

Absolute Ruler: Louis XIV

Directions: For each document, read the question, and then read through the document, annotating anything connecting to the question. When you have fully read and annotated the document, write an answer in clear words and complete sentences.

Document 7

How Louis Kept the Nobles in Order

...That it might be amusing for the nobles to obey the king, Louis built a splendid new royal residence at Versailles, near Paris, where he established the most brilliant court ever known in Europe. The most influential nobles were encouraged, and even commanded, to leave their castles in the country, where life at best was dull, and to come and live with the king at Versailles. Here the king provided amusements for them, and here he could keep his eye on them. The nobles could not well be discourteous or disobedient to the king while they lived in his house and ate at his table. Almost without knowing it, Louis's noble guests fell into the habit of trying to please him. The king's manners were imitated, his words repeated. All smiled when the king smiled, all were sad when the king was sad, "all were devout when the king was devout, and all were sorry not to be ill when the king was ill." If a noble at court displeased the king, he was sent back to the country to live in his own house, in which case everyone felt—and he did too—that he was in deep disgrace....

Source: Carl L. Becker, *Modern History*, Silver, Burdett and Company

1. According to Carl Becker, what was one way that Louis XIV attempted to control the nobility?

Document 8

... More and more Louis tried to impose uniformity in religious affairs. In the 1680s he intensified persecution of Protestants; his actions made the edict [of Nantes] nothing but a scrap of paper. Finally in 1685 he declared that the majority of French Protestants had been converted to Catholicism and that therefore there was no need for the edict. It was revoked.

Now Louis launched a reign of terror. He refused to allow French Protestants to leave the country. He promised that those who remained could worship privately, free of persecution, but never kept the promise. Their churches were torn down, their gatherings forbidden, their children made to attend mass. The Waldensians in Savoy were massacred, and six hundred Protestants "caught making assemblies" were executed. Perhaps two hundred and fifty thousand fled abroad to escape persecution....

Source: Milton Meltzer, *Ten Kings and the Worlds They Ruled*, Orchard Books

2. According to Milton Meltzer, what was one action Louis XIV took in an attempt to control the Protestants in France?

Document 9

In this excerpt, Barbara Tuchman is commenting on the effects of Louis XIV's policy toward the Huguenots.

... Recent [1960s and 1970s scholarly] studies have concluded that the economic damage done to France by the Huguenot [French Protestants] emigration has been overrated, it being only one element in the larger damage caused by the wars. Of the political damage, however, there is no question. The flood of anti-French pamphlets and satires issued by Huguenot printers and their friends in all the cities where they settled aroused antagonism to France to new heat. The Protestant coalition against France was strengthened when Brandenburg entered into alliance with Holland, and the smaller German principalities joined. In France itself the Protestant faith was reinvigorated by persecution and the feud with Catholics revived. A prolonged revolt of the Camisard Huguenots in the Cévennes, a mountainous region of the south, brought on a cruel war of repression, weakening the state. Here and among other Huguenot communities which remained in France, a receptive base was created for the Revolution to come...

Source: Barbara W. Tuchman, *The March of Folly: From Troy to Vietnam*, Alfred A. Knopf, 1984

3. According to Barbara Tuchman, what was one political consequence of Louis XIV's policy toward the Huguenots?

Summary Questions

Directions: Answer these two questions using information from the documents. You do NOT have to cite the documents (YET), but as you look back to the documents for supporting information, circle anything that relates to these two questions and write an A or B next to the circle. This will help later.

A. Describe actions taken by Louis XIV that show this individual was an absolute ruler:

B. Discuss the extent to which this Louis XIV's use of absolute power helped and/or hurt his country or his people: