

Title: Age of Absolutism

Lesson Author: Bernadette Blackburn and Sherry Elliott

Key Words: absolutism, czar, boyar, serf, Oprichnina, Oprichniks

Grade Level: 10th grade Modern World History

Time Allotted: 1.5 hours (1 block period)

Rationale/ Purpose (so what?)

It is important for students to understand the social, political, and economic changes that began to occur during the age of absolutism in France, Prussia, and Russia as monarchs began to amass more power. Students need to understand that the changes that were implemented during absolute rule so that they can comprehend how the discontent that began to grow during this era ultimately laid the seeds for the revolutions that would come.

Key Concept(s) include definition: Absolutism: During the 1500s to the 1700s many European rulers solidified their authority exercising supreme, unlimited power.

NCSS Standard(s)

SOL Information (As written in the Virginia SOL "Curriculum Framework" for the grade level)

NCSS Theme (s) with indicators:

Theme Two: Time, Continuity, and Change: Teachers of social studies at all school levels should provide developmentally appropriate experiences as they guide learners in the study of time, continuity, and change. They should:

- Have learners apply key concepts from the study of history such as time, chronology, causality, change, conflict, and complexity to explain, analyze, and show connections among the patterns of historical change and continuity
- Ask learners to identify and describe significant historical periods and patterns of change within and across cultures such as the rise of nation-states, and social, economic, and political revolutions
- Guide learners as they systematically employ processes of critical historical inquiry to reconstruct and reinterpret the past

Theme Six: Power, Authority, and Governance: Teachers of social studies at all levels should provide developmentally appropriate experiences as they guide learners in the study of power, authority, and governance. They should:

- Help students to explain the purpose of government and how its powers are acquired, used, and justified
- Provide opportunities for learners to examine issues involving the rights, roles, and status

<p>of groups in relation to the general welfare</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have learners explain conditions, actions, and motivations that contribute to conflict within and among nations • Challenge learners to apply concepts such as power, role, status, justice, and influence to the examination of persistent issues and social problems • Guide learners to explain how governments attempt to achieve their stated ideals at home and abroad <p>SOL: WHII.6b The student will demonstrate knowledge of scientific, political, economic, and religious changes during the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries by b) describing the Age of Absolutism, including the monarchies of Louis XIV, Frederick the Great, and Peter the Great</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Essential Knowledge (minimum for SOL Resource Guide)</p> <p>Characteristics of absolute monarchies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centralization of power • Concept of rule by divine right <p>Absolute monarchs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Louis XIV-France, Palace of Versailles as a symbol of royal power • Frederick the Great-Prussia, emphasis on military power • Peter the Great-Russia, westernization of Russia 	<p style="text-align: center;">Essential Skills (minimum for SOL Resource Guide)</p> <p>Identify and compare contemporary political boundaries with the location of civilizations, empires, and kingdoms (WHII.1d)</p>

Guiding Question:

How did absolutist rulers change life and policy in their countries, both positively and negatively?

Assessment Tool(s):

Informal assessment: While students work in small groups and during student presentations their level of comprehension will be gauged. Their ability to discern key points from the handouts provided and synthesize the information into a presentation that their peers understand will also be evaluated.

Formal assessment: The students in class writing assignment will be worth 10 points as they illustrate their understanding of the elements of absolutist rule. In addition, the students will take a ten question short answer quiz the following day.

Background: How does this lesson fit into a unit of study? Looking backwards, looking forwards

Prior to this lesson students will have explored the empires of Asia so students will be able to compare and contrast the western monarchies with the eastern empires. After investigating the absolute monarchies students will begin to study the political, social, and scientific revolutions that began occurring in the 1500s.

Lesson Objective(s):

1. Students will be able to define absolutism.
2. Students will be able to construct an understanding of the individual ruler they are assigned as they prepare to present the material.
3. Students will be able to recognize how the policies of the rulers during the age of absolutism led to revolutionary thinking.
4. Students will be able to collect and organize the information presented by their peers.
5. Students will be able to compare and contrast the rules of Louis XIV, Frederick the Great, and Peter the Great.

