

The absolute monarch of louis xiv

[History](#)



The Absolute Monarch of Louis XIV absolutism - a form of government in which all power is vested in a single ruler or other authority The Sun King, Louis XIV of France, inherited the throne upon his father's death in 1643. Only 5 years old and by law too young to rule, his mother Anne of Austria became Queen Regent and appointed Cardinal Mazarin as chief minister. Louis' mother instilled in him at a young age the concept of divine right of the king to do what he chooses. Mazarin proved to be a crucial figure in Louis XIV's life, teaching not only of European policy and the secrets of state, but also of splendor and the power of imagery. Louis' obsession with a luxurious lifestyle and a glamorous court life led to his eventual downfall. In 1661, Louis XIV's mentor and surrogate father, Cardinal Mazarin, died. This marked a turning point in Louis' reign, when he banished all members of nobility from the king's council. He insured that no new chief minister would replace Mazarin. He claimed absolute power over France and was vigilant of any challenge on his authority. Louis XIV's most infamous course of action was the building of Versailles. It would be an understatement to say that Louis spent a modern equivalent of billions of dollars on this project. The taxes imposed upon French citizens to complete Versailles exacted a great toll. As his people fell victim to famine, crop failure, and poverty, Louis still continued to put finishing touches on Versailles. It became the hub of Louis' centralized power, and he flaunted it to visitors. He wanted the extravagance of Versailles to represent the glamour of France in the eyes of foreigners. The city bled due to Louis' desire to outdo all of Europe and there were no politicians under him to advise him otherwise. His persistent effort to modernize France, while France did develop a reputation of renowned glamour and spectacle throughout Europe, seriously harmed his country.

Louis soon began practicing warlike behavior, which would eventually cast a very dark shadow over the Sun King's reign. ½ of Louis' rule was spent at war. Wanting to be second to none, Louis was infuriated by the economic success of the Dutch. After six years of murderous war, France won, but their newly prosperous economy was crushed. However, he did not let the high costs of the war interfere with his glamorous lifestyle. While Versailles was grand in appearance, it was oppressive to the people of France. In 1685, the most painful blow to Louis' reign was suffered when he revoked the Edict of Nantes in an attempt to appease the Catholic community. As a result, all Protestant-practicing people in France were exiled. He took France to the brink of ruin, and because he had complete control, he still reigned for years afterward. He also plunged France deeper into trouble when he agreed to make his great grandson the heir to Carlos of Spain. Intimidated by the superpower that the force of France and the territory of Spain would impose if combined, the other European nations felt intimidated and formed an alignment to fight against France. While the war was ultimately won, the experience was unbearable for the French people, who suffered crop failure, disastrous frost and famine each day.