The Age of Discovery and the Rise of Absolutism and Constitutionalism (1400–1700)

The Renaissance spirit of inquiry not only led to changes in religion, but also led Europeans to explore the outside world. Beginning in the fifteenth century, European nations undertook expeditions to find a direct water route to India, believing that control of the trade route with East Asia would bring vast wealth. Asian traders and Italian merchants from the city-states of Venice and Genoa held a monopoly on the existing trade routes and prices were very high. Many Europeans wanted to bypass the Mediterranean and trade directly with the East as a way to increase profits. Others sought fame and fortune and the titles that went with the exploration of new lands. Finally, some saw these expeditions as an opportunity to spread the glory of God.

Technological development during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries also contributed to this age of increased exploration. Notable improvements in map making and shipbuilding, which gave rise to the caravel, a ship with both square and triangular sails that enabled it to sail more effectively against the wind than the square-rigged ships, enabled Europeans to sail farther than ever before. The caravel also had an improved rudder that enabled it to achieve easier turns than earlier ships, plus a larger cargo area, which enabled the caravel to carry the amount of supplies needed for longer voyages. Navigational improvements, moreover, such as the mariner’s compass, the sextant, and the astrolabe, made ocean voyages less dangerous.

The financial capital that was needed to promote these explorations supported the need for strong leadership with the ability to centralize and consolidate power. This consolidation of power contributed to the rise of the absolute rulers who controlled every aspect of their respective governments. In France, the reign of Louis XIV (1643–1715) symbolized absolutism at its height. There would be absolute rulers in Eastern Europe, like Peter the Great of Russia, but none would surpass the power of the French monarchs. While France represented the classic model of absolutism, England provided the example of a constitutional parliamentary government, which defined the limits of the king. Spain, similar to France, developed a strong absolutist government, but had a short period of greatness, which ended at the close of the sixteenth century.

The Age of Discovery

Historians have called the period from 1415 to 1650 the Age of Discovery. This term refers to the era’s phenomenal advances in geographical knowledge and technology. Portugal, situated on the extreme southwestern edge of the European continent, had a head start in overseas exploration before the rest of Europe. Prince Henry (1394–1460), the son of the Portuguese king, was called “the Navigator” because of the annual expeditions that he sent down the western coast of Africa. He established a school of navigation along the southwestern coast of Portugal. Prince Henry gathered mapmakers, shipbuilders, and trained captains at the school to help them perfect their trade. In 1415, he encouraged Portugal to search for a direct water route to India around the south coast of Africa. Some important Portuguese explorers included the following:

- **Bartholomew Diaz** (1450–1500). In 1488, Diaz was the first man to sail around the Cape of Good Hope in Africa.
- **Vasco da Gama** (1469–1524). In 1498, da Gama discovered an all-water route to India by sailing around the southern tip of Africa, and was the first European to reach India by water. By doing so, he showed that it was possible for Europeans to obtain Asian goods without having to use an overland route. In 1502, on a second voyage, da Gama returned home with Asian spices that were worth more than $1 million in gold and 60 times the cost of the actual voyage. This voyage generated a great deal of excitement in Western Europe.

Portugal gained control of the rich spice trade of the Indian Ocean by overpowering Muslim forts and deploying squadrons of naval ships to defeat the Arab fleets that patrolled the Indian Ocean. A scholar once commented that Christianity came to India on cannonballs. The Portuguese successfully mounted cannons on ships, using them in 1509 to blast open Goa, a port city on India’s west coast, and in 1511, Malacca, near modern Singapore. These battles ended Arab domination of the South Asian trade and established a Portuguese foundation for a
trading empire for most of the 1500s. In capturing the port city of Malacca, the Portuguese seized the waterway that gave them control of the Spice Islands, just west of New Guinea. Portugal’s control of these areas broke the old trade route from the East. In 1504, spices could be bought in Lisbon for only one-fifth of what it cost when they had been purchased from the Arabs and Italians.

The success of Portugal inspired Spain to gain a share of the rich trade with the East. However, the Spanish decided to try the westward route, or the Atlantic route, rather than down around the Cape of Good Hope to reach the treasures of the East. The Spanish were hoping to beat the Portuguese to the East, which da Gama had not yet reached, and they also wanted to break the Muslim-Italian monopoly of the spice trade. Some important Spanish explorers included the following:

- **Christopher Columbus** (1451–1506). Convinced that he could reach Asia by sailing west, Columbus managed to persuade Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain to provide three ships for a journey. In October 1492, after a 36-day voyage from the Canary Islands, Columbus landed in the Bahamas instead of the East Indies. Undeterred, he named the territory the “Indies.” In three subsequent voyages, Columbus explored all of the Caribbean islands.

- **Ferdinand Magellan** (1480–1521). In 1519, Magellan led several ships from Spain, rounded the southern tip of South America, and crossed the Pacific. However, Magellan became involved in a local war between two rival tribes and was killed in the Philippine Islands. By 1522, one of Magellan’s ships managed to return to Spain, thereby completing the first circumnavigation of the globe. Magellan’s voyage proved that the territory where Columbus landed was not part of the Far East but an entirely new continent. This new island group gave Spain a base from which to trade with China and spread Catholicism in Asia.

The Spanish also sent out *conquistadors* (or conquerors) who sought fame, wealth, and power in the unexplored lands in the New World. These included the following:

- **Hernando Cortés** (1485–1547). Cortés landed in Mexico in 1519. By 1521, he had formed an alliance with the enemies of the Aztec and defeated the mighty Aztec Empire. The Aztecs controlled their vast empire of 38 provinces of central Mexico through terror. Their state religion, the Cult of Huitzilopochtli, which required human sacrifice, led to constant warfare against their neighbors in order to obtain sacrifices for these religious practices. When Cortés arrived in 1519, the provinces were in revolt against the Aztecs, who were demanding higher tribute. Thus, many of these subjugated people joined the Spanish against the Aztecs.

- **Francisco Pizarro** (1476–1541). Between 1531 and 1533, Pizarro conquered the Inca Empire of Peru and established Spanish control in western Latin America.

Spain’s conquests were successful for the following reasons:

- **Superior technology.** The Spanish used armor, horses, and muskets—all of which the Indians had never seen.
- **Introduction of disease.** The Spanish carried diseases, such as measles, mumps, and smallpox, to which the natives had never been exposed and had no natural immunity, thus killing millions.
- **Support.** Spain found allies among the natives, such as the Tlaxcaltec in Mexico, who disliked the Aztecs.

The results of Spain’s conquests in the Americas were the following:

- There was an influx of gold and silver from the New World, which contributed to Spain’s growth as a major power in the sixteenth century.
- New foods, such as potatoes and tomatoes, were introduced to Europe.
- Europeans began transporting slaves from Africa to the Americas to serve in the mines and farms in the New World. Over ten million slaves were involved in the trans-Atlantic slave trade from 1451 to 1870.
- Diseases destroyed about 25 million, or 80 percent, of the Native Americans. Syphilis appeared in Europe for the first time in 1493 because sailors and settlers returned to their homelands infected with this disease. The global transfer of plants, people, animals, and diseases that occurred during the European colonization of the Americas became known as the **Columbian Exchange**.
The Rise of Absolutism in France

The foundation of French absolutism was established in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The following people helped achieve the foundation of French absolutism:

- **Henry IV** (b. 1553, ruled 1589–1610). The Duke of Sully (Maximilien de Bethune, 1560–1641), Henry IV’s chief minister, established economic growth and financial stability for France, reducing the crushing debt that had accumulated during the religious wars between the Catholics and the Calvinists (Huguenots) by reforming the tax system and tax collection. The Duke also instituted a program of economic improvement by constructing new roads and bridges that improved transportation and promoted economic prosperity. Henry IV strengthened the power of the monarch by limiting the power of the nobles over the regional parliaments. In 1610, Henry IV was assassinated by a fanatic who thought that Henry was a menace to the Catholic Church.

- **Louis XIII** (b. 1601, ruled 1610–1643). Louis was only nine years old when he became king. His mother, Marie de’ Medici, replaced the Duke of Sully and ran the government inefficiently until her son was 23, spending money lavishly on court expenditures as well as pensions to discontented nobles. In 1617, Louis XIII forced his mother into retirement because she had excluded him from running the government even though he had been declared of age in 1614. They were reconciled in 1624 and she was able to secure the appointment of her protégé, Cardinal Richelieu. (At this time, religious leaders held official positions in the government in many Catholic countries.) By 1630, she became jealous of Richelieu’s influence and urged Louis to dismiss him. Instead, the king sent his mother into exile and she never returned to France. Afterwards, the king gave full support to Richelieu, who was appointed prime minister.

- **Cardinal Richelieu** (1585–1642). Richelieu’s goal was to establish the supremacy of the king and French domination of the European continent. He achieved these objectives by destroying the fortified castles of the French nobles, which had long been a symbol of their independence. He also crushed the political power of the Huguenots. When the Huguenots revolted in 1625, Richelieu personally supervised the siege of their walled city, La Rochelle, and forced it to surrender. By the Peace of Alais in 1629, the Huguenots were allowed to keep their religion but they lost their fortified cities, military, and territorial rights. Richelieu did not want the Huguenots to ever again be able to defy the king and then withdraw behind a strong defense. Through his spy system, he efficiently destroyed any conspiracy that threatened royal power. By the use of the intendant system, he transferred local government functions from the nobles to royal officials, further weakening the power of the nobles. The intendants were royal officials who collected taxes, recruited soldiers, and carried out government policies in the provinces. All of these officials regularly communicated to Richelieu. He also levied taxes without the consent of the Estates General, the French parliament. All these steps served to strengthen the power of the king. In foreign affairs, Richelieu involved France in the Thirty Years’ War, supporting the Protestants in order to weaken the domination of the Hapsburgs and establish French control on the continent.

- **Louis XIV** (b. 1638, ruled 1643–1715). Louis was only four when his father died and his mother Queen Anne selected Cardinal Mazarin as Prime Minister. Mazarin, resented by the people because he was Italian, continued Richelieu’s strategies for centralizing power; however, he lacked Richelieu’s shrewdness. Mazarin’s attempts to increase the royal revenue led to civil wars, called the Fronde, which lasted intermittently from 1648 to 1653. The term fronde means a slingshot, and frondeurs were originally mischievous street children who threw mud or shot rocks at passing carriages of the rich. The term came to symbolize anyone who opposed the policies of the government. In 1648, a bitter civil war ensued between the monarchy and the Frondeurs (the nobility and the middle class). Riots wrecked Paris and violence continued intermittently for a number of years, resulting in Louis XIV and Cardinal Mazarin fleeing the city. However, internal differences between the nobles and the middle class and the overall chaos in the country contributed to Louis XIV’s eventual return. The Frondeurs had no systematic program other than the overthrow of Mazarin.

