bidding, some 600 noble guests flocked to the royal palace for a week of sumptuous feasts, pageants, sports, dances, plays, and music. This extravaganza was the first of many spectacles organized by Louis XIV.

By the late 1600s, Louis was absolute monarch of France and the most powerful ruler in Europe. Yet, just 100 years earlier, France had been torn apart by turbulent wars of religion.

Rebuilding France

From the 1560s to the 1590s, religious wars between Huguenots (French Protestants) and the Catholic majority tore France apart. Leaders on both sides used the strife to further their own ambitions.

The worst incident began on St. Bartholomew's Day, August 24, 1572. As Huguenot and Catholic nobles gathered to celebrate a royal wedding, violence erupted that led to the massacre of 3,000 Huguenots. In the next few days, thousands more were slaughtered. For many, the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre symbolized the complete breakdown of order in France.

Henry IV In 1589, a Huguenot prince inherited the French throne as Henry IV. Knowing that a Protestant would face severe problems ruling a largely Catholic land, he became Catholic. “Paris is well worth a Mass,” he is...
supposed to have said. To protect Protestants, however, he issued the Edict of Nantes in 1598. It granted the Huguenots religious toleration and let them fortify their own towns and cities.

Henry IV then set out to heal his shattered land. His goal, he said, was not the victory of one sect over another, but “a chicken in every pot”—a good Sunday dinner for every peasant. Under Henry, the government reached into every area of French life. Royal officials administered justice, improved roads, built bridges, and revived agriculture. By building the royal bureaucracy and reducing the influence of nobles, Henry IV laid the foundations for royal absolutism.

Richard I When Henry IV was killed by an assassin in 1610, his nine-year-old son, Louis XIII, inherited the throne. For a time, nobles reasserted their power. Then, in 1624, Louis appointed Cardinal Armand Richelieu (rihsh uh loo) as his chief minister. This cunning, capable leader spent the next 18 years strengthening the central government.

Richelieu sought to destroy the power of the Huguenots and nobles, two groups that did not bow to royal authority. He smashed the walled cities of the Huguenots and outlawed their armies, while still allowing them to practice their religion. At the same time, he defeated the private armies of the nobles and destroyed their fortified castles. While reducing their independence, Richelieu tied nobles to the king by giving them high posts at court or in the royal army.

Richelieu handpicked his able successor, Cardinal Jules Mazarin. When five-year-old Louis XIV inherited the throne in 1643, the year after Richelieu's death, Mazarin was in place to serve as chief minister. Like Richelieu, Mazarin worked tirelessly to extend royal power.

**Louis XIV, the Sun King**

Soon after Louis XIV became king, disorder again swept France. In an uprising called the Fronde, nobles, merchants, peasants, and the urban poor rebelled—each group for its own reasons. On one occasion, rioters drove the boy king from his palace. It was an experience Louis would never forget.

When Mazarin died in 1661, Louis resolved to take over the government himself. “I have been pleased to entrust the government of my affairs to the late Cardinal,” he declared. “It is now time that I govern them myself.”

“I Am the State” Like his great-grandfather Philip II of Spain, Louis IV firmly believed in divine right. He wrote:

“God's power is felt in an instant from one end of the world to the other; royal power takes the same time to act throughout the kingdom. It preserves the order of the whole kingdom, as does God with the whole world.”

—Louis XIV, quoted in *From Absolutism to Revolution* (Rowen)

Louis took the sun as the symbol of his absolute power. Just as the sun stands at the center of the solar system, he argued, so the Sun King stands at the center of the nation. Louis is often quoted as saying, “L'etat, c'est moi”—“I am the state.”
During his reign, Louis did not once call a meeting of the Estates General, the medieval council made up of representatives of all French social classes. In fact, the Estates General did not meet between 1614 and 1789. Thus, unlike the English Parliament, the Estates General played no role in checking royal power.

**Strengthening Royal Power** Louis spent many hours each day attending to government affairs. To strengthen the state, he followed the policies of Richelieu. He expanded the bureaucracy and appointed intendants, royal officials who collected taxes, recruited soldiers, and carried out his policies in the provinces. The office of intendant and other government jobs often went to wealthy middle-class men. In this way, Louis cemented ties between the middle class and the monarchy.

Under Louis XIV, the French army became the strongest in Europe. The state paid, fed, trained, and supplied up to 300,000 soldiers. Louis used this highly disciplined army to enforce his policies at home and abroad.

**Colbert and the Economy** Louis's brilliant finance minister, Jean Baptiste Colbert (kohl behr), followed mercantilist policies to bolster the economy. Colbert had new lands cleared for farming, encouraged mining and other basic industries, and built up luxury trades such as lacemaking. To protect French manufacturers, he put high tariffs on imported goods. He also encouraged overseas colonies, such as New France in North America, and regulated trade with the colonies to enrich the royal treasury.

Colbert's policies helped make France the wealthiest state in Europe. Yet Louis XIV was often short of cash. Not even the financial genius of Colbert could produce enough income to support the huge costs of Louis's court or pay for his many foreign wars.