Historical Source(s):
(include copies in materials section)

- Pictures of each ruler

Additional Materials/Resources: (include copies in materials section)

- Student Text: World History: The Human Experience
- <http://www.geograhia.com/Russia/rushis04.htm>
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick_II_of_Prussia
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ivan_IV
- <http://www.xs4all.nl/~kvenjb/madrus.htm#grosny>
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cardinal_Richelieu
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis_XIV_of_France#Early_years
- <http://www.bartleby.com/65/th/ThirtyYe.html>
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick_William
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick_William_I_of_Prussia

Procedure/Process:

JUST DO IT! The "Hook": (A high-interest activity that introduces new content with connections to students' prior knowledge. Between 1-5 minutes (Could also introduce the days guiding question)

Just Do It: If you had absolute control over the school what changes would you implement? (4 minutes) [Material A]

Obj # See above.	Processing Activity and Procedure - include directions, question frames, assignment detail to be given to students (these should all be made into explicit materials (e.g. see material A), and time estimates	Check for Evidence of Understanding -Either Formal or Informal- (Checks Essential Knowledge and Skills)
Just do it. Objective 1	If you had absolute control over the school what changes would you implement? (4 minutes) [Material A]	Ask for a few student volunteers to share their responses to the posed question. (4 minutes)
Transition:	As you can see many students if given absolute control over the school would abuse their power to accomplish their own priorities. A few students would attempt to use their power to improve the school, but the temptation to use the power as you wish is a very potent lure. Just as you all were tempted to misuse your power rulers who had absolute control over their countries during the 1600s and 1700s also often used their power to not only do good, but also to further their own agenda. In order to explore the rulers who had absolute control you will now be divided into groups to conduct a focused study of an absolute ruler and the events that allowed them to solidify their power.	
Objective 2,3	In your small group you will have 20 minutes to read about and prepare a 3-5 minute presentation on your ruler. Your presentation should highlight the main attributes of your individual's rule. (20 minutes) [Material B, C, D, E]	Monitor small group discussions to ensure students are staying on task and are identifying the key concepts and are organizing them into a short presentation.
Transition:	Okay, now we are ready to begin the presentations. As students deliver their presentations be sure to write the key ideas they present in your Venn Diagram . I will also jot down main ideas they mention on the board.	
Objective 4	Each group has approximately 3-5 minutes to present the key ideas/points about their ruler and their lasting impact. The teacher will also interject to reinforce ideas or mention pertinent information omitted by students. (35 minutes)	As students are giving their presentations their level of understanding will be gauged to determine if they were able to identify and synthesize the main ideas.
Transition:	Now that we have filled out our Venn Diagram, what can be put in the sections that overlap? What similarities do you see between the various rulers? Based on the similarities noted, how should we define the term absolutism?	
Objective 5	Students will offer similarities they notice between the rulers so that we can construct a definition of absolutism. (7 minutes)	Students understanding of the material covered will be gauged as they create a definition for absolutism. I will informally

		assess if they have comprehended the main elements of absolutist rule.
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Closure/Writing Prompt: For class work students will write a letter to the ruler of their choice from the perspective of a commoner. They will include what they like and dislike about the changes occurring and the new policies being implemented in their country. (20 minutes) [Material F]

Materials (one resource per page- so it becomes a teacher or student handout, or overhead directions or ppt presentation):

Material A: Overhead with instructions for Just Do It

Material B: Handouts on rulers

Material C: Handouts with images of rulers

Material D: Guiding Questions handout

[Material E](#): Venn Diagram to compare and contrast the rulers and the three different countries

Material F: Overhead with class work assignment directions

Material G: Rubric for grading in class writing assignment

Material H: Quiz for following day

Teacher Notes (Reflections/clarifications/explanations):

- Divide the class into the following groups:
 - Group A:
 - Group B:
 - Group C:
 - Group D:
- Be sure to alert the group of how long they have to read the material and prepare for the presentation. Give them a two-minute warning while preparing for the presentation so they can begin to wrap things up. Be sure to tell them how long the presentation is expected to be.
- Remind students of presentation protocol:
 - Speak slowly and clearly
 - Audience should be respectful of presenters
- After class work is completed and turned in, remind students to study for the short answer quiz that they will have the following day on the absolute rulers explored.

