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# How Absolute Monarchs Like Louis XIV Ruled Their Countries

**KS3** Ages 11-14 ⌚ 3 min read

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## What Was an Absolute Monarch?

An **absolute monarch** was a king or queen who held all the power in their country. Unlike modern leaders who share power with parliaments or governments, absolute monarchs answered to nobody. **Louis XIV** of **France** was one of the most famous absolute monarchs in history. He ruled from **1643 to 1715** and believed he had the right to make all the decisions for his entire kingdom.

Think of it like being the owner of a school where the headteacher has final say on absolutely everything—the rules, the money, what gets taught—and nobody can argue or vote against their decisions.

## Power Through Divine Right

**Louis XIV** believed in something called **divine right**. This meant he thought God himself had chosen him to be king, and that his power came directly from heaven. This was a brilliant way to control people because most people were very religious. If they believed God wanted the king to have power, they were less likely to rebel.

Louis XIV famously said, "**L'État, c'est moi**" ("I am the state"). This meant that he and the country were one and the same—whatever he wanted was what was best for France.

## Control Through Fear and Loyalty

Absolute monarchs kept power by controlling the **nobility** (rich lords and landowners). Louis XIV invited all the important nobles to live with him at his enormous palace called **Versailles**. If they stayed close to the king, he could watch them and make sure they didn't plot against him. He also gave them important jobs and money to keep them happy and loyal.

Think of it like a teacher keeping the rowdiest students as special helpers—they get attention and responsibility, so they're less likely to cause trouble.

## Money, Army, and Laws

Louis XIV controlled three powerful tools: **money**, the **army**, and **laws**. He could raise taxes whenever he wanted, spend money however he pleased, and use soldiers to enforce his rules. Nobody could challenge his decisions because he had the resources to punish anyone who disagreed. He also created new laws without asking anyone's permission.

## The Grand Display

The king also used magnificent buildings, fancy clothes, and huge celebrations to show his power. **Versailles Palace** was enormous and spectacular—it showed everyone how wealthy and important Louis XIV was. This made people respect him and feel that his power was natural and right.