**Versailles, Symbol of Royal Power**

In the countryside near Paris, Louis XIV turned a royal hunting lodge into the immense palace of Versailles (ver sii). He spared no expense to make it the most magnificent building in Europe. Its halls and salons displayed the finest paintings and statues, and glittering chandeliers and mirrors. In the royal gardens, millions of flowers, trees, and fountains were set out in precise geometric patterns.

**Did You Know?**

A High-Maintenance King

"No expense is too great." Applying this rule certainly helped Louis XIV make sure his every wish was fulfilled. For example:

- As much as $1.5 billion may have been taken from France's treasury to build his lavish palace at Versailles. Tens of thousands of workers spent several decades building the palace.
- Hone item for the Versailles palace was his bathtub, which was carved out of a single piece of priceless Languedoc marble.
- Guards were stationed at every fountain in Versailles's gardens. The guards’ job was to whistle whenever the king approached.

**Hall of Mirrors at Versailles**
Versailles became the perfect symbol of the Sun King's wealth and power. As both the king's home and the seat of government, it housed at least 10,000 people, from nobles and officials to servants.

**Court Ceremonies** Louis XIV perfected elaborate ceremonies that emphasized his own importance. Each day began in the king's bedroom with a major ritual known as the levée, or rising. High-ranking nobles competed for the honor of holding the royal wash basin or handing the king his diamond-buckled shoes. At night, the ceremony was repeated in reverse. Wives of nobles vied to attend upon women of the royal family.

Rituals such as the levée served a serious purpose. French nobles were descendants of the feudal lords who held power in medieval times. Left at their estates, these nobles were a threat to the power of the monarchy. By luring nobles to Versailles, Louis turned them into courtiers angling for privileges rather than warriors battling for power. Louis carefully protected their prestige and left them free from paying taxes.

**Cultural Flowering** The king and his court supported a “splendid century” of the arts. Louis sponsored musical entertainments and commissioned plays by the best writers. The age of Louis XIV was the classical age of French drama. Jean Racine (rah seen) wrote tragedies based on ancient Greek myths. The actor-playwright Molière (mohl yair) turned out comedies, such as *The Miser*, that poked fun at French society.

In painting, music, architecture, and decorative arts, French styles became the model for all Europe. A new form of dance drama, ballet, gained its first great popularity at the French court. As a leading patron of culture, Louis sponsored the French Academies, which set high standards for both the arts and the sciences.

**Successes and Failures**

Louis XIV ruled France for 72 years, far longer than any other monarch. During his reign, French culture, manners, and customs replaced those of Renaissance Italy as the standard for European taste. In both foreign and domestic affairs, however, many of Louis's policies were costly failures.

**Wars of Louis XIV** Louis XIV poured vast resources into wars to expand French borders. At first, he did gain some territory. His later wars were disastrous, though, because rival rulers joined forces to check French ambitions. Led by the Dutch or the English, these alliances fought to maintain the *balance of power*, a distribution of military and economic power that would prevent any one nation from dominating Europe.

In 1700, Louis's grandson Philip V inherited the throne of Spain. Louis declared that France and Spain “must regard themselves as one.” But neighboring powers led by England were determined to prevent this union. The War of the Spanish Succession dragged on until 1713, when an exhausted France signed the Treaty of Utrecht. Philip remained on the Spanish throne, but France agreed never to unite the two crowns.

**Persecution of the Huguenots** Louis saw France's Protestant minority as a threat to religious and political unity. In 1685, he revoked the Edict of Nantes. More than 100,000 Huguenots fled France.

The persecution of the Huguenots was perhaps the king's most costly blunder. The Huguenots had been among the most hard-working and prosperous of Louis's subjects. Their loss was thus a serious blow to the French economy, just as the expulsion of Muslims and Jews had hurt Spain.
Looking Ahead

Louis XIV outlived his sons and grandsons. When he died in 1715, his five-year-old great-grandson inherited the throne as Louis XV. Although France was then the strongest state in Europe, years of warfare had drained the treasury. The prosperity nurtured by Colbert evaporated under the burden of bad harvests, heavy taxes, and other problems.

Louis XV was too weak a king to deal with such problems. He devoted his days to pleasure, ignoring the growing need for reform. He often quoted an old proverb, “After us, the deluge.” As you will read, the deluge came during the reign of the next king.
During the 1600s, the British Parliament asserted its rights against royal claims to absolute power.

Setting the Scene

“The most high and absolute power in the realm consists in the Parliament,” wrote an English statesman in the 1560s. He was voicing a tradition that had roots in the Middle Ages. But in 1603, a monarch with far different ideas took the throne of England. “Kings are called gods,” declared James I, “because they sit upon God's throne on Earth.” Before long, James was on a collision course with Parliament.

In the 1600s, while Louis XIV perfected royal absolutism in France, England developed in a different direction. In this section, we will look at why and how Parliament asserted itself against royal power.

