

# Louis the xiv essay



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Louis the XIV was a man who possessed the qualities of a great king. He was born on 1638 to Louis the XIII, King of France, and Anne of Austria. At a mere four years and eight months, Louis XIV, become the third king of the Bourbon dynasty. Louis XIV proved to be a great success as an absolute monarch. He managed to reconstruct France's political, social, economic and cultural status during his reign. Louis XIV's kingdom consisted of France and Navarre whose population was 19 million. Since he inherited the crown at such a tender age, his mother acted as his regent.

Louis was still extremely loyal and thankful to his mother. Louis was not well educated for his mother believed that kings make history not learn it. At thirteen, the French considered this to be the age at which a king no longer needed a regent. However, Louis still did not have total control as king as Cardinal Jules Mazarin, who was also Louis's Godfather, acted as France's First Minister. As much as Louis disliked the Cardinal, he knew that he needed his support and knowledge. Before Mazarin died he gave Louis wise words of advice.

He told Louis to keep the church a top priority, yet keep a close eye on its members, treat the nobility with trust and kindness, convince the monarchs that there was one sole ruler of France, not allow divisions with the council and to punish anyone who took political matters into their own hands. Louis shocked France when he announced that he would rule France with no First Minister. Louis thought that the people who were involved with several revolts, would not dare defy the king directly. He stated that he would rule France out of Piety and Justice.

Louis wanted nothing but power, glory and stability for France. Louis was to rule as an absolute monarch, which rules by divine right and decides what is best for the kingdom. He believed that only God was higher than himself, thus he only had to answer to him. As for deciding what was best for the State, he believed that he was the State, quoting " L'etat, c'est moi" 1 meaning " I am the State". Louis was extremely careful and wise when it came to people who were involved with the affairs of the State. He surrounded himself with people who proved to be loyal.

His new ministers did not specialize in certain areas, but were involved with everything. Louis refused to appoint family members, nobleman or dukes to the council and was well aware that some of these people were hungry for power and he was not willing to give any up. This was a smart move by Louis, since he realized before it was too late that some people are corrupt and will do nothing to gain power or money. Louis reduced the number of ministers of the High Council from 24 to 3, who were Le Tellier, Colbert and Lionne.

Louis stated, " I wished to divide the execution of my orders among several people, the better to bring them under my authority. It was with this in mind that I chose men of diverse talents and professions, fitting the diversity of the materials that ordinarily fall under the administration of state, and I distributed my time and my confidence according to the misunderstanding that I had of their virtues and the importance of the affairs that I gave over them. " 2 Louis called the council into session everyday and was always well aware of the problems and affairs that were occurring.

He spent an average of 6-8 hours working on State affairs knowing that France had financial and administrative issues that had to be dealt with. Part of Louis' economic success was because of Colbert. Colbert believed in mercantilism, which is the theory that a country's economic stability was due to acquiring gold and silver, and importing and exporting goods. Louis developed and encouraged a strong trade and manufacturing organization. This system transformed France's economic status over a span of 20 years, making it stable and prosperous.

Louis made the appropriate decisions when it came to matters such as France's financial affairs. He wanted what was best for France, since he wanted nothing but glory for his country. When it came to religion, Louis was strict and intolerant. His predecessors were more tolerant when it came to religion, but Louis believed one religion was a key factor in the success of a nation. Cardinal Richelieu helped Louis create one religion in France even before it was one of Louis' main concerns. Louis strongly believed in "one king, one law, one faith".

He felt that even if his power is absolute, he is still limited to the words of God. Louis believed that he was forever in debt to God and that he was God's representative. In France there was a religious sect known as the Huguenots (French Protestants). Since Louis wanted only Catholicism in France, the Huguenots were either persecuted or forced to flee France. Louis disabolished the Edict of Nantes in 1683, which granted religious toleration, but this was one of Louis few mistakes, since he lost roughly 200, 000 subjects many of who were highly educated.

