Crown and Claim

How rulers claimed and exercised power

9-12.WC.42 "Identify the characteristics of Absolutism and Divine Right of Kings (e.g. Louis XIV, James I, Charles I)."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two ways monarchs concentrated power, circle two claims about the source of royal authority, and number two limits or challenges to a monarch's power. Use your marks to distinguish what rulers claimed from what they could do.

The Power Behind the Crown

1. A royal order arrives in a town, telling officials what to do without asking local leaders to vote. This reflects a central feature of absolutism: the monarch seeks to hold the highest governing authority and make major decisions without sharing power with representative bodies. Some monarchs defended that authority through divine right, the belief that God had chosen them to rule. Under this view, a king answered to God rather than to his subjects for his right to govern. Such claims did not make royal power unlimited in practice. Monarchs still needed officials, money, and cooperation to carry out their orders.

2. In France, Louis XIV worked to strengthen his control over government. He brought many nobles into court life at Versailles, where access to the king could shape their fortunes. He also relied on royal officials called intendants to carry out policies in the provinces, reducing the influence of powerful local nobles. Louis presented himself as the center of government and expected obedience, but he could not personally enforce every order across France. Wars placed heavy demands on the treasury, and raising enough money remained a persistent problem. His reign shows both the reach and the practical limits of absolutist rule.

3. In England, James I argued that kings received their authority from God, not from Parliament. Parliament, however, claimed an important role in making laws and approving taxes. James's son Charles I also defended strong royal authority. From 1629 to 1640, Charles ruled without calling Parliament and raised money through measures that many subjects opposed, including ship money. Conflict over taxation, religion, and the balance of power helped lead to civil war. Charles was executed in 1649. The English struggle shows that a claim of divine right did not guarantee that subjects or Parliament would accept a king's decisions.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What two characteristics of absolutism appear in the passage?

2. How did Louis XIV try to strengthen royal control over France? Identify two actions.

3. What did James I claim was the source of a king's authority, and how did that claim differ from Parliament's view of its role?

4. Which actions of Charles I show his support for strong royal authority, and what challenge to his power followed?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a three-sentence report about an imaginary monarch in a situation not described in the passage. Show one action that concentrates governing power, one claim based on divine right, and one practical obstacle to the monarch's wishes.

ANSWER KEY

Crown and Claim

HIGH SCHOOL · 9-12.WC.42

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two ways monarchs concentrated power, circle two claims about the source of royal authority, and number two limits or challenges to a monarch's power. Use your marks to distinguish what rulers claimed from what they could do. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What two characteristics of absolutism appear in the passage?	**An absolutist monarch seeks the highest governing authority and makes major decisions without sharing power with representative bodies.**
2	How did Louis XIV try to strengthen royal control over France? Identify two actions.	**He drew nobles into court life at Versailles and used intendants to carry out royal policies in the provinces.**
3	What did James I claim was the source of a king's authority, and how did that claim differ from Parliament's view of its role?	**James claimed that authority came from God, while Parliament claimed a role in making laws and approving taxes.**
4	Which actions of Charles I show his support for strong royal authority, and what challenge to his power followed?	**He ruled without calling Parliament and raised money through opposed measures such as ship money. Conflict helped lead to civil war and his execution.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Queen Mira ordered every town council to send its tax plans to her office for approval. She said God had chosen her to rule, so her authority did not depend on a vote. Yet merchants refused to lend money for her new fleet, forcing her to delay construction.

Accept accurate paraphrases supported by the passage. For Part 3, look for a distinct example of concentrated power, a claim that God grants royal authority, and a realistic limit on carrying out the monarch's wishes.