The Tudors and Parliament

From 1485 to 1603, England was ruled by the Tudor dynasty. Although the Tudors believed in divine right, they shrewdly recognized the value of good relations with Parliament. As you have read, when Henry VIII broke with the Roman Catholic Church, he turned to Parliament to legalize his actions. Parliament approved the Act of Supremacy, making the monarch head of the Church of England.

A constant need for money also led Henry to consult Parliament frequently. Although he had inherited a bulging treasury, he quickly used up his funds fighting overseas wars. To levy new taxes, the king had to seek the approval of Parliament. Members of Parliament tended to vote as Henry's agents instructed. Still, they became accustomed to being consulted on important matters.

Like her father, Elizabeth I both consulted and controlled Parliament. Her advisers conveyed the queen's wishes to Parliament and forbade discussion of certain subjects, such as foreign policy or the queen's marriage. Her skill
in handling Parliament helped make “Good Queen Bess” a popular and successful ruler.

**The Early Stuarts**

Elizabeth died in 1603 without a direct heir. The throne passed to her relatives the Stuarts, the ruling family of Scotland. The Stuarts were neither as popular as the Tudors nor as skillful in dealing with Parliament. They also inherited problems that Henry and Elizabeth had long suppressed. The result was a “century of revolution” that pitted the Stuart monarchs against Parliament.

**The Royal Challenge**  The first Stuart monarch, James I, had agreed to rule according to English laws and customs. Soon, however, he was lecturing Parliament about divine right. “I will not be content that my power be disputed upon,” he declared. Leaders in the House of Commons fiercely resisted the king’s claim to absolute power.

James repeatedly clashed with Parliament over money and foreign policy. He needed funds to finance his lavish court and wage wars. When members wanted to discuss foreign policy before voting funds, James dissolved Parliament and collected taxes on his own.

James also found himself embroiled in disputes with dissenters, Protestants who differed with the Church of England. One group, called Puritans, sought to “purify” the church of Catholic practices. Puritans called for simpler services and a more democratic church without bishops. James rejected their demands, vowing to “harry them out of this land or else do worse.”

A positive result of the king’s dispute with the Puritans was his call for a new translation of the Bible. The King James version that appeared in 1611 has had a lasting influence on English language and literature.

**Parliament Responds**  In 1625, Charles I inherited the throne. Like his father, Charles behaved like an absolute monarch. He imprisoned his foes without trial and squeezed the nation for money. By 1628, though, his need to raise taxes forced Charles to summon Parliament. Before voting any funds, Parliament insisted that Charles sign the Petition of Right. It prohibited the king from raising taxes without the consent of Parliament or from imprisoning anyone without just cause.

Charles did sign the petition, but he then dissolved Parliament in 1629. For 11 years, he ignored the petition and ruled the nation without Parliament. During that time, he created bitter enemies, especially among Puritans. His Archbishop of Canterbury, William Laud, tried to force all clergy to follow strict Anglican rules, dismissing or imprisoning dissenters. Many people felt that the archbishop was trying to revive Catholic practices.

In 1637, Charles and Laud tried to impose the Anglican prayer book on Scotland. The Calvinist Scots revolted. To get funds to suppress the Scottish rebellion, Charles finally had to summon Parliament in 1640. When it met, however, Parliament launched its own revolt.

**The Long Parliament**  The 1640 Parliament became known as the Long Parliament because it lasted on and off until 1653. Its actions triggered the greatest political revolution in English history. In a mounting struggle with the king, Parliament tried and executed his chief ministers, including Archbishop Laud. It further declared that the Parliament could not be dissolved without its own consent and called for the abolition of bishops.

**Connections to Today**

**Our Puritan Heritage**

Decades before the Puritans gained power in England, a group of settlers tried their hand at building a Puritan society across the Atlantic. Massachusetts Bay was a new colony without any traditions of established churches, strong government, or historic communities. The Puritans knew that to assure survival of their beliefs and culture, they would have to educate their children in their own ways. That was one reason the Puritans built schools, including Harvard College.

Eventually, the colonies became the United States. Over time, the rest of the country adopted the Puritan tradition of establishing public schools to help train children to become good citizens of their community. A literate, well-informed citizenry has continued to be a major aim of American schools to this day.

**Theme: Political and Social Systems**

What other institutions help to train American children to be good citizens?
Charles lashed back. In 1642, he led troops into the House of Commons to arrest its most radical leaders. They escaped through a back door and soon raised their own army. The clash now moved to the battlefield.

**The English Civil War**

The civil war that followed lasted from 1642 to 1649. Like the *Fronde* that occurred about the same time in France, the English Civil War posed a major challenge to absolutism. But while the forces of royal power won in France, in England the forces of revolution triumphed.

**Cavaliers and Roundheads** At first, the odds seemed to favor the Cavaliers, or supporters of Charles I. Many Cavaliers were wealthy nobles, proud of their plumed hats and fashionably long hair. Well trained in dueling and warfare, the Cavaliers expected a quick victory. But their foes proved to be tough fighters with the courage of their convictions. The forces of Parliament were composed of country gentry, town-dwelling manufacturers, and Puritan clergy. They were called Roundheads because their hair was cut close around their heads.