Material A:

Overhead: Opening Activity

Just Do It:

If you had absolute control over the school, what changes would you implement?

Create a list of at least 5 changes you would make or 5 things you would do.

Material B: Ruler Information

Cardinal Richelieu

Government Policies

Cardinal Richelieu's policy involved two primary goals: centralization of power in France and opposition to the Hapsburg dynasty (which ruled in both Austria and Spain). Before Cardinal Richelieu the nation's political structure was largely feudalistic, with powerful nobles and a wide variety of laws in different regions. Parts of the nobility periodically conspired against the King, raised private armies, and allied themselves with foreign powers. He sought to establish a more centralized government. Local and even religious interests were subordinated to those of the whole nation, and of the embodiment of the nation—the King. In order to consolidate power in France, Richelieu sought to weaken the influence of the feudal nobility. In 1626, he abolished the position of Constable of France and he ordered the destruction of all fortified castles, excepting only those needed to defend against invaders. Thus, he stripped the princes, dukes, and lesser aristocrats of important defences that could have been used against the King's armies during rebellions. The nobles kept their social prestige, but lost political power.

Another obstacle to the centralization of power was religious division in France. The Huguenots (France's Protestants), one of the largest political and religious factions in the country, controlled a significant military force, and were in rebellion. Moreover, the English king, Charles I, declared war on France in an attempt to aid the Huguenot faction. In 1627, Richelieu ordered the army to siege the Huguenot stronghold of La Rochelle; the Cardinal personally commanded the troops. English troops under the Duke of Buckingham led an expedition to help the citizens of La Rochelle, but failed tremendously. The city, however, remained firm for over a year before surrendering in 1628. Although the Huguenots suffered a major defeat at La Rochelle, they continued to fight. Protestant forces were defeated in 1629 and Rohan, leader of the Huguenots submitted to the terms of the Peace of Alais. Religious toleration for Protestants, which had first been granted by the Edict of Nantes in 1598, was permitted to continue; however, the Cardinal abolished their political rights and protections.

Foreign Policy

Equally critical for France was Richelieu's foreign policy, which helped restrain Habsburg influence in Europe. Habsburg Spain exploited the French conflict with the Huguenots to extend its influence in northern Italy. It funded the Huguenot rebels in order to keep the French army occupied, meanwhile expanding its Italian dominions. Richelieu, however, responded aggressively and he personally led the French army to northern Italy to restrain Spain.

Life Under Richelieu

Richelieu is also notable for the authoritarian measures he employed to maintain power. He censored the press, established a large network of internal spies, forbid the discussion of political matters in public assemblies such as the Parlement de Paris (a court of justice), and had those who dared to conspire against him prosecuted and executed. The Canadian historian and philosopher John Ralston Saul has referred to Richelieu as the "father of the modern nation-state, modern centralised power [and] the modern secret service." The Cardinal's motives are the focus of much debate among historians; some see him as a patriotic supporter of the monarchy, whilst others view him as a power-hungry cynic.

Cardinal Richelieu was a famous patron of the arts. He believed by supporting French culture national unity would be strengthened. Himself an author of various religious and political works (most notably his *Political Testament*), he funded the literary careers of many writers. He was a lover of the theatre, which was not considered a respectable art form during that era. Richelieu was also the founder and patron of the French Academy. It promoted French literature, and continues to be the official authority on the French language.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cardinal_Richelieu

Louis XIV: Bourbon Dynasty

Religious Policy

Louis believed that in order to achieve absolute power he had to first achieve a religiously unified nation — specifically a Catholic one. He had already begun the persecution of the Huguenots by excluding them from public office and by quartering soldiers in their homes. In October 1685, Louis increased the persecution of the Huguenots by issuing the Edict of Fontainebleau, revoking the Edict of Nantes. The new edict banished from the realm any Protestant minister who refused to convert to Roman Catholicism. Protestant schools and institutions were banned. Children born into Protestant families were to be forcibly baptised by Roman Catholic priests, and Protestant places of worship were demolished. The Edict precluded individuals from publicly practicing or exercising the religion, but not from merely believing in it. Although the Edict formally denied Huguenots permission to leave France, 200,000 of them left in any event, taking with them all their skills in commerce and trade. The Edict proved economically damaging, and Sébastien Le Prestre, Marquis de Vauban, one of Louis XIV's most influential ministers, publicly condemned the measure.

