The Sun King's Power

Trace how Louis XIV gained and used authority in France.

SS24.8.14b "Analyze the rise of absolutism in France under Louis XIV, including the divine right of kings."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two actions that helped Louis XIV concentrate power, circle the belief he used to justify his authority, and write 1 beside a cost of his rule.

How Louis XIV Ruled France

1. When Louis XIV was a child, uprisings called the Fronde shook France. Powerful nobles and other groups challenged the royal government while Louis's mother ruled for him. The experience helped convince Louis that divided authority threatened order. In 1661, after his chief minister died, Louis began to govern without appointing another chief minister. He made final decisions himself, but he still needed officials to carry them out. This shift strengthened the crown's control over policy and marked a major step toward absolutism, a system in which a monarch holds supreme political power.

2. Louis also claimed the divine right of kings: he believed God gave him authority to rule. Under this belief, subjects owed their king obedience, and nobles could not claim an equal right to govern. Louis built Versailles into a grand palace and center of government. There, many nobles competed for royal attention and favors instead of building independent power in their home regions. While nobles attended court, royal officials called intendants supervised local government in the provinces. Together, court life and provincial officials helped Louis draw power toward himself.

3. Absolute power did not mean that Louis could make every problem vanish. Taxes fell unevenly, and some privileged groups paid less than others. Louis fought expensive wars to expand French influence, increasing pressure on the treasury and on ordinary people. In 1685, he revoked an earlier law that had protected many French Protestants, known as Huguenots, and his government increased pressure on them to convert. Many fled France. These choices show both the reach of royal authority and its costs: the king could direct policy, but his decisions could weaken the country.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How might Louis's experience during the Fronde help explain his decision not to appoint another chief minister?

2. How did the divine right of kings support Louis's claim to rule over the nobles?

3. How did Versailles and the intendants work in different places to strengthen Louis's control?

4. How do Louis's wars show that making final decisions did not give him unlimited power?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a bridge collapses in a French province during Louis XIV's reign. In four or five sentences, explain how Louis could use his claim to divine right and one method of governing from the passage to respond, then explain one obstacle or cost his response might face.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 8 · SS24.8.14b

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two actions that helped Louis XIV concentrate power, circle the belief he used to justify his authority, and write 1 beside a cost of his rule. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How might Louis's experience during the Fronde help explain his decision not to appoint another chief minister?	**The Fronde showed Louis how challenges to royal authority could threaten order, so governing without another chief minister kept final decisions in his hands.**
2	How did the divine right of kings support Louis's claim to rule over the nobles?	**Louis claimed that God gave him authority, so nobles could not claim an equal right to govern and were expected to obey him.**
3	How did Versailles and the intendants work in different places to strengthen Louis's control?	**At Versailles, nobles sought Louis's favor instead of building power at home. In the provinces, intendants supervised local government for the crown.**
4	How do Louis's wars show that making final decisions did not give him unlimited power?	**Louis could choose to fight wars, but their expense put pressure on the treasury and ordinary people.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Louis could say that God gave him the authority to order repairs to the bridge. He could send an intendant to organize the work in the province. Paying workers and buying supplies would cost money when wars had already strained the treasury. If taxes were raised to cover repairs, ordinary people might bear much of the burden.

Accept explanations that connect the Fronde, divine right, Versailles, or intendants to greater royal control. For the open task, accept a plausible response that applies divine right and a governing method to the bridge collapse while identifying a cost or obstacle supported by the passage.