The Roundheads found a leader of genius in Oliver Cromwell. A Puritan member of the lesser gentry, Cromwell was a skilled general. He organized the “New Model Army” for Parliament into a disciplined fighting force. Inspired by Puritan chaplains, Cromwell’s army defeated the Cavaliers in a series of decisive battles. By 1647, the king was in the hands of parliamentary forces.

**Execution of a King** Eventually, Parliament set up a court to put the king on trial. It condemned him to death as “a tyrant, traitor, murderer, and public enemy.” On a cold January day in 1649, Charles I stood on a scaffold surrounded by his foes. “I am a martyr of the people,” he declared.

Showing no fear, the king told the executioner that he himself would give the sign for him to strike. After a brief prayer, Charles knelt and placed his neck on the block. On the agreed signal, the executioner severed the king’s head with a single stroke.

The execution sent shock waves throughout Europe. In the past, kings had occasionally been assassinated or died in battle. But for the first time, a ruling monarch had been tried and executed by his own people. The parliamentary forces had sent a clear signal that, in England, no ruler could claim absolute power and ignore the rule of law.

**The Commonwealth**

After the execution of Charles I, the House of Commons abolished the monarchy, the House of Lords, and the official Church of England. It declared England a republic, known as the Commonwealth, under the leadership of Oliver Cromwell.

**Challenges to the Commonwealth** The new government faced many threats. Supporters of Charles II, the uncrowned heir to the throne, attacked England by way of Ireland and Scotland. Cromwell led forces into Ireland to crush the uprising. He then took harsh measures against the Irish Catholic majority. In 1652, Parliament passed a law exiling most Catholics to barren land in the west of Ireland. Any Catholic found disobeying this order could be killed on sight.

**Primary Source**

**In 1651, two years after the English Civil War ended, English political philosopher Thomas Hobbes published...**
Squabbles also splintered forces within the Commonwealth. One group, called Levellers, thought that poor men should have as much say in government as the gentry, lawyers, and other leading citizens. “The poorest he that is in England hath a life to live as the greatest he,” wrote one Leveller. In addition, female Levellers asserted their right to petition Parliament.

These Leveller ideas horrified the gentry who dominated Parliament. Cromwell and his generals suppressed the Levellers, as well as more radical groups who threatened property ownership. As the challenges to order grew, Cromwell took the title Lord Protector in 1653. From then on, he ruled through the army.

**Puritan Society** Under the Commonwealth, Puritan preachers tried to root out godlessness and impose a “rule of saints.” The English Civil War thus ushered in a social revolution as well as a political one.

Parliament enacted a series of laws designed to make sure that Sunday was set aside for religious observance. Anyone over the age of 14 who was caught “profaning the Lord’s Day” could be fined. To the Puritans, theaters were “spectacles of pleasure too commonly expressing mirth and levity.” So, like John Calvin in Geneva, Cromwell closed all theaters. Puritans also frowned on lewd dancing, taverns, and gambling.

Puritans felt that every Christian, rich and poor, must be able to read the Bible. To spread religious knowledge, they encouraged education for all people. By mid-century, families from all classes were sending their children to school, girls as well as boys.

Puritans pushed for changes in marriage to ensure greater fidelity. In addition to marriages based on business interests, they encouraged marriages based on love. As in the past, women were seen mainly as caretakers of the family, subordinate to men. When some radical Protestant groups allowed women to preach sermons, most Puritans were shocked.

Although Cromwell could not accept open worship by Roman Catholics, he believed in religious freedom for other Protestant groups. He even welcomed Jews back to England, after more than 350 years of exile.

**End of the Commonwealth** Oliver Cromwell died in 1658. Soon after, the Puritans lost their grip on England. Many people were tired of military rule and strict Puritan ways. In 1660, a newly elected Parliament invited Charles II to return to England from exile.

England’s “kingless decade” ended with the restoration of the monarchy. Yet Puritan ideas about morality, equality, government, and education endured. In the following century, these ideas would play an important role in shaping the United States of America.

**From Restoration to Glorious Revolution**

In late May 1660, cheering crowds welcomed Charles II back to London. One supporter wrote:

“This day came his Majesty, Charles the Second to London, after a sad and long exile … with a triumph of above 20,000 horse and [soldiers], brandishing their swords, and shouting with inexpressible joy; the ways strewd with flowers, the bells ringing, the streets hung with tapestry.”

—Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*

**Primary Sources** How might people who supported Parliament over the monarch have argued against Hobbes’s view?
With his charm and flashing wit, young Charles II was a popular ruler. He reopened theaters and taverns and presided over a lively court in the manner of Louis XIV. Charles restored the official Church of England but tolerated other Protestants such as Presbyterians, Quakers, and Baptists.