The rebellions had a traumatic effect on Louis XIV, who became convinced that the sole alternative to anarchy and the power of the nobles was to establish an absolute monarchy. After the death of Mazarin in 1661, Louis became his own prime minister and adopted the ideal of the Divine Right of Kings. This concept had been developing in France since the sixteenth century. According to Bishop Jacques Bossuet (1627–1704), one of Louis’ advisers, the king was chosen by God to rule, and only God had authority over the king, not
a parliamentary body or any group of nobles. This Divine Right Theory of rule provided the justification for the absolute sovereignty of Louis and his monarchy. Louis’s statement, “L’état, c’est moi” (“I am the state”), represents his belief that there was no higher authority that could ever control him.

During Louis XIV’s 72-year reign, France became a dominant power in Europe. European countries envied France’s success in industry and agriculture. Jean-Baptiste Colbert (1619–1683), the son of a wealthy merchant, was Louis’ able finance minister who helped revive trade and the economy. While he did not invent the system of mercantilism, discussed in Chapter 6, “Mercantilism and the Agricultural and Industrial Revolutions,” he rigorously applied it to France. Colbert’s central principle was that the wealth and the economy of France should serve the state. To advance prosperity, Colbert promoted good farming methods, internal improvements (roads and canals), and support of both old and new industries. Colbert sponsored the established cloth industries and gave special privileges to the newly developing ones like silk, rugs, and tapestries. Colbert also set up large areas of free trade zones known as the Five Great Farms, but enacted high tariffs to prevent foreign products from competing with French ones. Colbert’s goal was to make France militarily stronger and to create a strong merchant marine that could help France compete with the overseas empires of the English and Dutch in North America as well as Asia. Another goal was to make France self-sufficient by centralizing the economy through government control of trade and industry. Unfortunately, France did not have the resources to support a powerful army and navy. Thus, Louis XIV established a strong army and ceded naval dominance to the British.

Louis XIV also sought to control religion, believing that more than one religion could not exist and that religious unity was essential for absolute control. In 1685, he revoked the Edict of Nantes. He destroyed Huguenot schools and churches and took away their civil rights. The Huguenots escaped France and settled in Holland, England, and America. Many of those who fled were craftsmen and businesspeople, and their departure hurt the French economy.

Louis kept France at war for much of the time that he ruled. He pursued an aggressive foreign policy, wanting France to achieve its natural boundaries along the Rhine River. To this end, Louis created a personal army that was employed by the state instead of the nobles. The French armies were able to gain some territory in Germany and its surrounding areas. France was engaged in the following wars: the War of Devolution or the First Dutch War (1667–1668); the Second Dutch War (1672–1678); and the War of the League of Augsburg (1688–1697). By the end of the fourth war, the War of the Spanish Succession (1701–1714), fought because of Louis’ efforts to lay claim to the Spanish throne for his grandson, the European countries of Holland, Great Britain, and Austria were able to contain Louis’ territorial ambitions. In 1713, France signed the Peace of Utrecht, which forbade the union of France and Spain, stating that the two countries could not be ruled by the same monarch. The treaty also made Louis XIV’s grandson, Philip V, the new king of Spain. The treaty ended French expansionism and left France on the brink of bankruptcy.

The reign of Louis XIV is considered the Golden Age of France. French became the language of polite society and replaced Latin as the language of diplomacy and scholarship. Louis—who was referred to as the Grand Monarch or the Sun King, because, like the sun, he was the center of all power—was a strong patron of the arts. He loved the stage and encouraged writers like Molière, Racine, and Louis de Rouvroy, duc de Saint-Simon, to pursue their crafts. The French style of classicism and fashion were the models for all of Europe.

Louis XIV’s palace at Versailles influenced the architectural style of Europe. It was built 12 miles outside of Paris, at a cost of over $100 million, and was filled with 1,400 fountains—this palace served as a fundamental tool of state policy under Louis. He was able to control the nobles who were forced to live at Versailles and also used the elaborate architecture to impress his subjects and foreign visitors. Versailles became a reflection of French genius. Peter the Great of Russia and Frederick the Great of Prussia would try to model their palaces on the one in Versailles. By the time of Louis’ death in 1715, France was the leading nation on the European continent. However, his extravagant lifestyle at Versailles burdened the peasants with taxes, and the long war emptied the treasury, drained the manpower of the country, and held back economic development of the country.
The Rise of Constitutionalism in England

While France witnessed the rise of Absolutism in the 1600s, England would develop a parliamentary system of government limiting the power of the king. The foundation for the development of constitutionalism in England was established in the Middle Ages. The Magna Carta (1215) limited royal power by stating that the king could not tax without the consent of the Grand Council (consisting of the nobility and the high clergy). The Grand Council later evolved into the Parliament, which alone levied taxes. By the 1300s, the Parliament (or the Grand Council) included middle-class representation. Because the enlarged council served as a model for England’s future legislature, it is often called the Model Parliament. By the fourteenth century, Parliament had compelled English monarchs to accept guidelines on the question of taxes as well as other issues. In the fifteenth century, after the War of the Roses (1455–1485), Henry Tudor established the Tudor Dynasty following the defeat of Richard III of the House of York in 1485, becoming Henry VII (b. 1457, ruled 1485–1509) after he married Elizabeth of York, and was crowned King.

The Tudors

After the death of Henry VII, Henry VIII (b. 1491, ruled 1509–1547) and Elizabeth I (b. 1533, ruled 1558–1603) strengthened the power of the Tudor monarchy by governing intelligently and following a popular foreign policy. The Tudors were successful because they skillfully mastered Parliament by outwardly consulting it, but actually dominating the legislature. They also aided the middle class by providing law and order and encouraging trade. Elizabeth, who was the daughter of Henry VIII and his second wife Ann Boleyn, was the last and greatest of the Tudor monarchs. Elizabeth was the first woman to successfully occupy the British throne. Sometimes called the “Virgin Queen,” referring to her choice not to marry, she used the prospects of marriage as a political tool. Elizabeth’s potential eligibility as a wife may have also kept foreign powers from attacking England due to the fact that foreign leaders may have wanted to keep their options open. Elizabeth firmly established Protestantism in England. The Act of Uniformity of 1559 and the Thirty-Nine Articles of 1563 defined the English Reformation. The Act of Uniformity established a common prayer book and set the basic ceremonies of the Church. The Thirty-Nine Articles established the religious doctrine that governed the Church until the English Revolution of the 1640s. Both acts were compromises favoring the view of the more conservative Protestant groups. Throughout most of her reign, powerful Catholic nobles in northern England rose in rebellion but were savagely repressed.
In 1571, an international conspiracy was uncovered to assassinate her in favor of her cousin, Mary, Queen of Scots. Although Mary was beheaded in 1587, the plot against Elizabeth did not end until England defeated the Spanish Armada in 1588. Elizabeth’s reign was a period of cultural flowering. The Elizabethan Age was the era of William Shakespeare, Edmund Spenser, Christopher Marlow, and John Donne. Although Elizabeth may not have directly promoted the arts, she created a stable environment allowing the arts to flourish. When Elizabeth died in 1603, childless, her cousin King James Stuart of Scotland (James VI) ascended to the throne.

**The Stuart Monarchs**

James I (b. 1566, ruled 1603–1625) created resentment and hostility by telling Parliament at their first session that his power could not be challenged. Although the king had the power to summon and dismiss the Parliament, he needed its support to raise money for additional revenue that was beyond his ordinary expenses. Parliament refused to grant him additional revenue. James I squandered his revenue on an extravagant lifestyle at the court and was unable to live within the fixed and customary level of the crown. From 1610 to 1611, James I and Parliament were involved in continuous debates on how to finance the government.

In religious matters, the Puritans (a Calvinist sect) viewed James I as the enemy. They wanted to purify the Anglican Church of all traces of Catholicism. In 1604, when they petitioned James I to reform the Church of England, he refused to make any changes. James I presided at the Hampton Court Conference (1604). The goal of the conference was to examine the different versions of the English Bible, which had been translated from the original Hebrew and Greek. From this conference originated the movement from which came the authorized King James Version of the Bible, the first edition of which appeared in 1611. James also followed an unpopular foreign policy of friendship with Catholic Spain.

Like his father James I, Charles I (b. 1600, ruled 1625–1649) wanted to rule by Divine Right. Yet Charles was more politically inept than his father, running into friction with Parliament when they refused to grant him a lifetime of custom duties, instead granting him a one-year period. Charles used his wife’s dowry to fight a war against Spain, which was a failure. However, when he needed additional money for his military expedition against Spain, he requested a forced loan from his wealthier subjects. Several members of the gentry refused to vote for the loans and Charles threw them into jail. In 1628, Parliament again declined to give Charles additional resources unless he signed the Petition of Right, which forbade the king to do the following:

- Levy taxes without the Parliament’s consent
- Proclaim martial law in peacetime
- Imprison anyone without a specific charge
- Quarter troops in the home of private citizens without their permission

Charles ended up signing the petition in order to get his funds. Charles ruled without the Parliament for eleven years (1629–1640).

In 1637, Charles tried to impose Anglican practices on Calvinist Scotland. The people revolted and Charles was forced to call upon Parliament, referred to as the Short Parliament because it lasted only three weeks, to raise money for the war against the Scots. They turned down his request unless Charles addressed their grievances. The Scots defeated Charles’ army and invaded northern England. They then demanded money in order to leave northern England. Thus, in 1640, Charles again appealed to the Parliament for money. This Parliament, known as the Long Parliament because it lasted 20 years, managed to pass laws limiting the power of the king. The king was compelled to summon Parliament every three years and could not dissolve Parliament without its consent. Parliament also impeached Charles’ chief advisors, supporting what was known as the Grand Remonstrance, a list of 204 Parliamentary grievances from the past decades. In 1642, Charles I charged five Parliament members with high treason and tried to arrest them. When Parliament refused to hand the members over, the king decided to personally arrest them. The five members fled, having received information in advance. Parliament then demanded sole command of the military forces. Charles refused and in August he fled London to Nottingham to recruit and gather his army, declaring war against Parliament. The English Civil War had begun.
Highlights of the English Civil War (1642–1649)

The English Civil War concerned religious differences and also centered on whether authority or sovereignty rested in England with the monarchy or the Parliament. It had two phases: Phase I (1642–1646) and Phase II (1646–1649).

The participants in the English Civil War were:

- **Cavaliers or Royalists.** These were supporters of the king. This group consisted of the wealthy landowners, the Anglican clergy, and the Catholics.
- **Roundheads.** These were supporters of the Parliament. This faction was generally made up of the middle class, merchants, small nobility, Puritans, and the Presbyterian Scots who had opposed Charles’ efforts to impose his religion on them.

**Phase I (1642–1646)**

At first, the Cavaliers gained victory until Scotland intervened on the side of Parliament and Oliver Cromwell (1599–1658), a Puritan leader in Parliament, emerged as a leader. Cromwell organized the New Model Army, which was composed of well-paid and disciplined soldiers. In 1644, Cromwell’s Model Army defeated Charles and the Royalists at Marston Moor. In 1646, Charles gave himself up to the Scots, who turned him over to Parliament, which was led by Cromwell.

**Phase II (1646–1649)**

The victors then quarreled among themselves. The Presbyterian wing of the Puritan movement, supported by the Scots, decided to set up a constitutional monarchy, with Charles at the head and Presbyterianism as the established church. They were opposed by the army—which was more radical than Parliament and wanted a republic—some of whose members, like Cromwell, were Independents who favored some religious toleration for all groups except Catholics and were opposed to Presbyterianism as the established church. To add to the confusion, Parliament refused to pay the troops. Charles took advantage of this situation between Parliament and the army and fled London. In 1647, the Scots allied with Charles, who promised that he would support Presbyterianism in England. In August, 1648, the Scots invaded England but the army, led by Cromwell, defeated them at the Battle of Preston. Charles was captured. The second civil war had made Cromwell the undisputed leader. In 1648, the Rump Parliament was established which removed all Presbyterian members and was under the control of Cromwell. After a formal trial, Charles I was accused of treason and condemned to death. Charles I was beheaded on January 30, 1649. The Civil War was over.

From 1649 to 1653, the Rump Parliament claimed to have supreme power. The monarchy was abolished and a Commonwealth, a Republican form of government, was established. In 1653, Cromwell expelled the Rump Parliament because the Parliament was lax in paying the troops, had been accused of accepting bribes, and filled vacancies in Parliament by nominations and not by elections. In 1653, Cromwell took the title of Lord Protectorate and established a military dictatorship. He suppressed rebellions in Ireland and Scotland, advanced English trade, and greatly increased English power. However, Cromwell’s rule did not gain popular support because people resented the severe moral code of the Puritans. The Anglicans, who were more numerous than the Puritans, also opposed Cromwell’s policy of intolerance. When Cromwell died in 1658, people were tired of his stern military rule and deposed his son Richard in 1660. Charles II, son of Charles I, was invited to return from exile and accept the throne.

**The Stuart Restoration (1660–1688)**

Mindful of his father’s fate, Charles II (b. 1630, ruled 1660–1685) pledged to work with Parliament. He accepted the Parliament’s right to levy taxes and agreed to call Parliament into regular sessions. During his reign, the Cavalier Parliament restored the Church of England as the official church. In 1670, Charles signed a secret treaty with Catholic France in which he received a subsidy in return for some vague promise that England may become
Catholic. In 1673, Parliament passed the Test Act, which excluded all Catholics from public office. It also tried to pass a law excluding James, Charles’ Catholic brother, from inheriting the throne; it failed. At this time, Parliament was divided into two groups: the Whigs, who wanted a constitutional monarchy under a Protestant king; and the Tories, who supported the king, but feared the restoration of Catholicism. The Whigs, fearful of Charles II’s pro-Catholic tendencies, did what they could to limit his power. In 1679, under the control of the Whigs, the Parliament passed the Habeas Corpus Act. This act prohibited imprisonment without due cause and guaranteed a fair trial.

Upon the death of Charles II in 1685, James II (who reigned from 1685 to 1688) assumed the throne. As a converted Catholic, James antagonized the Parliament by appointing pro-Catholic ministers to important posts, which angered the Whigs who supported the Church of England. James’ efforts to set up a standing army created fears among the Tories. When James’ wife gave birth to a son, Parliament was fearful that Catholicism would be reestablished in England.

The Glorious Revolution

In 1688, Parliament secretly offered the English crown to William, the Protestant ruler of Holland, and his wife Mary, the Protestant daughter of James II. They accepted. When William arrived in England, James II fled to France. In 1689, Parliament proclaimed William and Mary the new king and queen of England, under the conditions that they accept the Declaration of Rights, which later was enacted into law as the Bill of Rights. This bloodless overthrow of the previous monarch in 1688 is called the Glorious Revolution because there was so little violence.

The Glorious Revolution had the following effects upon English government:

- It ended the Divine Right Theory in England.
- It re-established the principle of supremacy of the Parliament over the monarch.
- Parliament passed the Bill of Rights (1689), a series of laws stating that the king could not levy taxes, make laws, or maintain an army without the consent of the Parliament. People were guaranteed basic civil liberties such as freedom of speech, right to petition, and protection against excessive bail or unusual punishment.
- Parliament passed the Toleration Act (1689) granting freedom of worship to Protestants who were dissenters from the Church of England, such as Baptists and Congregationalists, but not to Catholics or Quakers.
- English rulers had to be Anglican.
- It laid the foundation for the constitutional monarchy. Over the centuries, the British monarchy would be permitted to reign, but not to rule completely.

The Golden Age of Spain and Its Decline

In the sixteenth century, Spain became a rich and powerful country as a result of its vast empire in the New World. Charles V (b. 1500, ruled 1519–1556), Charles of Hapsburg, was the grandson of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella. As king of a united Spain and the Holy Roman Empire, he was the most powerful ruler of Europe during the first half of the sixteenth century. He controlled lands in Spain and its colonial empire as well as the Netherlands, southern Italy, Austria, and other lands in Central Europe.

Charles V abdicated the Spanish throne to his son, Philip II (b. 1527, ruled 1556–1598). Throughout his reign, Philip, who considered himself the champion of Catholicism, was involved in religious wars resulting from the Protestant Reformation. The country’s wealth was drained as Philip tried to halt the Reformation. He was unable to put down the Dutch religious revolt. In 1588, the defeat of the seemingly invincible Spanish Armada prevented an invasion of England and ended all efforts to restore Catholicism, as well as Spain’s dominance of the sea. Spain lost large portions of her empire to England and Holland. Royal expenditures increased but income from the Americas suffered. Spanish kings seemed to lack the will to reform. Philip III (b. 1578, ruled 1598–1621), a deeply pious man whose only virtue seemed to be the total absence of vice, drew criticism from his reliance on the advice of his corrupt chief minister, the lazy Duke of Lerma, who was more concerned with promoting the
wealth of his family over the interest of the country. **Philip IV** (b.1605, ruled 1621–1665) was a patron of the arts and not interested in politics. Spain’s participation in the Thirty Years’ War during his reign also contributed to its decline. Spain no longer had the wealth or the military power to become involved in any war on the European continent. By 1640, Portugal regained its independence after a revolt and, in 1648, Holland was lost by the **Treaty of Westphalia**. By the Treaty of the Pyrenees in 1659, which ended the French-Spanish war, Spain was compelled to surrender extensive territory to France. The treaty marked the end of Spain as a great power.

During the sixteenth century, Spain produced one of the world’s greatest literary masterpieces. **Miguel de Cervantes** (1547–1616) wrote *Don Quixote*, a book that describes the fabric of Spanish society in the sixteenth century. The main character, Don Quixote, a knight, lives in a world of dreams traveling around the countryside seeking military glory. Cervantes is considered the greatest of all Spanish authors. In English, the term *quixotic* means idealistic, but impractical. This term describes Spain in the seventeenth century.
### Chronology of the Age of Discovery and the Rise of Absolutism and Constitutionalism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1415</td>
<td>Prince Henry the Navigator establishes his school of navigation.</td>
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<td>1445</td>
<td>The Portuguese conquer Cape Verdi, Africa.</td>
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<td>1488</td>
<td>Bartholomew Diaz reaches the Cape of Good Hope.</td>
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<td>1492</td>
<td>Christopher Columbus sails for India.</td>
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<td>1493</td>
<td>Pope Alexander VI establishes the Line of Demarcation. Spain receives everything west of the line between the Azores and Cape Verdi. Portugal receives everything east of the line between the Azores and Cape Verdi.</td>
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<td>1494</td>
<td>The Treaty of Tordesillas moves the Papal Demarcation Line of 1493 west to give Brazil to Portugal.</td>
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<td>1500</td>
<td>Pedro Cabral reaches Brazil.</td>
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<td>1513</td>
<td>Vasco Nunez de Balboa reaches the Pacific.</td>
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<td>1519</td>
<td>Ferdinand Magellan sets out to circumnavigate the globe.</td>
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<td>1519</td>
<td>Hernando Cortés conquers the Aztecs of Mexico.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1531–1533</td>
<td>Francisco Pizarro conquers the Incas of Peru.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1534–1541</td>
<td>Jacques Cartier explores the St. Lawrence River in Canada.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1542–1543</td>
<td>The Portuguese land in Japan.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1558</td>
<td>Elizabeth I of England ascends to the throne as the last Tudor monarch.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1588</td>
<td>The Spanish Armada, under Philip II, is defeated by the English Navy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1589</td>
<td>Henry of Navarre becomes King Henry IV and begins the Bourbon Dynasty.</td>
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<td>1603</td>
<td>James VI of Scotland, cousin of Elizabeth I, becomes James I of England, the first Stuart king.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1610</td>
<td>Louis XIII and Cardinal Richelieu reign.</td>
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<td>1618</td>
<td>The Thirty Years' War begins.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1625</td>
<td>Charles I becomes king.</td>
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<td>1629</td>
<td>Charles I accepts the Petition of Right prohibiting taxation without parliamentary approval.</td>
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<td>1637</td>
<td>Charles I forces a new prayer book upon Scotland's Presbyterians.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1643</td>
<td>Louis XIV becomes king of France.</td>
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<td>1648</td>
<td>Peace of Westphalia ends the Thirty Years' War.</td>
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<td>1649</td>
<td>Charles I is beheaded on the charge of treason.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1653</td>
<td>Oliver Cromwell establishes the Commonwealth of England.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1658</td>
<td>Oliver Cromwell dies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1660</td>
<td>Restoration: Charles II becomes king.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1685</td>
<td>Louis XIV revokes the Edict of Nantes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1688–1689</td>
<td>Parliament deposes James II and replaces him with Protestant leader William of Orange and his wife, Mary; this bloodless overthrow is known as the Glorious Revolution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1689</td>
<td>Peter the Great becomes Czar of Russia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1715</td>
<td>Louis XIV dies.</td>
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Sample Multiple-Choice Questions

1. Which of these events during the Age of Exploration was a cause of the others?
   A. Europeans brought food, animals, and ideas from one continent to another.
   B. European diseases had an adverse effect on the native populations of new territories.
   C. Warfare increased as European nations competed for land and power.
   D. Advances in learning and technology made long ocean voyages possible.
   E. Christianity was brought to the Native Americans.

2. Which of these European nations was the first to send ships into the Indian Ocean and establish colonies?
   A. Britain
   B. Portugal
   C. Holland
   D. France
   E. Spain

3. “The person of the king is sacred, and to attack him in any way is an attack on religion itself. Kings represent the Divine Majesty and have been appointed by Him to carry out His purposes. Serving God and respecting kings are bound together.”
   Which of these men would support this statement?
   A. Thomas Hobbes
   B. Bishop Jacques Bossuet
   C. John Locke
   D. Jean Jacques Rousseau
   E. Baron de Montesquieu

4. Colbert supported all of the following to promote the French economy EXCEPT
   A. improvement of internal transportation in France.
   B. encouragement of the growth of new industries.
   C. establishment of a strong maritime fleet to transport goods.
   D. creation of a central bank.
   E. setting up of tariffs to protect French industries.

5. Louis XIV was able to control the nobility by
   A. working closely through the Estates General.
   B. appointing them to higher positions within the government.
   C. gaining their support for his foreign policy.
   D. requiring them to live at Versailles for at least part of the year.
   E. gaining the support of the Huguenots.

6. Cardinal Richelieu was able to establish absolute control for Louis XIII of France by all of the following EXCEPT
   A. destroying the castles of the nobles.
   B. levying taxes without the consent of the Estates General.
   C. disbanding the intendant system.
   D. eliminating the nobility from any government position.
   E. crushing any group of nobles who threatened royal power.

7. The decline of Spain in the seventeenth century can be attributed to
   A. an overexpansion of industry and trade.
   B. the rise of an urban middle class.
   C. weak and ineffective monarchs.
   D. the growth of slave labor in America.
   E. the growth of an intellectual movement that questioned the authority of the king.

8. Which is the best way to describe Oliver Cromwell’s Protectorate?
   A. Constitutional monarchy
   B. Democracy
   C. Puritan military dictatorship
   D. Absolute monarchy
   E. Parliamentary democracy
9. Which was a result of the Glorious Revolution of 1689?
   A. It restored the Puritans to office.
   B. It established democracy.
   C. It restored the supremacy of Parliament over the king.
   D. The king gained power at the expense of the nobility.
   E. The Stuarts were allowed to remain in power.

10. Therefore, the Parliament declares:

   “That the (king’s) pretended power of suspending laws . . . without consent of Parliament is illegal. That levying money (taxes) for or to the use of the crown (king) . . . without grant (consent) of Parliament . . . is illegal.”

   This seventeenth-century excerpt can be found in which of the following?
   A. English Bill of Rights (1689)
   B. Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen
   C. Napoleonic Code
   D. Magna Carta
   E. Locke’s Two Treatises of Government
Multiple-Choice Questions: Answers and Explanations

1. D. The Renaissance spirit of inquiry and the development of navigational devices such as the compass and astrolabe made better navigation possible for Europeans. Advances in geographic knowledge due to the improvement in the field of cartography also encouraged explorers to venture farther away from home. Finally, new and improved ships such as the caravel provided the vessels that Europeans needed to launch their voyages. The Age of Exploration led to the Columbian Exchange in which Europe brought horses, cattle, and sheep to the Americas and returned with corn, potatoes, peanuts, and tobacco. Europeans also brought diseases such as smallpox to the Americas. These advances also contributed to the Europeans engaging in a series of wars from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. They were caused partly by colonial rivalry. The English defeated the Spanish Armada in 1588 and England and France fought in four major wars. Missionaries also saw exploration as a struggle to convert Native Americans to Christianity.

2. B. Prince Henry the Navigator of Portugal set up a school for sailing that inspired Portugal to search for a direct all-water route around Africa to the East. In 1498, Vasco da Gama rounded the Cape of Good Hope and sailed on to India. He established trading posts at Goa and Calicut. Spain would explore efforts to reach a direct water route in 1492 when Columbus sailed westward and landed in the Bahamas. Britain, Holland, and France would begin their exploration of the New World in the sixteenth century.

