

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## LOUIS XIV AND THE RISE OF ABSOLUTISM

**READINGS:** Highlight and taking thinking notes (writing in the margins) for each of the following readings.

- "The Sun King" Hand out.
- Thomas Hobbes, "Leviathan: Political Order and Political Theory." p. 207-208 (Sherman)
- "Rigaud's Louis XIV: The State Portrait" p. 434-435 (Kagan Text)
- "Versailles" p. 433, 436-437. (Kagan); See also the visual of Versailles on page. 436.
- Saint-Simon, "Memoires: The Aristocracy Undermined in France." p. 217. ( Sherman)

**SMALL GROUP DIRECTIONS:** In your group you will address a section of the reading...listed above. Answer the questions with as much detail using the relevant section of text. You will EACH need to present your answers back to a new group at some point in the activity so take great notes.

GROUP 1: "The Sun King" p. 55- 56 and Thomas Hobbes, "Leviathan: Political Order and Political Theory." p. 207-208 (Sherman)

1. What forces opposed national unity leading up to Louis XIV's rule?
2. Who is Thomas Hobbes? How does Hobbes describe the fate of men doomed to live together without effective government? What symbols does Hobbes use in the title page to the Leviathan? What kind of government does Hobbes favor? Why?
3. What is the difference between absolutism, constitutional monarchy, and modern democracy?
4. What is the significance and relevancy of the following terms: Leviathan, sovereignty, the modern state, Mazarin.

GROUP 2: "The Sun King" p 56 - 59

1. How did Louis XIV come to power? What traits contributed to his personal success?
2. How did Louis staff his government? Why is this significant?
3. How did Michel le Tellier and the Marquis de Louvois strengthen the military? Why is this significant? What were the two major flaws or defects of Louis military machine?
4. Who was Jean-Baptiste Colbert and how did he contribute to the success of Louis?
5. What role did each of the following terms play in Louis' reign: Intendants, Mercantilism, Marshal Sebastian Vauban,

GROUP 3: Saint-Simon, "Memoires: The Aristocracy Undermined in France." p. 217. ( Sherman)

1. Who is Saint-Simon and what is his importance?
2. How does Louis XIV undermine the authority of the nobility in France?
3. What options are available to a noble who wants to maintain or increase his power?
4. Why do the nobility submit to Louis' authority?

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GROUP 4: "Rigaud's Louis XIV: The State Portrait" p. 434-435 (Kagan Text)

1. Describe the symbols captured in Louis XIV's "State Portrait." What is the significance of this portrait? How does it contribute to the image of Louis XIV and the time period?
2. Who is Rigaud? How does his work creating this image of Louis XIV reflect Louis' own government? (See also p. 56-57 in the Sun King)

GROUP 5: "The Sun King" p. 60-62, See also the visual of Versailles on page. 436.

1. How did Louis symbolize his authority in art, architecture, and life at Versailles?
2. Describe the palace of Versailles? What role did the palace of Versailles play in Louis XIV's reign? Why was Versailles significant?

**SEMINAR PREPARATION:**

Reflect on the following questions in preparation for our seminar on Louis XIV:

1. What led many to feel that an Absolute Monarchy was the best form of government?
2. How does Louis XIV undermine the authority of the nobility in France? Why do the nobility submit to Louis' authority?
3. How do the actions of Louis XIV support or refute the theory of Divine Right?
4. How absolute was Louis XIV's rule?
5. Which minister or individual had the greatest impact in Louis XIV's reign? Mazarin, Colbert, le Tellier, Louvois, Rigaud, or Vauban?
6. What action had the greatest impact on increasing the authority of the king in France?
7. How well did Louis XIV live up to the advice of Cardinal Richelieu as outlined in his "Political Will and Testament"? Evaluate how successful Louis XIV would be as a ruler in today's world. What has or has not changed with respect to rulers/leaders since Louis XIV?
8. Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the assessment of Thomas Hobbes in his "Leviathan"? What factors help explain your reaction to Hobbes' views?