I Am Absolute Monarch (And So Can You!)

Mrs. Short

Purpose: The purpose of this assignment is for you to show your understanding of absolute monarchy, the goals of absolute monarchs, and problems for anyone who wasn't the king or queen that existed in an absolutist society. You will show your understanding through creative writing on this poster project.

Your absolute monarch can be written in first-person or third person, but please be consistent. You are creating a fictional character, and the absolute monarch does not need to be like you, even in the first-person. It can be, though, if you would like. Your character can care about the people they rule—or your character can care about only himself or herself. However, your character must care about maintaining their absolute power and control over the state. (state = nation / country)

Congratulations--just by looking at this assignment, you gained 25% more absolute power.

In 2007, Stephen Colbert, the host of television's highest-rated punditry show The Colbert Report, published “I Am America (And So Can You)!” that contained all of the opinions that Stephen doesn't have time to shoehorn into his nightly broadcast.

In this assignment, you will exude your most deeply held knee-jerk beliefs on absolute monarchies, possibly explaining your policies, uses and abuses related to family, race, religion, fashion, luxury and many more topics.

Always controversial and outspoken (during this assignment), you will address why your absolute monarch is dominating America, why evolution led to your superiority, and why the elderly should donate their social security to help build your new palace.

* The previous passage is modified from the advertisement for I Am America (And So Can You)! found on amazon.com

Knowing the Content – Important Vocabulary and People

- **absolutism** -- principle or exercise of complete and unrestricted power in government
- **absolute monarchy** -- monarchy not limited or restrained by laws or constitution
• divine rights of kings – belief that God chose the monarch to rule

• King Louis XIV – French king who firmly established an absolute monarchy, attempted to establish French supremacy in Europe by waging almost continual wars from 1667 to 1714, which ultimately failed. But his reign is regarded as a golden age of French literature and art. He became known as “the sun king” after he adopted the sun as his symbol. He built the Palace of Versailles, which became the envy of other absolute monarchs. The combination of wars and lavish spending drained France’s coffers.

• Jean-Baptiste Colbert – Colbert was a French politician from the middle class who served as the Minister of Finances of France from 1665 to 1683 under the rule of King Louis XIV. Like all great leaders, it is important to have some very talented and skilled people working for you. He used mercantilism to make all of Louis XIV’s spending possible.

• legacy -- anything handed down from the past, as from an ancestor or predecessor: the legacy of King Louis XIV was depleted coffers (spent all the money), decadent culture... and eventually led to the French Revolution.

• Peter the Great – Peter the Great was a Russian czar of the late 18th century who tried to westernize Russia and modernize the country. He built a new capital called St. Petersburg (Moscow being the former capital). He studied shipbuilding, forced his people to move to St. Petersburg and to shave. He forced the nobles to change to a Western style of dress. He went to war to gain a warm water port (meaning one that doesn't freeze). He gave estates with serfs to people who served him well, greatly expanding the exploited underclass.

• Catherine the Great – Catherine the Great was an empress of Russia in the late 18th century who encouraged the cultural influences of Western Europe in Russia and extended Russian territory towards the Black Sea. Fascinatingly, she was not born Russian or with the name Catherine. She married into the Russian royal family, and seized power through a coup. (You could do this, too.)

• Frederick the Great -- Frederick II (1712-1786) ruled Prussia from 1740 until his death, leading his nation through multiple wars with Austria and its allies. His daring military tactics expanded and consolidated (united) Prussian lands, while his domestic policies transformed his kingdom into a modern state and formidable European power. As an enthusiastic patron of the arts and sciences, a gifted musician and a correspondent with the top minds of the Enlightenment, Frederick sought to embody the Platonic ideal of a “philosopher-king.” He also really liked winning in war. His military was the envy of Europe.

• Henry VIII – Henry VIII was a Tudor King of England famous for his six wives. Henry was an avid sportsman, eater and drinker. He ended up hugely overweight from his consumption. (divorced, behead, died, divorced, beheaded, survived)
• **Bloody Mary** – England’s first female monarch, Mary I (1516-1558) ruled for just five years. The only surviving child of Henry VIII and his first wife, Catherine of Aragon. She sought to return England to the Catholic Church and stirred rebellions by marrying a Spanish Habsburg prince. But she is most remembered for burning nearly 300 English Protestants at the stake for heresy, which earned her the nickname “Bloody Mary.” Will you, as an absolute monarch, be earning a super-sweet nickname by doing something horrible? Or are you more of a sun-king-type?

• **Queen Elizabeth** – Brave and shrewd, Elizabeth I was one of the greatest rulers in English history. She changed England from an island kingdom to a world power. She supported the arts, including the writer William Shakespeare.

• **Any other absolute monarch:** You are welcome to Google other absolute monarchs OR to research additional information about the aforementioned absolute monarchs.

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### Preparing for Poster

*think SUBJECTIVE… from the perspective of your imaginary monarch*

Everything you put on this packet is to help your organize everything you need for the poster. You will only submit the poster for a grade—I will not be collecting the packet.

Select a snooty name like Frederick, William, Mary, etc. Maybe put a roman numeral after it—not something crazy. *Keep the Roman numeral under XX:*

Now you need to come up with a super sweet nickname. Think ahead, are you going to pick a symbol to represent your absolute monarch like King Louis XIV and be known as something like “the Sun King.” Are you going to kill a bunch of people and earn yourself a nickname like Bloody Mary?

On your poster you will be required to address FOUR of the following topics with a paragraph on a note card. Each paragraph must contain a reference in the form of a simile or a metaphor to a specific absolute monarch. The more specific that the reference is, the more CONTENT about the absolute monarch from history, the better:

1. Government
2. Military and War
3. Architecture / Monuments
4. Fashion
5. Economy (Mercantilism)
6. Controlling Policies
7. The “Little People”
As often as possible, make a comparison to an absolute monarch about whom we have studied or read in class—or that you have researched on your own:

**Government**
While obviously you are living in an absolute monarchy, you need to make sure that your egotistical jerk of a ruler does everything to maintain his iron hand rule. You should make a comparison between your most trusted advisor (whom you will make up as well) and Jean-Baptiste Colbert. *(see vocabulary)*

As an absolutist, your monarch believes in a strong central power (his or her power to be specific). They will want to ensure that nobles or other citizens do not have too much power. All citizens should want to stay in the monarch’s favor.

You may decide to have a governing “representative body” over which your monarch has complete control. You could create laws, which are a part of government. Options really are limitless.

**Military and War**
You also need to describe your military policies. The absolute monarchs that we studied all improved the military in terms of training and technology, because they largely wanted to kill their neighbors. Sometimes they worried that their neighbors wanted to kill them. Your monarch should want to do and fear this, too.

Is there a military draft? This may be question that you want to answer. When do people get drafted? How long must they serve in the military? Is your military cronyism (you promote friends) or a meritocracy (you promote based on skill)? What do you spend your money on in your military? How do you keep your military loyal?

This militarism leads to war—expansion most likely should be on your absolute monarch’s mind! #canadaisours

**Architecture / Monuments**
You could also describe what you would want to build. King Louis XIV built Versailles. It was pretty sweet. Your monarch may want a sweet crib. Maybe your monarch is patron of the arts. Maybe your monarch wants everyone to know their face/

Whatever your monarch builds, it should be something that glorifies the state, the image or increases the control of your monarch. Make a comparison to a specific thing built by an actual monarch. If you are building a statue, find an absolute monarch that built a statue, and reference that specific statue by name.

ORDERED: If you want to propose a different topic, you may with approval in ADVANCE! Please do not turn it in with the assumption that it will be accepted. If you want to add a 5th category and paragraph—that does not require approval.
Fashion
An absolute monarch cannot be outdone by those blasé characters like Lady Gaga, Beyonce or Nicki Minaj. Your fashion needs to say I spent more money on this outfit than the average American family earns in a year. If you've read or seen The Hunger Games, you need to out-do those crazy people in the Capitol.

Additionally, as this is social studies assignment, you need to make an absolute monarch (that we learned about) shout-out to the one that relates most to your character. This is one of the few sentences that you can use a ton of gratuitous slang. (Example: Holla at my boi Louis XIV, because ______!) Remember that there is a reason for being ostentatious. Your absolute monarch is demonstrating their wealth and power. It should be clear that your monarch's attire draws both respect and envy from the masses. Dress to impress!

Economy (Mercantilism)
The goal of your economy is obviously to make you and your country rich. (Remember “I am the state.” #louisegolikebeyonce)

There are different ways that you monarch could do this. Perhaps your monarch creates a monopoly that is state-run. Maybe they protect local industries by not allowing people to buy a specific product from outside the country. They may place taxes on goods that go directly to the monarch's personal fund.