Even though this slightly hurt the French economy, it was still able to recover from it. Louis might not have had the final result he wanted, he did get his main objective across. Louis was a great patron of the arts choosing the title Sun King for himself, since Apollo was the god of the arts and peace. To show the glory of his reign, he became very involved with the arts. One of Louis' greatest achievements is the palace Versailles. It took 35, 000 men over a span of a decade to build it. Louis felt that Versailles reflected the image of great royalty and he used Versailles as a political tool and cultural masterpiece.

In Versailles, Louis housed over 1, 000 nobles and their servants. By doing this Louis was able to keep a close eye on his nobility and make sure no one stirred any plots against him. Louis let his nobility fight over little things such as who got the honour opening the king's bed curtain, rather than have them fight over power. This resulted in Louis strengthening his position as absolute monarch. Culturally, Louis used Versailles to host grand ceremonies as well as to show plays and operas. Louis loved opera and had chief musician Jean Baptiste Lully compose several compositions.

Louis' love for opera spread throughout Europe. He also loved plays, especially ones by playwright Jean Baptiste Poquelin. Louis loved more than just stage art; he had a great passion for paintings and sculptures. He adorned many Renaissance sculptures in the gardens at Versailles. At one point he even housed Mona Lisa on his bedroom wall. Long after the Sun King's death, his standards and elegance of the fine arts still continue to be achieved. To gain more respect and power, Louis felt he had to prove that he was a strong and confident soldier.

To prevent the army from corruption, Louis appointed one Colonel from a great noble family to every Lieutenant Colonel from a lesser noble family. By doing this Louis was assured that one class could not overpower the other. His troops were paid in the name of the king not the captain. He made enlistment mandatory for every single man and this made the soldiers feel they owed their king a duty, which Louis wanted. Louis also treated his soldiers with respect, providing them uniforms and barracks. With the help of the Marquis de Louvois, who was the son of Michel Tellier, he was able to reconstruct the military.

The army was strong and willing to fight for any cause that Louis thought needed addressing. Louis tried to take advantage of France's rivals' current conditions. England was still recuperating from their civil war, Spain still had not had the power it once had and Germany was still tore by the Thirty Years' War. Louis thought this was the best time to expand France's kingdom. Even though his military campaign was not as successful as he wanted, he still had the love and respect of his military and subjects. During this time period absolute monarchs dominated Europe.

However, Louis XIV was the most powerful and successful. During his rule, which lasted from 1643-1715, the French monarch, under Louis, was at the height of its absolutism. Since Louis dissolved the Parlement, he had complete power as an absolute monarch. This time period has also been called the " Grand Century", the " Age of Magnificence" or even " the Age of Louis XIV". His rulings and decisions were never questioned or turned down, but followed through and acted upon. He was not well educated, yet he was taught to watch his every word and action.

At a young age he knew that his life was not that of an ordinary boy and a person could tell that this young boy had what it took to be a great king. He was well aware of the duties that were expected of him. He was an extremely consistent man, always thinking about France's future before his own. In front of his subjects he was always in control, never losing his composure. By showing this level of maturity from a young age up until his death, he gave his subjects a great deal confidence in him. Louis never lost the loyalty, respect or confidence that his subjects had in him.

His decisions were never made out of impulse or an unstable mind, but were heavily thought out and planned. Louis believed that he had three roles in which he must live up to. The first was that of a statesman, thus having to deal with conflicts within the nobility, town business' and religious institutions. As a judge, Louis made all the final decisions in the court system, thus securing his power by never being questioned. Last was the role of the soldier, which Louis thought he needed to gain further respect and power. During his reign he remolded France as a nation, making it wealthier, more cultural and healthier.

The average Frenchman's life expectancy was higher and they were eating on average more than ever before. Culturally, Paris was transformed, monuments were built in every town and there was peace among the country. Throughout his entire reign Louis never lost sight of his dream which was greatness for France and that is what he achieved. To this day monarchs still try to obtain the respect, supremacy and grandeur that Louis so obviously earned. His legacy as the grand Sun King still lives strong to this day, not losing any of its majestic essence.