3. B. Bishop Jacques Bossuet believed in the Divine Right Theory. This theory was used to justify unlimited royal power. Bossuet summed up the theory in his book, *Discourse on Universal History* (1681). Bossuet claimed that the king was an agent of God and his authority to rule came directly from God. The king was entitled to unquestioning obedience. The Divine Right Theory supported the idea that we are given basic rights from God. Thomas Hobbes supported an absolute monarchy but not the divine right of government. John Locke and Jean Jacques Rousseau rejected absolutism and supported the idea that government was a social contract between the people and the government. Baron de Montesquieu believed in limiting royal absolutism.

4. D. Colbert supported the principle of mercantilism that depended upon making France self-sufficient. To achieve this goal, Colbert wanted France to develop its internal transportation system and promote the growth of new industries. To protect these industries, he supported a protective tariff. He also believed that France could become self-sufficient only if it developed a strong merchant marine fleet that could transport the goods necessary for the economy. The establishment of a national bank was not one of Colbert’s economic goals.

5. D. Louis XIV required all the great nobility of France to live at the Versailles Palace, at great cost to the Royal Court. The nobles were free from paying any taxes. Left at their own estates, the nobles could be a threat to the power of the monarch. By luring the nobles to Versailles, he turned them into courtiers, battling for privilege rather than power. Louis never called a meeting of the Estates General, and he appointed members of the upper middle class, not the nobles, to high positions of power within the government. Louis also never needed the support of the nobles for the war. In 1685, he revoked the Edict of Nantes, which had granted the French Huguenots religious toleration. Louis exiled many of the Huguenots, and others fled to Holland and the Americas. He wanted their support only if they converted.

6. C. Cardinal Richelieu did not eliminate the intendant system. He introduced the institution of the intendants, who were state-appointed officials. These officials held a wide range of powers over the local area that they administered. The intendants were used to enforce royal orders in the provinces and to weaken the power and influence of regional nobility. Richelieu destroyed the fortified castles, which had long been a symbol of noble independence. Although a few nobles held important offices, a majority of state officials were members of the middle class. Richelieu crushed aristocratic conspiracies ruthlessly.

7. C. After Philip II’s rule ended in 1598, his successor Philip III allowed the Duke of Lerma to run the country on his behalf. He used this power to advance his personal and familial wealth. Philip IV left the management of his several kingdoms to his favorite nobles. Many of them clung to the belief that the solution to restoring Spain’s greatness was to revive its involvement in the religious wars of Europe. Spain became involved in the Thirty Years’ War, which emptied its treasury and brought disaster. The decadence of the Spanish rulers and the lack of effective royal councilors contributed to Spain’s failure. The incredible
wealth of South America destroyed any efforts to expand Spain's industry and trade and destroyed what remained of the Spanish middle class. The gold and silver of the colonies created contempt for business and manual labor. The growth of slave labor helped to create Spanish absolutism because its power was built upon the slaves who produced the gold and silver in the colonies. There was limited intellectual growth in Spain, as the Spanish ignored new scientific or mercantile ideas because they came from the heretical nations of Holland and England.

8. C. Oliver Cromwell was designated as a Lord Protectorate in 1652 to restore law and order. He ruled as a military dictator through his army. Cromwell levied heavy taxes, divided England into 12 military districts, and proclaimed quasi-martial law. He ruled until his death in 1658. Cromwell's government was not a parliamentary democracy since all power in his government resided in him.

9. C. The Glorious Revolution was a bloodless and successful revolution. In 1688, Parliament secretly offered the English crown to William, the Protestant ruler of Holland and his wife Mary (also Protestant), daughter of James II. Parliament was fearful that James II would reestablish Catholic rule in England. When William and Mary accepted and arrived in England, James II fled the country. Parliament proclaimed William and Mary the new king and queen. This relatively bloodless revolution ended divine-right rule in England and established the supremacy of Parliament. The Glorious Revolution ended the Stuarts' power, but did not restore the Puritans to office, or establish democracy. The Glorious Revolution provided for a constitutional monarchy in which the king's power was limited and not increased at the expense of the nobility. The wealthy landowners through Parliament were the dominant force in the government.

10. A. This seventeenth-century excerpt is found in the English Bill of Rights. This excerpt rejected the idea that the king is an absolute ruler. In 1689, James II of England was forced to abdicate his throne because of his Catholicism and his wish to become an absolute ruler. The British Parliament invited William and Mary to rule provided that they agreed to sign a series of acts that became known as the Bill of Rights. This bill limited the power of the king to repeal any law, levy taxes, or maintain an army without the consent of Parliament. The monarch also agreed not to interfere with parliamentary elections and debates. The people were also guaranteed basic civil rights. The Bill of Rights guaranteed the superiority of Parliament over the king. The National Assembly of France in 1789 issued the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen. It proclaimed that the government rested on the consent of the people, not on the divine right of the king. This declaration ended the absolutism of Louis XVI and turned France into a constitutional monarchy. The Napoleonic Code consisted of laws that consolidated the achievements of the French Revolution, such as social equality, religious toleration, and trial by jury. The Magna Carta (1215) was signed by King John and was passed to protect the feudal nobles against the tyranny of the king. John Locke's Two Treatises on Government was written to justify the Glorious Revolution and that government was organized to protect the life and liberty of all.