

## Louis XIV

From 1643 to 1715, France was ruled by Louis XIV, and extravagant monarch. Louis XIV nicknamed himself “the Sun King.” He truly thought that the world revolved around him in the same way that the planets revolve around the sun. Prior to Louis XIV’s reign, France was a collection of various provinces that were ruled by multiple barons. Louis united these provinces to form one nation-state, ruled by the king. Louis is famous for having said, “The state – I am the state.”

Louis ascended to the throne not long before his fifth birthday, but he did not actually control the government until the death of the prime minister, Cardinal Mazarin, in 1661. Cardinal Mazarin ruled France until his death because Louis’ mother, Anne, had her husband’s will annulled after his death. By annulling Louis XIII’s will, Anne was able to get rid of the regency council and become the sole regent. She then entrusted her power to Cardinal Mazarin. Upon Mazarin’s death, Louis was given full power. Louis remained in power until his death in 1715. He was four days away from his seventy-seventh birthday. His reign was the longest documented reign of any European monarch to date.

When Louis first began his rule, the French treasury was nearly bankrupt. His reign began with administrative and financial reform. Louis eliminated the position of the Superintendent of Finances, which was held by Nicolas Fouquet. He then appointed Jean-Baptiste Colbert as the General Controller of Finances. Under Colbert, the national debt was reduced. Additionally, Colbert sought to strengthen France through trade and commerce.

Louis was considered to very a lavish ruler, and he built a huge palace outside of Paris at Versailles. This building was filled with works of art. In addition, there were dazzling chandeliers and mirrors throughout the palace. Concerts and plays were frequently held at the palace.

During his reign, France engaged in three major wars – the Franco-Dutch War, the War of the League of Augsburg, and the War of Spanish Succession. Louis worked to create a centralized state that was governed from the capital. He wanted to rid France of feudalism, which remained in some parts of France. Louis wrestled power from the nobility and forces many nobles to live at the Palace of Versailles with him. At the palace, French aristocrats were considered lucky if they were permitted to hold a candle for Louis while he adjusted his wig. Louis is considered to be the prime example of an absolute monarch in early modern Europe.

Louis built France into the most powerful nation in Europe at the time. Under his reign, France was considered the most advanced and elegant country in Europe. French porcelain, linens, and decorations were highly regarded from Madrid to Moscow. In addition, French became the international language. It was spoken by the upper classes throughout the world. French literature, customs, and music were considered very prestigious in Europe as well as in America.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Louis XIV Questions

### Multiple Choice:

1. Louis XIV was nicknamed:
  - a. The sun god
  - b. The sun king
  - c. The moon god
  - d. The moon king
  
2. Louis XIV began ruling after the death of:
  - a. His mother
  - b. Jean-Baptiste Colbert
  - c. Cardinal Mazarin
  - d. Nicolas Fouquet
  
3. Louis XIV built the Palace at:
  - a. Paris
  - b. Augsburg
  - c. Madrid
  - d. Versailles
  
4. All of the following wars were fought during Louis XIV's reign EXCEPT:
  - a. The Franco-Dutch War
  - b. The War of the League of Augsburg
  - c. The War of the Roses
  - d. The War of Spanish Succession

### True or False:

- \_\_\_ 5. Queen Anne is famous for having said, "The state – I am the state."
- \_\_\_ 6. Louis XIV was a very frugal king who had simple tastes.
- \_\_\_ 7. Louis XIV's reign was the longest documented reign of any European monarch to date.
- \_\_\_ 8. Under Louis XIV's reign, France was considered the most advanced and elegant country in Europe.
- \_\_\_ 9. Prior to Louis XIV's reign, France was a collection of various provinces that were ruled by multiple barons.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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## Louis XIV Answers

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