

Name _____ Global Studies
Date _____ Block# _____

Person 1

Louis XIV, the Sun King

Louis XIV was a member of the Bourbon dynasty or family of rulers. He was only four years old when he came to the throne of France. He held the throne for 72 years from 1643 to 1715, his reign was the longest in modern European history. Louis XIV was an outstanding example of an absolute monarch, a ruler with total control over his people. He also believed in the divine right of kings, meaning God had ordained him to govern France. The Divine Right Theory stated that a king's power to rule came directly from God, rather than the consent of the people of his country. According to this theory, it was up to God to punish a wicked king. So far as the people are concerned, "the king could do no wrong". Louis is said to have boasted, "L'etat c'est moi" ("I am the State.") These words expressed the spirit of a reign in which the king held all political authority.

Person 2

Louis XIV, the Sun King

Louis chose the sun as his royal emblem and was often called the Sun King. The emblem suggested that just as the Earth depended on the sun for survival, so too, did the people of France depend on their king for their well being. Louis XIV continued the efforts for earlier French kings to add to his royal authority over local rulers. He reorganized the army so that it was loyal to him rather than individual nobles. With his strong, loyal army Louis XIV suppressed local unrest as well as assert French power in Europe. He fought all the countries around him and defeated them. As Louis XIV became more powerful he started new industry, set up trading posts in India and North America and built the Palace of Versailles. As a result of Louis's lavish policies and wars, France was deeply in debt, the people were taxed more heavily than ever. "The people" meaning the ordinary peasants(farmers) and working people. Nobles and church officials did not pay taxes. Indeed, the ordinary people paid taxes to the nobles, to the church, and to the king as well. Louis lost some of his popularity in his latter years because of his debt and taxation problems, but he had demonstrated what a monarch at the head of a strong, central government could do.

Person 3

Louis XIV, the Sun King

Louis XIV wanted and gained total power and control of his countrymen and nobles. In order to increase and keep his royal power over his nobles he decided to remove himself from Paris where there had been danger from rebellious nobles in the past. To accomplish his goals, he built an enormous palace of Versailles(pronounced Ver Sigh) a few miles outside of Paris and moved the French government there. He also forced his nobles to live at the palace most of the year this way he could keep a close eye on them. They had to serve him at all times, help him dress in the morning, join him hunting, perform ceremonies of the court and hand him his nightshirt as he went to bed. Life at Versailles was an endless round of pleasures: balls, theater, hunting, picnics, music and banquets. Some of the nobles found this life boring and wanted to do something useful-to help run the country. But Louis would not allow anyone any part in the government unless he had chosen them to do so.

Versailles and Louis XIV soon became the ideal of European royalty. Many monarchs and nobility adopted French clothing, cooking and manners. The French language became the language of European diplomats. Louis XIV looked like a king, lived like a king, and behaved like a king. He was the role model for absolute monarchies.

Person 4

Louis XIV and the Palace of Versailles

The Palace of Versailles (Ver Sigh)became the home of the French government under Louis XIV. This way Louis could keep a close watch on the activities of his nobles. It was the architectural masterpiece of its time and even today. Versailles was stunning in size. It was almost a small town in one building and housed five thousand members of Louis' court. The palace was more than 1/4 of a mile long and had about 1,300 rooms. It contained 230 acres of gardens, 1,400 fountains, and 25,000 trees, planted full grown so that Louis XIV would not have to wait for them to grow. Inside the walls of this lavish palace are covered with portraits and tapestries. One room, called the Hall of Mirrors, was almost completely lined with mirrors and was lit with 4,000 candles in silver and crystal chandeliers. In 1682, 22,000 workers labored on the palace and the next years 36,000 worked to build this palace of palaces. . The palace took more than 40 years to complete and cost about 1 billion dollars in today's money. Versailles became the center of French culture. From Versailles French influence spread throughout Europe.

After World War I, the peace treaty with Germany called the Versailles Treaty was worked on and signed at this palace. Today the palace is a museum and monument to the divine right of Louis XIV.

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Group Work Notes on Louis XIV
Person 1

1. Give the name of the French dynasty.
2. Define dynasty.
3. Describe the meaning of absolute monarch.
4. Give the important points of the Divine Right Theory.
5. Give Louis' quotation which summarized his authority.

Person 2

1. Give the symbol and name Louis choose to represent himself.
2. Explain why Louis choose the sun as his royal emblem.
3. Explain why France was in so much debt.
4. Tell why the ordinary people of France resented Louis' policy of taxation

Person 3

1. Tell why Louis moved the French government to Versailles.
2. Why did he make the nobles live at the palace most of the year?
3. How did he keep his nobles "in their place"?
4. Tell how other European royalty felt about Louis XIV and his court.
5. Explain this statement. "Louis was a role model for absolute monarchies."

Person 4

Make the group practice saying Versailles(Ver Sigh) correctly.

1. Give the cost and time it took to build Versailles.
2. Describe the Palace of Versailles.
3. Tell why Louis want his nobles at the palace.
4. Why was this palace famous after WW I?
5. Tell how Versailles is used today.