In pursuance of his absolutist aims, Louis attempted to increase his influence over the Church. He convened an assembly of clergymen in November 1681. Before it was dissolved in June 1682, it had agreed to the Declaration of the Clergy of France. The power of the King of France was increased, and the power of the Pope reduced. The Pope was not allowed to send papal legates to France without the King's consent; those legates, furthermore, required further approval before they could exercise their power. Bishops were not to leave France without the royal approbation; no government officials could be excommunicated for acts committed in pursuance of their duties. The King was allowed to enact ecclesiastical laws, and all regulations made by the Pope were deemed invalid in France without the assent of the monarch. The Declaration, however, was not accepted by the Pope.

Government Policy

Louis attempted to reduce the influence of the nobility, continuing the work of Cardinal Richelieu and Cardinal Mazarin. He believed that his power would prevail only if he filled the high executive offices with commoners, because while he could reduce a commoner to a nonentity by dismissing him, he could not destroy the influence of a great nobleman. Thus Louis forced the nobles to serve him ceremonially as courtiers, whilst he appointed commoners as ministers and regional governors. As courtiers, the nobles grew ever weaker. Jean-Baptiste

Colbert was a key member of Louis' political advisers and he believed that the government had to manipulate the economy. Despite hiring top advisors from the middle class he did free the nobles from paying taxes so the poor carried most of the tax burden. The tax system remained unreformed so there was little reason to improve your farm or household because if you did you would have to pay higher taxes. The tax system varied from region to region so many people moved from areas that had high taxes to regions with lower taxes.

Court Life

Louis had converted the Chateau of Versailles outside Paris into a lavish royal palace; he moved there along with the royal court on May 6, 1682. Court life centered on grandeur; courtiers had to display expensive luxuries, to dress with suitable magnificence and to constantly attend balls, dinners, performances, and celebrations. Thus, many noblemen either had to give up all influence, or to depend entirely on the King for grants and subsidies. Instead of exercising power, the nobles vied for the honor of dining at the King's table or the privilege of carrying a candlestick as the King retired to his bedroom. Louis had several reasons for building Versailles. Most painfully obvious: he disliked Paris. During the nobility-led Fronde rebellion (1648-1653), insurgents captured the young Louis and held him hostage. The nobility had hoped to limit royal power, but were ultimately defeated, yet Louis never forgot this attempt to limit royal control and he wanted to ensure it did not happen again. He decided to build a palace outside Paris so he could watch the goings-on of all of his country. Versailles also served as a dazzling setting for state affairs and for receptions of foreign dignitaries.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis_XIV_of_France#Early_years

Louis XIV

Conflict: The Spanish Succession

Louis XIV's foreign policy was one of expansion because he wanted to expand the glory and power of France. Other European powers were intimidated by Louis' goals so to protect their own interests they allied together against France.

Toward the end of Louis XIV's reign the Spanish throne became an object of debate as the Spanish throne came up for grabs. The Spanish inheritance offered a much-sought prize — Charles II ruled not only Spain, but also Naples, Sicily, Milan, the Spanish Netherlands and a vast colonial empire — in all, twenty-two different realms. Both France and the Holy Roman Empire vied for the Spanish Crown. Many European powers feared that if either France or the Holy Roman Empire came to control Spain, the balance of power in Europe would be threatened. The English King William III proposed another candidate, the Bavarian Prince Joseph Ferdinand. Charles II in 1698, named Joseph Ferdinand as his heir, assigning to him the entire Spanish inheritance.

The entire issue opened up again when smallpox claimed the Bavarian prince six months later. In 1700, as he lay dying, Charles II named Louis XIV's grandson the heir to the Spanish throne. Consequently, when Charles II died on November 1, 1700, Philip, Duc d'Anjou became Philip V, King of Spain. Louis XIV's opponents reluctantly accepted Philip V as King of Spain. Louis, however, acted too aggressively. In 1701, he cut off English imports to France. Moreover, Louis ceased to acknowledge William III as King of England, instead supporting the claim of James II's son and heir, James Francis Edward Stuart

(the "Old Pretender"). England consequently entered into an alliance with the United Provinces, the Holy Roman Empire and most German states. Bavaria, Portugal and Savoy aided Louis XIV and Philip V.

The subsequent War of Succession continued for most of the remainder of Louis XIV's reign. The endeavour proved costly for Louis XIV; by 1709, he had lost almost all of the power France had amassed during his reign. While it became clear that France could not conquer the entire Spanish inheritance, it also seemed clear that its opponents could not overthrow Philip V in Spain. Louis XIV and Philip V made peace with Great Britain and the United Provinces in 1713 with the Treaty of Utrecht. Peace with the Holy Roman Empire came with the Treaty of Baden in 1714. The general settlement recognised Philip V as King of Spain and ruler of the Spanish colonies in the Americas. Spain's territory in the Low Countries and Italy went to the Holy Roman Empire. Louis, furthermore, agreed to end his support for the Old Pretender's claims to the throne of Great Britain. In addition, France was forced to give up the North American provinces of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland to England. The war was very costly for France and it drained the French treasury, increased poverty, and created opposition to Louis XIV's rule.

Legacy

Louis XIV placed France in a dominant position in Europe. Even with several great alliances opposing him, he could continue to increase French territory. For his vigorous promotion of French national greatness, Louis XIV became known as the "Sun King". Voltaire compared him to Caesar Augustus and called his reign an "eternally memorable age".

At the same time, however, Louis's efforts did not bring prosperity to the common people of France. His numerous wars and extravagant palaces effectively bankrupted the nation, forcing him to levy high taxes on the peasants. As the nobility and clergy had exemption from paying these taxes, the peasantry came to resent them. The peasantry also opposed the royal absolutism established by Louis. The French Revolution picked up on such sentiments in 1789.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis_XIV_of_France#Early_years

Prussia

Thirty Years War: 1618-1648

The war as a whole may be considered a struggle of German Protestant princes and foreign powers (France, Sweden, Denmark, England, the United Provinces) against the unity and power of the Holy Roman Empire as represented by the Hapsburgs, allied with the Catholic princes, and against the Hapsburgs themselves. (Catholics versus Protestants) The war began with the resistance and eventual revolt of Protestant nobles in Bohemia, which was under Hapsburg domination, against the Catholic king. The Catholic king wanted to decrease the freedoms of the Bohemian Protestants so they eventually revolted, but were forcefully suppressed and forced to convert to Catholicism. Although the revolt was stopped in Bohemia the war spread. It spread through Europe because of the constitutional frailty of the Holy Roman Empire, the inability of the German states to act in unison, and the ambitions of other European powers. Denmark and Sweden both then fought against the Catholic Hapsburgs hoping to gain political territory and to defend the Protestant cause. Over time the war moved from predominately religious goals to political ones as France entered the war under Cardinal Richelieu to keep the Roman Catholic Hapsburgs from getting too powerful.

The general results of the war was a tremendous decrease in German population; devastation of German agriculture; ruin of German commerce and industry; the breakup of the Holy Roman Empire, which was a mere shell in the succeeding centuries; and the decline of Hapsburg greatness. The war ended the era of conflicts inspired by religious passion, and the Peace of Westphalia was an important step toward religious toleration. The incredible sufferings of the German peasantry were remembered for centuries. The political settlements of the peace were to the disadvantage of Germany as well as the Hapsburgs.