Although Charles accepted the Petition of Right, he shared his father's faith in absolute monarchy and secretly had Catholic sympathies. Still, he shrewdly avoided his father's mistakes in dealing with Parliament.

A New Clash With Parliament

Charles's brother, James II, inherited the throne in 1685. Unlike Charles, James flaunted his Catholic faith. He further angered his subjects by suspending laws at whim and appointing Catholics to high office. Many English Protestants feared that James would restore the Roman Catholic Church.

In 1688, alarmed parliamentary leaders invited James's Protestant daughter, Mary, and her Dutch Protestant husband, William III of Orange, to become rulers of England. When William and Mary landed with their army late in 1688, James II fled to France. This bloodless overthrow of a king became known as the Glorious Revolution.

English Bill of Rights

Before they could be crowned, William and Mary had to accept several acts passed by Parliament in 1689 that became known as the English Bill of Rights. The Bill of Rights ensured the superiority of Parliament over the monarchy. It required the monarch to summon Parliament regularly and gave the House of Commons the “power of the purse.” A king or queen could no longer interfere in Parliamentary debates or suspend laws. The Bill of Rights also barred any Roman Catholic from sitting on the throne.

The Bill of Rights also restated the traditional rights of English citizens, such as trial by jury. It abolished excessive fines and cruel or unjust punishment. It affirmed the principle of habeas corpus. That is, no person could be held in prison without first being charged with a specific crime.

Later, the Toleration Act of 1689 granted limited religious freedom to Puritans, Quakers, and other dissenters, though not yet to Catholics. Still, only members of the Church of England could hold public office.

Looking Ahead

The Glorious Revolution did not create democracy, but a type of government called limited monarchy, in which a constitution or legislative body limits the monarch's powers. English rulers still had much power, but they had to obey the law and govern in partnership with Parliament. In the age of absolute monarchy elsewhere in Europe, the limited monarchy in England was radical enough.
SECTION 4
Rise of Austria and Prussia

Reading Focus
- What were the causes and results of the Thirty Years’ War?
- How did Austria and Prussia emerge as great powers?
- How did European diplomats try to maintain a balance of power?

Vocabulary
- elector
- mercenary
- depopulation

Taking Notes
Print out the chart shown at right. As you read this section, add events that occurred before and after the Peace of Westphalia.

Guided Reading

Main Idea
Two great empires, Austria and Prussia, rose out of the ashes of the Thirty Years’ War.

Setting the Scene
Year after year, war ravaged the German states of central Europe. Bodies of victims littered fields and roads. As the Thirty Years' War dragged on, almost every European power was sucked into the conflict. “We have had blue coats and red coats and now come the yellow coats,” cried the citizens of one German town. “God have pity on us!”

Finally, two great German-speaking powers, Austria and Prussia, rose out of the ashes. Like Louis XIV in France, their rulers perfected skills as absolute monarchs.

The Thirty Years' War
The French philosopher Voltaire noted that, by early modern times, the Holy Roman Empire was neither holy, nor Roman, nor an empire. Instead, it was a patchwork of several hundred small, separate states. In theory, these states were under the authority of the Holy Roman emperor, who was chosen by seven leading German princes called electors. In practice, the emperor had little power over the many rival princes. Religion further divided the German states. The north was largely Protestant, and the south was Catholic. This power vacuum sparked the Thirty Years’ War.

The War Begins The war had both religious and political causes. It began in Bohemia, the present-day Czech Republic. Ferdinand, the Hapsburg king of Bohemia, sought to suppress Protestants and to assert royal power over local nobles. In May 1618, a few rebellious Protestant noblemen tossed two royal officials out of a castle window in Prague. This act sparked a general revolt, which Ferdinand moved to suppress. As both sides sought allies, what began as a local conflict widened into a general European war.
The following year, Ferdinand was elected Holy Roman emperor. With the support of Spain, Poland, and other Catholic states, he tried to roll back the Reformation. In the early stages of the war, he defeated the Bohemians and their Protestant allies. Alarmed, Protestant powers like the Netherlands and Sweden sent troops into Germany.

Before long, political motives outweighed religious issues. Catholic and Protestant rulers shifted alliances to suit their own interests. At one point, Catholic France joined Lutheran Sweden against the Catholic Hapsburgs.

**A Brutal Conflict** The fighting took a terrible toll. Roving armies of *mercenary*, or soldiers for hire, burned villages, destroyed crops, and killed without mercy. A novel of the time describes episodes of nightmare violence, such as the plundering of a village by marauding soldiers:

“For one of [the peasants] they had taken they thru st into the baking oven and there lit a fire under him, … as for another, they put a cord around his head and twisted it so tight with a piece of wood that the blood gushed from his mouth and nose and ears. In a word each had his own device to torture the peasants.”

—Jacob von Grimmelshausen, *Simplicissimus*

Murder and torture were followed by famine and disease. Wolves, not seen in settled areas since the Middle Ages, stalked the deserted streets of once-bustling villages. The war led to severe *depopulation*, or reduction in population. Although exact population statistics do not exist, historians estimate that as many as one third of the people in the German states may have died as a result of the war.

