Power After War

Trace how war and peace changed rulers' power

SS24.8.14a "Explain how the Thirty Years' War and the Peace of Westphalia led to the rise of absolutism."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two ways the war created problems for princes, circle two powers confirmed by the peace, and number one sentence that shows a limit on a ruler's power. Use your marks to trace how war and peace could lead to stronger rulers.

From Ruined Fields to Stronger Rulers

1. In 1618, fighting began inside the Holy Roman Empire, a group of lands in central Europe ruled by an emperor and many local princes. The Thirty Years' War drew in armies from other countries and lasted until 1648. Soldiers seized food, ruined fields, and forced families to flee. In some regions, rulers faced empty farms and fewer taxpayers. To protect their lands, princes wanted reliable troops and steady money. War damage gave them a powerful argument for collecting taxes and directing defense from a stronger central government.

2. In 1648, treaties called the Peace of Westphalia ended the fighting and confirmed important powers for rulers within the empire. Each prince could choose whether the territory would be officially Catholic, Lutheran, or Reformed. Princes could also make alliances with other states, provided those alliances did not harm the emperor or the empire. These rights gave princes more room to direct affairs in their own lands. The peace did not hand them unlimited power: they still faced imperial rules and people at home who resisted new demands.

3. Frederick William, ruler of Brandenburg-Prussia, shows how these changes could help absolutism grow. His lands suffered badly during the war, and he argued that a permanent army was needed for safety. He gathered taxes to pay soldiers and used appointed officials to manage parts of his lands. As the peace confirmed princes' authority in their territories, he had more room to pursue these plans. He still had to make deals with powerful nobles. Absolutism was a push toward concentrating a ruler's power, not a switch that made rulers all-powerful.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did damage from the war help princes argue for more control over taxes and defense?

2. How did the Peace of Westphalia give princes more control within their territories?

3. How did both the war and the peace help Frederick William concentrate power?

4. Why does Frederick William's example show that the rise of absolutism did not make rulers all-powerful?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence memo to an imagined prince in 1649. Recommend a policy for a war-damaged territory, explain how the war and the peace each support it, and identify one obstacle to ruling alone.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two ways the war created problems for princes, circle two powers confirmed by the peace, and number one sentence that shows a limit on a ruler's power. Use your marks to trace how war and peace could lead to stronger rulers. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did damage from the war help princes argue for more control over taxes and defense?	**Ruined fields and fewer taxpayers made recovery and protection difficult. Princes used those problems to argue that they needed steady taxes and reliable troops.**
2	How did the Peace of Westphalia give princes more control within their territories?	**It confirmed their right to choose an official religion from three options and to make alliances that did not harm the emperor or empire.**
3	How did both the war and the peace help Frederick William concentrate power?	**War damage supported his argument for a permanent army funded by taxes. The peace confirmed princes' authority in their territories, giving him more room to pursue his plans.**
4	Why does Frederick William's example show that the rise of absolutism did not make rulers all-powerful?	**He strengthened his army and administration but still had to make deals with powerful nobles.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would ask local leaders to fund guards for the roads between villages. War left fields ruined and families displaced, so safer travel could help people return and trade. The Peace of Westphalia confirmed my right to make alliances within imperial limits, so I could seek help from a neighboring ruler to protect those roads. Local nobles might resist new taxes, so I would have to negotiate with them.

Accept different policies if the response connects a war-created need and a power confirmed by the peace to the policy. The obstacle should show that the prince's authority was not unlimited.