

Section # 2 – France (1589 – 1715)

The Bourbon Monarchy/ Dynasty:

In 1589 the Bourbon Monarchy of France began. Despite a 19-year gap during the French Revolution and the rule of Napoleon, the Bourbon Monarchy would rule France until 1848.

Henry IV (4th): (1589 – 1610)



The first in a long line of Bourbon Monarchs was Henry IV. Although Henry IV was a Protestant, he converted to Catholicism because France was and still is a predominantly Catholic country. Because he was once a Protestant, he did have some sympathy for Protestants. In 1598 he issued the Edict of Nantes, which granted Huguenots (French Protestants) religious freedom and let them fortify their towns and cities for protection. Henry IV laid the groundwork for absolute rule by limiting the power of the Estates General (French Congress), which made himself the only person who had any influence over French government. Although Henry IV improved French life in every facet and maintained a peaceful atmosphere, he was assassinated in 1610 after ruling France for 21 years.

Louis XIII (13th) and Cardinal Richelieu: (1610 – 1643)



After Henry IV's death in 1610, his 19 year-old son Louis XIII became the 2nd Bourbon monarch to inherit the throne of France. For the first 14 years of Louis XIII's reign, the Estates General began to gain back some of their power that Henry IV took from them. In 1624 Louis XIII appointed Cardinal Armand Richelieu as his Chief Administrator. Cardinal Richelieu's job was to take the power away from the French nobles and Huguenots and give it all back to King Louis XIII. The goal was to make Louis XIII's power unquestioned and absolute throughout all of France. Cardinal Richelieu did what he was appointed to do. After all

power was returned to Louis XIII, Richelieu set out to make France the most powerful country in Europe. He strengthened the French Army and built up the French economy. Seeing that his death was near, Richelieu did not want everything he had done to make France a great nation come tumbling down. In an effort to preserve everything he had done for France, he handpicked Cardinal Mazarin to be his successor. After Richelieu's death in 1642, Cardinal Mazarin stepped in to fulfill the duty. One year later in 1643, King Louis XIII's 33-year reign ended with his death.

Louis XIV (14th) and Cardinal Mazarin: (1643 – 1715)



In 1643 Louis XIII's son became the 3rd third Bourbon monarch to rule France. This new monarch was a five-year old boy named Louis XIV who would rule France until his death 72 years later. Because of his famous 72-year reign, Louis XIV is recognized as the most powerful and most famous Bourbon monarch ever. Due to his young age, Louis was unable to rule France right away. Cardinal Mazarin, the Chief Administrator, assumed the responsibility of ruling France up until his death in 1661. In 1661 the now 23-year old Louis XIV announced that he would rule his own government. He claimed that he was given the divine right by god to rule France and named himself the "Sun King", for he was the light that shines upon France. Louis XIV is quoted with saying, "Just as the sun stands at the center of the solar system, so the Sun King stands at the center of France." Louis XIV epitomized what an absolute monarch is supposed to be, and he was not afraid to let people know about his power as he often repeated the phrase "L'etat, c'est moi" – "I am the state."

"What a grandeur that a single man (Louis XIV) should embody so much! Behold this holy power, paternal, and absolute, contained in a single head: you see the of God in the King, and you have the idea of royal majesty."

- Jacques Bossuet, *Louis XIV's Leading Church Official*

Palace of Versailles:

For protection from a possible civilian uprising, Louis XIV decided to live outside of the capital of France (Paris) where the bulk of the French population lived. Louis moved his government to Versailles (12 miles outside of Paris), where he would construct the Palace of Versailles. No expense was spared when building this palace, as it became the symbol of Louis XIV and French absolutism. Not only was the palace absolutely beautiful, it was home to nearly 10,000 people. Nearly all of the people that lived in Versailles were nobles. Instead of using nobles for government service, Louis used them to wait on him hand and foot. Although the nobles would XIV normally be angry at their power being limited, they remained happy because Louis provided them with a beautiful home, protection, and a huge tax break. As you will see in later units, this tax break would lead to a bigger problem in years to come.

