

THEME: POWER AND AUTHORITY

SYNOPSIS:

The Theme of Power and Authority centers around several core questions. *Who should hold power? How should that power should be obtained and maintained? What system of government is most effective?* Various people and groups of people have sought answers to these questions through out the history of Western Civilization. Examples of this theme include but are not limited to Louis XIV in the Age of Absolute Monarchs, The Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen of the French Revolution, and Joseph Stalin of the 20th Century.

Louis XIV

- ❑ Ruled France from 1638 to 1715
- ❑ Built the Palace of Versailles to weaken the influences of the nobility.
- ❑ Created elaborate rules of etiquette for the nobility to follow.
- ❑ Maintained a large standing army of 400,000 soldiers
- ❑ Considered the most powerful monarch of his time who made France the cultural envy of Europe.
- ❑ **Connection to the Theme:**
Concentrated power in the monarchy by a system of favors and elaborate rules of etiquette...embodied the idea of the “divine right” monarchy...made all major decisions.



“I am the state.”

“It is legal because I wish it.”

“There is little that can withstand a man who can conquer himself.”

- **Louis XIV**

“THE DECLARATION OF THE RIGHTS OF MAN AND CITIZEN”:

- Document of the French Revolution, Aug 27, 1789
- Outlines what governments should or should not do.
- Identifies the source of true political power—from the people.
- Enumerates rights reserved to citizens.
 - “...Liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression.”
 - “The principle of sovereignty resides essentially in the nation.”
 - “Law is the expression of the general will.”
- **Connection to the Theme:**
 The *Declaration...* establishes the source of political authority and shows how power ought to be established and maintained.



Joseph Stalin:

- ❑ 1879-1953
- ❑ Communist Leader of the Soviet Union after Lenin
- ❑ Promoted concept of “Socialism in one country.”
- ❑ Master of propaganda and control of the media to influence ideas and thus obtain and maintain power over the Russian peoples.
- ❑ Industrialized the Soviet Union through a series of 5-year Plans.
- ❑ Created a police state that attacked political opponents.
- ❑ Established large prison-labor camps called Gulags.
- ❑ **Connection to the Theme:** Joseph Stalin consolidate his political power by controlling the media—public perception, creating a police state, and exiling political opponents to labor camps.

“Education is a weapon whose effects depend on who holds it in his hands and at whom it is aimed.”

- Joseph Stalin