Frederick William: The Great Elector (Hohenzollern Monarchy)

Frederick William raised an army of 40,000 soldiers, by 1678. His permanent standing army was expensive so he had to raise money to fund this his army so he proposed raising taxes which upset the Junkers (nobility) so to appease them he agreed to exempt the Junkers from taxes and in return they agreed to dissolve the Estates-General. He also gave the nobles control over the peasants. He was an advocate of mercantilism, monopolies, subsidies, tariffs, and internal improvements. Following Louis XIV's revoking of the Edict of Nantes, he encouraged skilled French Huguenots to emigrate to Prussia, bolstering the nation's technical and industrial base. He simplified travel by connecting riverways with canals, a system, that was expanded by later Prussian architects, and which is still functioning and in use today.

Frederick William I

During his reign, Frederick William I did much to centralize and improve Prussia. He replaced mandatory military service among the middle class with an annual tax, established primary schools, and resettled East Prussia (which had been devastated by the [plague](#) in 1709). Frederick William was an extremely able administrator. He opposed all superfluous spending, so long as it did not concern his army. Frederick William paid the consumer tax he himself had imposed, and no candles were left burning at court. He lived frugally and worked hard and tirelessly for the welfare of his people. He encouraged farming, reclaimed marshes, stored grain in good times and sold it in bad times. He dictated the manual of Regulations for State Officials, containing 35 chapters and 297 paragraphs in which every public servant in Prussia could find his duties precisely set out. A minister or councillor failing to attend a committee meeting would lose six months' pay. If he absented himself a second time, he would be discharged from

the Royal service. In short, Frederick William was extremely concerned by every little aspect of his country so that it suited the needs of his army. His rule was absolutist and he was a firm autocrat. He practiced rigid economy, and at his death there was a large surplus in the treasury. The Prussian army was made an efficient instrument of war. Although Frederick William built up one of the most powerful armies in Europe and loved military pomp, he was essentially a peaceful man.

<http://www.bartleby.com/65/th/ThirtyYe.html>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick_William

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick_William_I_of_Prussia

Frederick II (Frederick the Great)

Frederick II, of the Hohenzollern dynasty, became King of Prussia in 1740, one of the so-called enlightened monarchs. He was the son of Frederick William I and Sophia of Hanover. As a boy Frederick showed great interest in the arts (poetry, literature, philosophy, and music) as well as horseback riding. However when he became king he adopted his fathers more masculine pursuits of hunting, military interest, and beer drinking. Frederick managed to take Prussia from being a remote place to make it an economically strong and politically reformed state.

Foreign Policy

Frederick lead Prussian forces during many wars such as the War of Austrian Succession (1740-1748), where he rejected Austria's policy of pragmatic sanction and seized the Austrian province of Silesia. The war went on for 7 years, ending with the Treaty of Aiz-la-Chapelle that recognized Prussia's rise as an important nation and gave it control of Silesia. Austria's discontent over the result of the War of Austrian Succession caused Austria to switch allies which would led to further conflict including the Seven Years' War. Frederick the Great led troops during the Seven Years War (1756-1763) and the War of Bavarian Succession (1778). Frederick was in general quite successful on the battlefield and is often thought of as one of the "greatest tactical geniuses of all time." Even more important were his operational successes, especially preventing the unification of superior enemy armies and being at the right place at the right time to keep enemy armies out of Prussian core territory.

Government Policy

Frederick also instituted many changes to the government of Prussia, which were designed to improve the condition of the country as a whole. His acquisition of Silesia was orchestrated so as to provide Prussia's fledgling industries with raw materials, and he protected these industries with high tariffs and minimal restrictions on internal trade. Canals were built, swamps were drained for agricultural cultivation, and new crops, such as the potato and the turnip, were introduced. With the help of French experts, he reorganized the system of indirect taxes, which provided the state with more revenue than direct taxes. He abolished torture as a state prescribed means of punishment. He also granted the people of Prussia wide spread religious freedom. He organized a state bureaucracy and a civil service code based on respect for law and ethics.

