Power and Rank

Compare rulers and social structures in Japan and France

SS24.8.16c "Compare the policies of absolutism and social structures of the Tokugawa Shogunate in Japan to European monarchies."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one policy that limited powerful landholders in each country, circle the words that show who held political power, and write J or F beside two social groups from each place.

Who Held Power?

1. In the late 1600s, a French noble might spend months at the Palace of Versailles. King Louis XIV drew nobles to his court, where their status depended partly on his favor. By keeping them close, he reduced their freedom to build power far from Paris. In Japan, Tokugawa shoguns also watched powerful landholders. They required daimyo, regional lords, to spend alternating years in Edo, the shogun's capital. Their families usually remained there when the daimyo returned home. Both systems made it harder for regional leaders to challenge the central ruler.

2. Yet the rulers did not hold the same position. Louis XIV was France's king and claimed that God gave him the right to rule. He concentrated authority in his own hands, although laws and local customs could still limit what he could do. In Japan, the emperor remained an important symbol, but the shogun exercised most political and military power. Tokugawa shoguns restricted overseas trade and contact with foreign countries, though some trade continued at approved ports. France also regulated trade, but its merchants traded widely beyond Europe.

3. Rank shaped daily life in both places, but the groups were not identical. In Tokugawa Japan, samurai held a high inherited status and served rulers as warriors or officials. Farmers, artisans, and merchants were ranked below them in the official order; some people were pushed outside that order. In France, clergy and nobles held special privileges, including many tax exemptions. Most people belonged to the Third Estate, which included city workers, merchants, and peasants. A wealthy French merchant might have money but fewer legal privileges than a noble.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Louis XIV and the Tokugawa shoguns each limit the power of regional landholders?

2. How was the shogun's position different from Louis XIV's position as ruler?

3. How did merchants' places in the social order compare in Japan and France?

4. What was one similarity and one difference between the two governments' trade policies?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A museum visitor says these societies were identical because both had powerful rulers. Write a 5 to 6 sentence museum label that corrects this claim by comparing how rulers controlled powerful groups and how social rank worked in each place.

ANSWER KEY

Power and Rank

GRADE 8 · SS24.8.16c

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one policy that limited powerful landholders in each country, circle the words that show who held political power, and write J or F beside two social groups from each place. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Louis XIV and the Tokugawa shoguns each limit the power of regional landholders?	**Louis XIV drew nobles to Versailles, where they depended partly on his favor. The shoguns required daimyo to spend alternating years in Edo, while their families usually stayed there.**
2	How was the shogun's position different from Louis XIV's position as ruler?	**Louis XIV was France's king. The shogun held most political and military power in Japan, but an emperor remained an important symbol.**
3	How did merchants' places in the social order compare in Japan and France?	**Japanese merchants ranked below samurai in the official order. French merchants belonged to the Third Estate and had fewer legal privileges than nobles.**
4	What was one similarity and one difference between the two governments' trade policies?	**Both regulated trade. The shoguns restricted overseas trade and contact, while French merchants traded widely beyond Europe.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Both the Tokugawa shoguns and Louis XIV tried to keep powerful landholders from becoming rivals. In Japan, required stays in Edo kept daimyo under the shogun's watch, even though they ruled regions. In France, time at Versailles made nobles depend partly on the king's favor for status. Unlike Louis XIV, who was king, the shogun ruled while an emperor remained an important symbol. Samurai ranked high in Japan, while French nobles and clergy held special privileges above most people.

Accept different wording that accurately compares both societies. Students should not claim that Japan ended all foreign trade or that Louis XIV faced no limits on his power.