Age of Absolute Monarchs 1550 - 1800
Do Now

• If you had ABSOLUTE control of the school – what would you do?
Quick Introduction...

- **What is an ABSOLUTE MONARCH?**
  - A king or queen who has total power, and seeks to control all aspects of society

- **What gives the king their power?**
  - *Divine Right* – belief that God gave the king his “right” to be king (God’s Representative)

Diagram:

- Feudalism → Renaissance → Growth of Cities → Growth of Nationalism
- Need for Central Power → Evolution of Absolutism
What does it mean to be Absolute?

• 3 key components
  ▫ **Strong Central Government** – no one can stand in your way
  ▫ **Strong military** – Conquer and defend
  ▫ **Strong economy** – create wealth to support to the country
Phillip II

**Country:** Spain

**Years:** 1556 - 1598

**Achievements:**
- Hard-working ruler who ushered in the Golden age of Spain
- Militant Catholic
- Led the Counter-Reformation against Protestants
- Led many military campaigns

**Downfalls:**
- Spanish armada defeated by England.
- After Philip II Spanish power slowly declined.
- Rulers taxed people too much and spend money on overseas wars.
Louis XIV

Country: France
Years: 1643 – 1715 (72 years!)

Achievements:
• Called himself the “Sun King” and said “I am the state.”
• built palace of Versailles, made France a wealthy cultural center.
• Made colonies in new world stronger.
• Strongest army in Europe

Downfalls:
• He used the wealth for his own benefit
• peasants starved – high taxes
• Started 4 wars for personal glory
• His death left France weak
The Life of an Absolute Monarch
Versailles Statistics

- 2,000 acres of grounds
- 12 miles of roads
- 27 miles of trellises
- 200,000 trees
- 210,000 flowers planted every year
- 80 miles of rows of trees
- 55 acres surface area of the Grand Canal
- 12 miles of enclosing walls
- 50 fountains and 620 fountain nozzles
- 21 miles of water conduits
- 3,600 cubic meters per hour: water consumed
- 26 acres of roof
- 51,210 square meters of floors
- 2,153 windows
- 700 rooms
- 67 staircases
- 6,000 paintings
- 1,500 drawings and 15,000 engravings
- 2,100 sculptures
- 5,000 items of furniture and objects d'art
- 150 varieties of apple and peach trees in the Vegetable Garden
Versailles Today
Palais de Versailles
Palais de Versailles
Versailles Palace, Park Side
Garden View of Versailles
Chateau de Versailles
The Orangery
Fountains, Fountains, and More Fountains!
And More Fountains!
And More Fountains!
And Even More Fountains!!!
Hall of Mirrors
Louis XIV Furniture
Russia: How was it different from Europe?

• Religion: Russians were Eastern Orthodox whereas Europeans were Catholic or Protestant.

• Geography: Russia was isolated from Western Europe

• History: Russia was not involved in the Renaissance or the Age of Exploration

• Result: Russians distrusted and avoided foreigners
Peter the Great

**Country:** Russia  
**Years:** 1682 - 1725  
**Achievements:**
- St. Petersburg = new industries, education, warm water port (Baltic Sea),
- extended borders,
- unified the nation, reduced power of nobility,
- gained control of Russian Orthodox Church.
- Created Middle class, Westernize and modernize Russia

**Downfalls:**
- Did not reach Black sea,
- reforms died with him.
- Used terror to enforced his policies
- created a gap between rich and poor
Catherine the Great

Country: Russia

Years: 1762 - 1796

Achievements:
• German princess who came to Russia.
• Embraced Western Ideas (French).
• Wanted to Expand Russia’s borders. Partition of Poland.
• Enlightened Ideas - became an Enlightened Despot

Downfalls:
• Ruthless ruler,
• Crushed peasants.
Frederick the Great

Country: Prussia

Years: 1740 - 1786

Achievements:
• Seized Austrian lands,
• disciplined, strong army,
• enlightened despot.

Downfalls:
• Badly treated
• fled the country.
Elizabeth I

Country: England
Years: 1533 - 1603

Achievements:
• Last of the Tudor Monarchs.
• Was successful in keeping a good balance between Catholics and Protestants.
• Worked together with Parliament. Both Consulted and Controlled Parliament.
• Did not discuss foreign policy or her marriage

Downfalls:
• Died without a child.
• Economic problems.
• Leads to a “century of revolution”. Stuarts vs. Parliament.
• First heir James I fought with parliament.

1485–1603

1603–1625

1625–1649

1640–1653
The Long Parliament meets. Faced with economic problems and invasions by Scotland, Charles is forced to call Parliament. The Long Parliament, as it became known, works to steadily expand its powers. Eventually Charles strikes back, adopting the motto “Give Caesar his Due.”
1642–1649
The English Civil War rages.
War breaks out between Parliament’s Roundheads (right) and Charles I’s Cavaliers (left). The parliamentary forces, led by Oliver Cromwell, eventually win. In 1649, Charles is executed.

1649–1660
The English Commonwealth begins and ends.
Abolishing the monarchy and House of Lords, Parliament rules as a commonwealth with Cromwell as leader. Problems plague the nation, and the Commonwealth falls apart upon Cromwell’s death in 1658. Groups in favor of monarchy begin to gain power.

1660–1685
The monarchy is restored.
Charles II works with Parliament to repair the shattered nation, but clashes with Parliament when he works to restore Catholicism. In 1678, Charles dissolves Parliament and builds the monarchy’s power. His successor, James II, continues to push for Catholic power, and incites a backlash. James II flees England in 1688.

1688
The Glorious Revolution assures Parliament’s power.
William and Mary become England’s monarchs with Parliament’s blessing—provided that they agree to very limited powers under Parliament’s domination.

Thinking Critically
1. Recognize Point of View What does Charles I’s usage of the phrase “Give Caesar his Due” tell you about his view of royal power?
2. Recognize Ideologies How did the religious beliefs of key people on this timeline shape political outcomes?
What are the Pros and Cons of an Absolute Monarch?
Possible answers

- Benefit: Consistent leadership is good for business
- Drawback: Decision-making depends on the whims of a single person
- Benefit: The people might gain protection
- Drawback: people may be punished if their religion differs from the monarch
- Benefit: The people may gain pride in their country
Summary of Absolute Monarchy

• **Achievements** –
  ▫ weakened the nobles,
  ▫ provided strong central government,
  ▫ generally furthered growth of nation states

• **Weaknesses** –
  ▫ nation’s welfare depended on one person,
  ▫ sacrificed national well-being for personal or family interests,
  ▫ led nations into costly wars,
  ▫ disregarded the rights of the common people
Enlightened Despots

- Frederick the Great, Prussia; Catherine the Great, Russia, Joseph II, Austria
- Supported literature, art, music, science, education, some reforms
- However, autocracy, class distinctions, unfair taxation, and frequent wars undid any reforms they made