Legacy

Frederick died August 17, 1786, leaving a great legacy, which is still remembered in Germany today. Frederick had some famous buildings constructed in his chief residence, Berlin, most of which still exist today, such as the Berlin State Opera, the Royal Library (today the

Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin), St. Hedwig's Cathedral, the French and German Cathedrals on the Gendarmenmarkt, and Prince Henry's Palace (now the site of Humboldt University). But the king preferred spending his time in his summer residence Potsdam, where he built the palace of Sanssouci, the most important work of Northern German rococo. To this day Frederick remains a controversial figure in Germany and Central Europe. He called himself the "first servant of the state", but the Austrian empress Maria Theresa called him "the evil man in Sanssouci." He was both: an enlightened ruler and a ruthless despot. Through reform, war, and the first Partition of Poland (1772), he turned his state of Brandenburg-Prussia into a European great power.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick_II_of_Prussia

Peter I (the Great) & Catherine II (the Great)

Minority

Peter I came to the throne in 1689, succeeding his older half brother Feodor III who died in 1682. The early part of his reign was a minority under his sister Sophia, and he was to be co-czar with his half brother Ivan (who was an invalid). As a young man his interests included mechanics, geography, and military strategy. He engaged in such pastimes as shipbuilding and sailing.

Policy and Administration

In 1689 Sophia attempted a coup, just as Peter was coming of age, the coup was put down and Sophia was placed in a convent. Ivan and Peter ruled jointly for 6 years, after which Ivan died leaving Peter as the sole ruler of Russia. At the time he gained full control of the Russian government he decided to go on a tour of Europe (*Grand Embassy*). While in Europe he gathered much knowledge about western industrial techniques and much about European culture.

Upon his return to Russia he forced the Russian nobility (Boyar's) to conform to western ways, men were required to shave their beards and women were now ordered to attend social gatherings (from which they had previously been forbidden to attend). Peter even sent many Russians to Europe to study academics and to learn new trades (shipbuilding and naval warfare are two examples). Peter also built a new capital located at the mouth of the Neva River near the Baltic Sea; this city became Russia's "window to the West". Peter greatly expanded Russia's boundaries to include Siberia and the Eastern end of the Baltic region. Peter also created a central bureaucracy, under which the control of local governments was placed. He also brought the Eastern Orthodox Church under the direct control of the czar and created council of bishops (Holy Synod) who reported to a government official (appointed by the czar). Peter also gave the nobility direct control of the *serfs* or peasants who worked on their estates, he also began to tax the peasant class, who had little or no money, rather than the nobility.

While Peter did encounter much opposition to his reforms from those nobles and clergy who liked the status quo, Peter's reforms succeeded in bringing Russia into the "mainstream of western European civilization". Peter died in 1725, with no heir apparent. This led to Russia being ruled by a series of weak incapable rulers, that is until the reign of Catherine II.

Catherine II and Peter's Policies

Catherine was the wife of Peter I grandson, Peter III who came to the throne in 1761. Catherine seized the throne in 1762, after the untimely and controversial death of her husband, and ruled until 1796. She, like Peter I, was influenced greatly by western European thinking. Catherine believed that all people were born equal and during the early part of her reign considered freeing the serfs, a peasant rebellion however changed her mind about doing such thing. Catherine expanded Russia's borders to the south and was successful in acquiring a warm water port on the Black Sea. Catherine was also the first Czar (ina) since Peter I to continue with the many reforms that Peter had begun in Russia. Catherine is remembered as "the Great" because of her successful foreign policies, she died in 1796 and was succeeded by her son Paul I.

<http://www.geographia.com/Russia/rushis04.htm>

Ivan IV (the Terrible)

Russia from the 1200's to the early 1700's had been isolated and cut off from the developments of Western Europe. Russia had developed its own civilization based on the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Byzantine Empire. Thus Russia never faced the same challenges to the power of the royal government (involving its nobility, church, and towns) as the west had.

Ivan IV was the most powerful of the early czars of Russia, he ruled from 1533 to 1584. At the time he was in power he was the wealthiest of all of Europe's rulers. Ivan came to the throne at the age of 3, and was placed in a minority under his mother. As he was growing up Ivan witnessed much cruelty as a result of rival factions fighting within the government to take control. His minority ended in January of 1547 when he was crowned czar at the age of 16.