**Peace at Last** Finally, in 1648, the exhausted combatants accepted a series of treaties, known as the Peace of Westphalia. Because so many powers had been involved in the conflict, the war ended with a general European peace and an attempt to settle other international problems as well.

France emerged a clear winner, gaining territory on both its Spanish and German frontiers. The Hapsburgs were big losers because they had to accept the almost total independence of all the princes of the Holy Roman Empire. The Netherlands and the Swiss Federation (present-day Switzerland) won recognition as independent states.

The Thirty Years' War left Germany divided into more than 360 separate states, "one for every day of the year." These states still formally acknowledged the leadership of the Holy Roman emperor. Yet each state had its own government, coinage, state church, armed forces, and foreign policy. Germany, potentially the most powerful nation in Europe, thus remained fragmented for another 200 years.

**Hapsburg Austria**

Though weakened by war, the Hapsburgs still wanted to create a strong united state. They kept the title of Holy Roman emperors, but focused their attention on expanding their own lands. To Austria, they added Bohemia, Hungary, and, later, parts of Poland and Italy.

**Unity and Diversity** Uniting these lands proved difficult. Divided by geography, they also included diverse peoples and cultures. By the 1700s, the Hapsburg empire included Germans, Magyars, Slavs, and others.
many parts of the empire, people had their own languages, laws, assemblies, and customs.

The Hapsburgs did exert some control over these diverse peoples. They sent German-speaking officials to Bohemia and Hungary and settled Austrians on confiscated lands in these provinces. The Hapsburgs also put down revolts in Bohemia and Hungary. Still, the Hapsburg empire never developed a centralized system like that of France.

**Maria Theresa** In the early 1700s, the emperor Charles VI faced a new crisis. He had no son. His daughter, Maria Theresa, was intelligent and capable, but no woman had yet ruled Hapsburg lands in her own name. Charles persuaded other European rulers to recognize his daughter's right to succeed him. When he died, however, many ignored their pledge.

The greatest threat came in 1740, when Frederick II of Prussia seized the rich Hapsburg province of Silesia. Maria Theresa set off for Hungary to appeal for military help from her Hungarian subjects. The Hungarians were ordinarily unfriendly to the Hapsburgs. But she made a dramatic plea before an assembly of Hungarian nobles. According to one account, the nobles rose to their feet and shouted, “Our lives and blood for your Majesty!” She eventually got further help from Britain and Russia.

During the eight-year War of the Austrian Succession, Maria Theresa was not able to force Frederick out of Silesia. Still, she did preserve her empire and win the support of most of her people. Equally important, she strengthened Hapsburg power by reorganizing the bureaucracy and improving tax collection. She even forced nobles and clergy to pay taxes and tried to ease the burden of taxes and labor services on peasants. As you will read, many of her reforms were later extended by her son and successor, Joseph II.

**The Rise of Prussia**

While Austria was molding a strong Catholic state, Prussia emerged as a new Protestant power. In the 1600s, the Hohenzollern (hoh uhn tsahl ern) family ruled scattered lands across north Germany. After the Peace of Westphalia, ambitious Hohenzollern rulers united their lands by taking over the states between them. Like absolute rulers elsewhere, they set up an efficient central bureaucracy and reduced the independence of their nobles, called Junkers (yoon kerz).

To achieve their goals, Prussian rulers like Frederick William I forged one of the best-trained armies in Europe. Great emphasis was placed on military values. One Prussian military leader boasted, “Prussia is not a state which possesses an army, but an army which possesses a state.”

Frederick William won the loyalty of the Junkers by giving them positions in the army and government. By 1740, Prussia was strong enough to challenge its rival Austria.

**Frederick II** Frederick William made sure that, from an early age, his son Frederick was trained in the art of war:

“His tutor must take the greatest pains to imbue my son with a sincere love for the soldier's profession and to impress upon him that nothing else in the world can confer upon a prince such fame and honor as the sword.”
In fact, young Frederick preferred playing the flute and writing poetry. Frederick William despised these pursuits and treated the young prince so badly that he tried to flee the country. Discovering these plans, Frederick William put his son in solitary confinement. A friend who had helped Frederick was beheaded while the 18-year-old prince was forced to watch.

**Military Successes** Frederick’s harsh military training did have an effect. After becoming king in 1740, Frederick II lost no time in using his army. As you read, he boldly seized Silesia from Austria, sparking the War of the Austrian Succession. In several later wars, Frederick made brilliant use of his disciplined army, forcing all to accept Prussia as a great power. His exploits earned him the name Frederick the Great.

**Keeping the Balance of Power**

By 1750, the great powers of Europe included Austria, Prussia, France, England, and Russia. They formed various alliances to maintain the balance of power. Though nations sometimes switched partners, two rivalries persisted. Prussia battled Austria for control of the German states, while Britain and France competed for overseas empire.

On occasion, European rivalries ignited a worldwide conflict. The Seven Years’ War, which lasted from 1756 until 1763, was fought on four continents. Prussia, Austria, Russia, France, and Britain battled in Europe. Britain and France also fought in India and Africa. In North America, the French and Indian War also involved Native American nations. The Treaty of Paris ending the wars gave Britain a huge empire.
Czar Peter the Great and his successor, Catherine the Great, strengthened Russia and expanded Russian territory.

Setting the Scene

Along the Dutch waterfront, curious observers noticed that Peter Mikhailov was no ordinary man. For one thing, he stood almost seven feet tall. He had a booming laugh but also a furious temper. By day, he dressed in shabby clothes and worked as a shipyard carpenter. At night, he was entertained by royalty. For Peter Mikhailov was none other than Peter the Great, czar of Russia. His mission was to learn all he could about the more advanced nations of Western Europe.

In the early 1600s, Russia was still a medieval state, untouched by the Renaissance and Reformation and largely isolated from Western Europe. As you have read, the “Time of Troubles” had plunged the state into a period of disorder and foreign invasions. The reign of the first Romanov czar in 1613 restored a measure of order. Not until 1682, however, did a czar emerge who was strong enough to regain the absolute power of earlier czars. Peter the Great pushed Russia on the road to becoming a great modern power.

Peter the Great

Peter, just 10 years old when he came to the throne, did not take control of the government until 1689. Though he was not well educated, the young czar was immensely curious. He spent hours in the “German quarter,” the Moscow suburb where many Dutch, Scottish, English, and other foreign artisans and soldiers lived. There, he heard of the advanced technology that was helping Western European monarchs forge powerful empires.

Journey to the West In 1697, Peter set out to study western technology for himself. He spent hours walking the streets of European cities, noting the manners and homes of the people. He visited factories and art galleries, learned anatomy from a doctor, and even had a dentist teach him how to pull teeth. In England, Peter was impressed by Parliament. “It is good,” he said, “to hear subjects speaking truthfully and openly to their king.”
Returning to Russia, Peter brought along a group of technical experts, teachers, and soldiers he had recruited in the West. He then embarked on a policy of westernization, that is, the adoption of western ideas, technology, and culture. But persuading fellow Russians to change their way of life proved difficult. To impose his will, Peter became the most autocratic of Europe's absolute monarchs.

**Autocrat and Reformer** At home, Peter pursued several related goals. He wanted to strengthen the military, expand Russian borders, and centralize royal power. To achieve his ends, he brought all Russian institutions under his control, including the Russian Orthodox Church. He forced the haughty boyars, or landowning nobles, to serve the state in civilian or military jobs.

Under Peter, serfdom spread in Russia, long after it had died out in Western Europe. By tying peasants to land given to nobles, he ensured that nobles could serve the state. Further, he forced some serfs to become soldiers or labor on roads, canals, and other government projects.

Using autocratic methods, Peter pushed through social and economic reforms. He imported western technology, improved education, simplified the Russian alphabet, and set up academies for the study of mathematics, science, and engineering. To pay for his sweeping reforms, Peter adopted mercantilist policies, such as encouraging exports. He improved the waterways and canals, developed mining and textile manufacturing, and backed new trading companies.

Some changes had a symbolic meaning. After returning from the West, Peter insisted that boyars shave their beards. He also forced them to replace their old-fashioned robes with Western European clothes. To end the practice of secluding upper-class women in separate quarters, he held grand parties at which women and men were expected to dance together. Russian nobles resisted this radical mixing of the sexes in public.

As part of his program of westernization, Peter the Great ordered Russian nobles to shave their beards and dress in western style. Those who refused had to pay a special “beard tax.”
Peter had no mercy for any who resisted the new order. When elite palace guards revolted, he had over 1,000 of the rebels tortured and executed. As an example of his power, he left their rotting corpses outside the palace walls for months.

**Expansion Under Peter**

From his earliest days as czar, Peter worked to build Russian's military power. He created the largest standing army in Europe and set out to extend Russian borders to the west and south.

**Search for a Warm-Water Port** Russian seaports, located along the Arctic Ocean, were frozen over in the winter. To increase Russia's ability to trade with the West, Peter desperately wanted a *warm-water port*—one that would be free of ice all year round.

The nearest warm-water coast was located along the Black Sea. To gain control of this territory, Peter had to push through the powerful Ottoman empire. In the end, Peter was unable to defeat the Ottomans and gain his warm-water port. However, the later Russian monarch Catherine the Great would achieve that goal before the century ended.

**War With Sweden** In 1700, Peter began a long war against the kingdom of Sweden. At the time, Sweden dominated the Baltic region. Early on, Russia suffered humiliating defeats. A Swedish force of only 8,000 men defeated a Russian army five times its size. Undaunted, Peter rebuilt his army along western lines. In 1709, he defeated the Swedes and won land along the Baltic Sea.