Think about how you will be funding the military, as your military will be very important to your monarch.

Controlling Policies
Well, as an absolute monarch you need to crush the spirits of the people immediately underneath you. You cannot allow them to rise up and become your competition.

Additionally, you probably really enjoy controlling them. As you may recall, “absolute power corrupts absolutely.” This means that as you reign, your absolute monarch will probably become increasingly more controlling.

Freedom of the press? Only if it makes your absolute monarch look sweet. Do you have social restrictions? Do you have social classes? Are the laws the same for all social classes?

The “Little People” (a.k.a. unwilling minions)
However, it is not just the people immediately underneath you that you need to dominate. You should not forget about the “little people.” Do not make the mistake thinking that your absolute monarch might care about these people beyond how they can be useful.

Remember, when referring to the little people, you should remember to be derogatory (insulting). Here are some suggested words that you could use to refer to them: menial
worker, drudge, farmhand, gopher, laborer, peasant, serf, servant, slave, unskilled laborer, peon, plodder, workhorse, inferior, subordinate, grunt, working stiff, hireling, hand, boor, bumpkin, cropper, provincial or chattel.

Don’t use them all. Please make sure you know the meaning of your specific and delightful insulting term. You can choose a wide variety of descriptive adjectives to describe your huddled, and ready to be exploited, masses. Dirty, stupid, unimportant, and all related synonyms would accompany the list of words very well.

**REMEMBER:** Be as specific in your references as possible.

**EXAMPLE:** Just like King Louis XIV built Versailles outside of Paris to show his wealth and power, and to force all his nobles to live under his watchful eye, King Jane Doe III built ________________________, where/because ________________________.

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<th>Poster: Step-By-Step Instructions</th>
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**Step 1:** On the back of the poster, clearly write your first and last name, class period, and date.

**Step 2:** Leave your poster vertical. Across the top write the title of the assignment:

“I Am Absolute Monarch (And So Can You!)”

**Step 3:** Underneath the title write the name and nickname of your absolute monarch.

“King Louis XIV (a.k.a. The Sun King)”

**Step 4:** In the center of your poster you need to draw a king/queen. It should be approximately 4 inches tall. It can be a stick figure (wearing a crown, of course). If you are feeling especially ambitious, you could cut and paste a picture of your face on your fabulous stick figure or cartoon. Eventually, your whole poster should be illustrated and colored. Bedazzlement with glitter is always appreciated.

**Step 5:** Take the four note cards that you have and label them with the four topics that you have selected.

Government
Military and War
Architecture / Monuments
Fashion
Economy (Mercantilism)
Controlling Policies
The “Little People”
Step 6: Take the time to write, in complete sentences, descriptions explaining these topics. Be sure to reference the directions and notes on the previous pages. They must be realistic—in that they are possible. You cannot break the rules of science. Science is real. Your absolute monarch is not the child of Hercules. They do not have magic powers.

The majority of your grade will be based on the content and concepts included on these cards. This is world studies. This means that you should be demonstrating your understanding of absolute monarchs, absolute monarchy and specific figures from history. If you do not have enough room, ask for an additional note card. Remember to be creative and witty.

**IMPORTANT**: You should have at least one reference to a specific absolute monarch in each paragraph (minimum of one per card). You must use at least one different one on each note card, mentioning at least four different absolute monarchs on this assignment. Referencing more absolute monarchs is encouraged. Please make sure that you are not just name-dropping, but referencing what the absolute monarch did, believed, valued, etc.

Step 7: Illustrate your poster. Make it be-a-u-ti-ful. Draw your mansion in the background. Draw a painting or statue that you commission as a patron of the arts. The whole background must be illustrated from edge-to-edge. As mentioned, bedazzlement is always appreciated.

Step 8: Paste your four cards by the hands and feet of your absolute monarch illustration.

Step 9: Across the bottom of your poster, please include the definition of absolutism as found from a dictionary or other resource, then rewrite the definition in your own words.

Step 10: Edit everything. Add finishing touches.

Step 11: Outline in black pen, marker or Sharpie to make your illustrations pop.

Step 12: Go over your writing in black pen, marker or skinny Sharpie so that it is easy to read.