Early Reign

The early part of his reign was one of peace and growth for the country. Ivan revised the law code, created a standing army, and established a council of nobles (called the *Zemsky Sobor*). He also subordinated the Eastern Orthodox Church to the state, and made a system of rituals and regulations that were to be followed. During Ivan's reign the first printing press was brought to Russia as well as many new trade connections made, allowing more European goods to enter Russia (under England's Muscovy Company). There were some less than positive aspects to his early reign as well, He passed the first laws that restricted the mobility of the peasant class (which eventually lead to serfdom). In 1564 he also began to gather up the scattered lands of the *Boyar's* (nobles) and placed them under his control, these lands were collectively known as the *Oprichnina*. He distributed these lands to his own loyal people, known as the *Oprichniks*, who formed a sort of secret police force, which terrorized the rest of the country.

Military

During the 1550's Ivan annexed Mongol lands east and south of Moscow (Khanates of Kazan and Astrakhan). In the west, he waged a 25-year war with Poland, Lithuania, and Sweden for control of territory that would have given Russia an outlet to the Baltic Sea. This effort failed, however, and Russia lost land to Sweden.

Later Reign

During the later part of his reign Ivan gradually became less and less mentally stable, he would conduct immoral and depraved acts one week and fast and pray the next. In 1570, on the basis of unproved accusations of treason, Ivan sacked and burned the city of Novgorod and tortured, mutilated, impaled, roasted, and otherwise massacred its citizens. Between thirty and forty thousand were killed. During the time his mental capacity was decreasing the Oprichniks were getting out of hand and soon resembled murderous thugs, they began to murder nobles and peasants alike. In 1581 Ivan during a fight with his son, Ivan, accidentally murdered him. The fight having resulted from Ivan IV causing the miscarriage of his son's child by beating his daughter-in-law for wearing clothing he considered immodest.

Ivan died suddenly in March of 1584; he was succeeded by his unfit and childless son Feodor.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ivan_IV

<http://www.xs4all.nl/~kvenjb/madrus.htm#grosny>

Material F:

Write a letter to the ruler of your choice from the perspective of a commoner. You will include what you, as a commoner, like and dislike about the changes occurring and the new policies being implemented in their country.

Material G:

Grading Rubric for In Class Writing Assignment

10 points: Ideas are well articulated, letter consists of at least 6 sentences, includes aspects of the ruler's reign that student likes and dislikes

7 points: Ideas are not well thought out, letter does not consist of at least 6 sentences, only includes what student likes or dislikes, does not include both

5 points: Assignment was attempted, but student only wrote 4 sentences or less, and the student only included one component of what they liked or disliked, not both

Material H:

Age of Absolutism Quiz

1. What two groups did Cardinal Richelieu seek to weaken in order to obtain the centralization of France?
2. What steps did Louis XIV take to weaken the Huguenots? (list two)
3. Why did Louis XIV have the Chateau of Versailles converted into a royal palace?
4. What was the impact of the War of Spanish Succession on France? (list two)
5. What are **two** contributions that Frederick William I provided for Prussia?
6. What was the primary cause of The Seven Years' War?
7. Why did Ivan IV earn the title "Ivan the Terrible?"
8. What was the goal of Peter the Great's foreign policy?
9. Contrast the aims and policies of Louis XIV's and Peter the Great's absolutist rule.
10. What was Catherine the Great's attitude toward the serfs and what happened to change her mind?

Material D:

Guiding Topics

The following topics will be placed on the board in order to guide the students' analysis of the document they are given. It will help them to identify the main points and key ideas.

For each ruler:

- What were their main political goals?
 - How did they achieve them?
- What was their religious policy?
- What was their foreign policy?
- What was daily life like during their reign?
- What was the ruler's legacy?
 - What major accomplishments or failures are they credited with?
- After reading about your ruler's policies, can you see how it could lead to peasant or nobility discontent?

All of the questions may not apply for each ruler, but each question that is applicable should be answered.

Material F:

Overhead: In-Class Assignment

Write a letter to the ruler of your choice from the perspective of a commoner. Include what you like and dislike about the changes occurring and the new policies being implemented in your country.

Make your letter consist of at least 6 sentences.