**Peter's City** On land won from Sweden, Peter built a magnificent new capital city, St. Petersburg. Seeking to open a “window on the West,” he located the city on the swampy shores of the Neva River near the Baltic coast. He forced tens of thousands of serfs to drain the swamps. Many thousands died, but Peter got his city. He then invited Italian architects and artisans to design great palaces in western style. Peter even planned the city's parks and boulevards himself.

Just as Versailles became a monument to French absolutism, St. Petersburg became the great symbol of Peter's desire to forge a modern Russia. A hundred years later, Russia's best-known poet, Alexander Pushkin, portrayed Peter as a larger-than-life ruler, determined to tame nature no matter what the cost:

“Here we at Nature's own behest
Shall break a window to the West,
Stand planted on the ocean level;
Here flags of foreign nations all
By waters new to them will call
And unencumbered we shall revel.”

—Alexander Pushkin, *The Bronze Horseman*

**Toward the Pacific** Russian traders and raiders also crossed the plains and rivers of Siberia, blazing trails to the Pacific. Under Peter, Russia signed a treaty with Qing China, defining their common border in the east. The treaty recognized Russia's right to lands north of Manchuria.

In the early 1700s, Peter hired the Danish navigator Vitus Bering to explore what became known as the Bering Strait between Siberia and Alaska.
Russian pioneers crossed into Alaska and migrated as far south as California. Few Russians moved east of the Ural Mountains at this time, but on a map, Russia was already the largest country in the world, as it still is today.

**Legacy of Peter the Great**

When Peter died in 1725, he left behind a mixed legacy. He had expanded Russian territory, gained ports on the Baltic Sea, and created a mighty army. He had also ended Russia's long period of isolation. From the 1700s on, Russia would be increasingly involved in the affairs of Western Europe. Yet many of Peter's ambitious reforms died with him. Nobles, for example, soon ignored his policy of service to the state.

Like earlier czars, Peter the Great had brandished terror to enforce his absolute power. His policies contributed to the growth of serfdom, which served only to widen the gap between Russia and the West that Peter had sought to narrow.

**Catherine the Great**

Peter died without naming a successor, setting off power struggles among various Romanovs. Under a series of ineffective rulers, Russian nobles reasserted their independence. Then, a new monarch took the reins of power firmly in hand. She became known to history as Catherine the Great.

A German princess by birth, Catherine had come to Russia at the age of 15 to wed the heir to the Russian throne. She learned Russian, embraced the Russian Orthodox faith, and won the loyalty of the people. In 1762, her mentally unstable husband, Czar Peter III, was murdered by a group of Russian army officers. Whether or not Catherine was involved in the assassination plot, she certainly benefited from it. With the support of the military, she ascended the Russian throne herself.

**An Efficient Ruler** Catherine proved to be an efficient, energetic empress. She reorganized the provincial government, codified laws, and began state-sponsored education for boys and girls.

Like Peter the Great, she embraced western ideas. At court, she encouraged French language and customs, wrote histories and plays, and organized court performances. As you will read in the next chapter, she was also a serious student of the French thinkers who led the intellectual movement known as the Enlightenment.

**A Ruthless Absolute Monarch** Like other absolute monarchs, Catherine could be ruthless. She granted a charter to the boyars outlining important rights, such as exemption from taxes. At the same time, she allowed them to increase their stranglehold on the peasants. When peasants rebelled against the harsh burdens of serfdom, Catherine took firm action to repress them. As a result, conditions grew worse for Russian peasants. Under Catherine, even more peasants were forced into serfdom.

Like Peter the Great, Catherine was determined to expand Russia's borders. After a war against the Ottoman empire, she finally achieved
Peter's dream of a warm-water port on the Black Sea. She also took steps to seize territory from neighboring Poland.

**Partition of Poland** As you have read, Poland had once been a great European power. However, Polish rulers were unable to centralize their power or diminish the influence of the Polish nobility. The divided Polish government was ill prepared to stand up to the increasing might of its neighbors Russia, Prussia, and Austria.

In the 1770s, Catherine the Great, Frederick the Great, and Emperor Joseph II of Austria hungrily eyed Poland. To avoid fighting one another, the three monarchs agreed to partition, or divide up, Poland. At the first partition, in 1772, Catherine took part of eastern Poland, where many Russians and Ukrainians lived. Frederick and Joseph nibbled at Polish territory from the west.

Poland was partitioned again in 1793 and a third time in 1795. By the time Austria, Prussia, and Russia had taken their final slices, the independent kingdom of Poland had vanished from the map. Not until 1919 would a free Polish state reappear.

**Looking Ahead**

By the mid-1700s, absolute monarchs ruled four of the five leading powers in Europe. Britain, with its strong Parliament, was the only exception. As these five nations competed with one another, they often ended up fighting to maintain the balance of power.

At the same time, new ideas were in the air. Radical changes would soon shatter the French monarchy, upset the balance of power, and revolutionize European societies. In the next chapters, you will read about how the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, the rise of Napoleon Bonaparte, and the Industrial Revolution would transform Europe.