Unit 2: Absolutism Notes

Absolutism

- Absolutism – A state where the king or queen holds all of the power.
- Absolute monarchs believed in divine right.
  - Divine Right – The idea that God created the monarchy and the monarch was God’s representative on Earth.

Spain

Spanish Power

- In the early 1500s, Spain grew into a world power thanks to the exploitation of new lands.
  - Conquistadors – Spanish soldiers and explorers who took part in the conquest of America.

Philip II

- Philip II inherited Spain and Spanish American from his father.
- He was a member of the Hapsburg royal family.
- Philip II was a devout Catholic and looked to expand his kingdom.
- At the beginning of Philip’s reign (1554), Spain was the richest empire in the world.

Religious Wars

- In Philip’s defense of Catholicism, he became the enemy of the Protestants.
- The Netherlands were under Hapsburg control, but were mostly Protestant.
- Philip heavily taxed them, causing them to revolt.
- England pledged to help the people of the Netherlands (the Dutch) fight the Spanish.

Spanish Armada

- To get back at Elizabeth, Philip decides to invade England.
- He builds the Spanish Armada.
- Philip hoped to overthrow Elizabeth.
- The Spanish Armada was defeated and many ships and men are lost at sea.
With this defeat, the Spanish Empire began to weaken.

France

- France is mostly Catholic
- Since the Reformation, the Catholics have been fighting a group of Protestants called Huguenots (aka Calvinists)
- The Edict of Nantes is eventually passed.
  - Edict of Nantes – Declaration of religious tolerance.

French Royal Family

- France’s royal family is the House of Bourbon.
- When the king (Henry) is killed, **Louis XIII** is his successor.

Louis XIII

- Louis XIII is a weak king
  - Louis’ prime minister, **Cardinal Richelieu**, is a strong leader and takes control of the country.
  - Richelieu is a powerful figure in the Catholic Church.

Richelieu’s Policies

- Upheld the Edict of Nantes, but did not allow Huguenot cities to have walls.
- Took power away from the nobles and gave it to government officials called intendants.

Richelieu and the Thirty Years War

- The Holy Roman Empire was a Catholic kingdom in Central Europe ruled by the Hapsburg royal family.
- The 30 Years War was fought because the Protestant German-States of the Holy Roman Empire wanted to rule themselves.
- Richelieu involved France in the Thirty Years War against Spain.
  - Wanted to weaken the Hapsburg Family.

Louis XIV

- **Louis XIV** took over after death of Louis XIII.
- He was determined to make the monarchy so powerful that no one could challenge him.
- Called himself “The Sun King”
- Expanded the power of intendants over the nobles.
- Appointed Jean Baptiste Colbert as minister of finance.
  - Colbert tried to make France self-sufficient and not reliant on imports.

Palace of Versailles
- The Palace of Versailles was a palace built by Louis XIV.
- The palace was a sign of the absolute power of the monarch.

End of Louis XIV’s Reign
- Louis fought many wars in an attempt to expand France’s borders.
- England and other countries fought France and Spain in the War of Spanish Succession.

France upon Louis XIV’s Death
- **Louis’ constant wars and extravagance led to the bankruptcy of France.**
- **The peasants had been heavily taxed and grew upset at the monarchy.**

Central Europe – Austria and Prussia

Thirty Years War
- War fought between the Hapsburg Catholics of Holy Roman Empire and German Protestants.
- Richelieu and France sided with the Germans in order to stop the Hapsburg family from gaining more power.

The Fall of the Holy Roman Empire
- Almost 100 years after the Thirty Years War, religious differences cause the Holy Roman Empire to split between two kingdoms.
  - Austria - Catholic
  - Prussia – Religious Tolerance (Protestant and Catholic)

Austria
- Austria is ruled by the Hapsburgs.
- Very diverse empire. Many different ethnic groups.

Maria Theresa

- Their king dies without a son and allows his daughter, Maria Theresa, to rule after his death.
- She is the first woman to rule in the Hapsburg family.
- Maria Theresa decreased the power of the nobility.
- Fought the war of Austrian Succession shortly after taking the throne in order to legitimize taking the throne.
- Created marriage alliances across Europe.

Prussia

- Prussia was ruled by the House of Hohenzollern
- Believed having a strong military was the only way to ensure safety.
- Mostly Germanic people.

Frederick the Great

- Frederick the Great was an enlightened leader.
- Believed the people should have some say in the way he governed.
- Although Frederick was a patron of the arts, he built Prussia’s army to be the best in the world.
- Challenged Maria Theresa in the War of Austrian Succession and gained valuable land for Prussia.

Russia

Ivan the Terrible

- Ivan the Terrible becomes the first Czar of Russia.
  - Czar or Tsar – the monarch of Russia.
- Takes power away from the boyars.
  - Boyars – Russian nobles.

Peter the Great

- Peter the Great takes the throne of Russia after a few weak czars.
Family of Romanov

- Wants to westernize Russia.
  - Westernization – Using Western Europe as a model for change.

Peter’s Reforms

- Increased taxes to pay for an advanced military.
- Improved status of women.
- Fought Sweden for land to build a port-city.
  - Named St. Petersburg
- Took control of the Orthodox Church.
- Imposed a “beard tax”

England

Parliamentary Monarchy

- Since the Magna Carta (1215) England has had a parliament to share in the ruling process.
- Elizabeth was not an absolute monarch...
- ...But she did hold a lot of influence and power.
- Parliaments Job:
  - Create Laws
  - Get money for the monarch.
  - It was up to the monarch whether or not to enforce the laws.

Queen Elizabeth’s Reign

- Under Elizabeth, England grows to be the greatest power in the world.
- She dies without an heir, leaving the empire to her cousin (James).
- This changed England’s royal family to the House of Stuart.

Charles I

- Charles I takes after James’ death and continues to disrespect parliament.
• Marries a Catholic.
  o Strike One.
• Constantly at war and wastes a lot of money.
  o Strike Two.
• Dissolves parliament and tries to arrest parliament leaders when he doesn’t get his way.
  o Strike Three
• English Civil War begins...

English Civil War

• Fought between:
  o Royalists (Cavaliers) who were loyal to Charles
  o Puritans (Roundheads) who believed Parliament should have more power.
• Oliver Cromwell becomes general and builds the New Model Army.
• Eventually, Cromwell captures King Charles.

Execution of the King

• Charles I was held prisoner and tried for treason against parliament.
  o He was killed in a public execution.

Oliver Cromwell

• Cromwell allowed a constitution to be drawn up, but tore it up and ruled as a dictator.
• Believed that the Puritan way of life would reform England.
• Cromwell did not take the title of king. Instead he called himself Lord Protector of England.
• Tolerated all religions except Catholicism.
  • (As long as they followed his laws)
• The Irish rebelled, Cromwell invaded them and seized the Eastern part of Ireland.