Louis XIV's Successes:

Louis XIV had a lot of great accomplishments during his 72-year reign. He turned France's army into the strongest in Europe, which would help him effectively deal with conflicts both foreign and domestic. Louis XIV also created much wealth for France by strengthening its economy through the promotion of trade and industry. The strength of Louis XIV's economy lie in his established trading outposts in America and Canada, which was collectively known as New France.

Louis XIV's Failures:

Louis XIV's 1st failure was his unfair tax system. While Louis XIV was creating wealth for France, he was trying to create wealth for himself and the French nobles. He did this by not taxing the nobles and church officials (clergy) and heavily taxing the French peasants. This unjust tax system would remain in place until 1789 when it became one of the leading causes of the French Revolution. A 2nd failure of Louis XIV was his religious beliefs. In an effort to make his power absolute, Louis had already limited the nobles power, but had not yet limited the power of the Huguenots (French Protestant). Like many of his predecessors, Louis XIV was a devout Catholic who wanted to crush the Protestant faith wherever it may be. In 1685 Louis XIV repealed the Edict of Nantes, which granted Huguenots religious freedom and the right to fortify their towns. Louis XIV also made it a law that Huguenots could no longer

practice their religion and their children had to become Catholics. The result of this was the emigration of 200,000 Huguenots to other European countries. As these Huguenots left, so did the wealth that they created. These Huguenots were very active in trade and commerce, and were a huge part of the prosperous French economy. This loss of economic activity destroyed the French economy and the country's wealth.

War of Spanish Succession:

Louis XIV 3rd and final failure was his expansion policy. It was well known to all European countries that Louis XIV wanted to use his powerful army to expand the borders of France. For fear of French expansion, many countries allied in opposition to France. One country that Louis XIV had his eye on was Spain. Current King Charles II of Spain was going to die without and heir to the throne. Both France and Austria had claims to the throne, and much of Europe did not want to see France acquire the Spanish throne. When Charles II died he passed his throne to Phillip of Anjou who was Louis XIV's grandson. All of Europe feared that Louis and Phillip would unite their countries into one nation, most likely France. From 1701 – 1713 The Great Alliance of the Dutch Netherlands, England, and Austria fought Spain and France for the right to the Spanish throne in what is known as the War of Spanish Succession. The war ended in 1713 with the Treaty of Utrecht, which stated that Phillip of Anjou could remain the king of Spain, but France and Spain could never unite as one country.

Louis XIV's Legacy:

During the reign of Louis XIV, France enjoyed one of its most brilliant time periods, but towards the end of Louis XIV's reign France's brilliance began to come unraveled in a number of ways. The tax system Louis XIV created led to an extreme class conflict due the heavy tax burden it placed on the lower class. The economy was also on the decline because of the emigration of the Huguenots to other countries. This economic decline was destroying the wealth of France. This left France with little money to invest in the French culture and the French Army. The War of Spanish Succession was the downfall of Louis XIV. Due to lack of funding, the French army was not a powerful as it once was. At the end of the war France failed at making Spain part of its country. The war effort depleted French wealth even further leaving France in financial ruins, and it created extreme opposition by the French people towards

Louis XIV. When Louis XIV died in 1715, he bequeathed his declining empire to his grandson Louis XV who could never make France as great as it once was under Louis XIV. As you will see in later units, Louis XIV laid the seeds of The French Revolution which would come 74 years later and change the entire world.

14. What was the last war that Louis XIV was involved in, and why did it cause the downfall of Louis XIV?

Section # 2 Questions: Answer these questions on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Who was the first Bourbon monarch, how long did he rule France (include the dates), and how did he die?
2. What was the predominant religion of France?
3. What are Huguenots?
4. Who issued the Edict of Nantes and what were terms of it?
5. What is the Estates General?
6. Who was the second Bourbon Monarch, how long did he rule France (include the dates), and who was his Chief Administrator?
7. Who was the third Bourbon Monarch, how long did he rule France (include the dates), and who was his chief administrator?
8. What is "divine right"?
9. What did Louis XIV call himself, and what was the idea behind the name?
10. What phrase did Louis XIV commonly repeat?
11. What is the name of Louis XIV's home and why did he build it where he did?
12. Explain in detail how Louis XIV kept the French nobles happy after he took away all of their power?
13. What were Louis XIV's three failures during his reign?