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.