



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

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Examples of Absolutism**

**Directions:** Read the following four examples. After you read each example, go to your blank chart and fill it out. For example, read #1, and answer all four questions on your chart for concept example #1. Once you are done go on to #2 and repeat the same steps until you are finished with example #4.

1.

Like King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella before him, King Phillip II of Spain centralized royal power, making all parts of the government responsible to him. He had complete authority over the government and the lives of the people during his reign from 1556 to 1598. He believed that his authority to rule came directly from God. As a result he saw himself as the guardian of the Catholic Church and made it his personal responsibility to defend the Catholic Reformation. He used his control of the Spanish army and navy to impose the Inquisition against Protestants and heretics. Without representation, the small middle class was heavily taxed by Phillip to fund his wars and build the Armada.

2.

“L’etat, c’est moi,” “I am the state,” said King Louis XIV of France. Louis believed that he was the only one responsible for governing France when he ruled from 1643 to 1715. A tutor to his son once said, “As God’s representative on Earth, the king was entitled to unquestioning obedience. Louis reigned from the most magnificent building in Europe, the palace of Versailles. Full of the finest paintings, statues, chandeliers and mirrors, and surrounded by millions of flowers and plants, Versailles was the perfect symbol of Louis’ wealth and power. During his 72 year reign the Estates General, the legislative body of France, never met once. Without opposition he revoked the Edict of Nantes and taxed his people in order to wage costly wars against the Dutch and English.

3.

After a journey to Western Europe, Peter the Great decided to modernize Russia. To impose his will he became the most autocratic of Europe’s monarchs, believing that his right to rule as Tsar came from God. He centralized his power and brought all Russians under his control, including the Russian Orthodox Church. Peter forced the most powerful nobles, known as boyars, to serve in either the military or state government. Peasants and serfs were required to become soldiers or work on roads, canals, and other government projects. He improved the technology, education and the military of Russia, but in the process tortured and executed thousands of people who challenged his power from 1682 to 1725.

4.

According to the 1665 *Kongeloven* (King’s Law), The monarch of Norway “shall from this day forward be revered and considered the most perfect and supreme person on the Earth by all his subjects, standing above all human laws and having no judge above his person, neither in spiritual nor temporal [secular] matters, except God alone.” After abolishing the legislative branch known as the Rigsraadet, the king was the only person in charge of the country’s affairs. Frederick III ignored the advice of his nobles, and controlled the government and military on his own.

## List of Examples

### Directions:

Read the following four examples below and decide whether or not they are examples of the concept we are studying. Make sure to use the critical attributes and definition of the concept to test the examples. Next to each paragraph write a “yes” if it is an example, and “no” if it is not. If your answer is “no,” write why it is not an example of the concept.

1.

In 1689 King William and Queen Mary became the monarchs of England. Before they were crowned, they accepted the English Bill of Rights which required the monarchy to work with Parliament to govern the country. The monarchs were required to regularly call on Parliament to meet and lost their power to suspend laws. The responsibility of coordinating the countries finances and power to tax were given to the lower house of Parliament, known as the House of Commons.

2.

According to the Mandate from Heaven, the right to rule China is granted by Heaven. The Chinese believed that since there was only one Heaven, there could be only one ruler. Chinese emperors that were part of the Han dynasty referred to themselves as Sons of Heaven, and commanded respect from all their subjects. Chinese law dictated that the emperor’s position could not be challenged by anyone. Emperors handpicked governors and officials in order to centralize their authority and spread their power. Each emperor served as head of state and commander of the army. They chose whether or not to listen to advisors, but had no legislative body to monitor imperial power or prevent abuse.

3.

Saudi Arabia contains one of the last remaining monarchies in the world today. Monarchs are chosen by members of the royal family and approved by Muslim legal scholars in accordance to the Qur’an and Shari’ah (Islamic law). State issues are decided by King Abdullah, along with the Council of Ministers and Consultative Council. With no elections or political parties, it is up to the king to appoint and dismiss members of both councils. At any time the king can choose to dissolve both government bodies. The Council of Ministers is responsible for internal, external, financial, economic, educational, and defense policies, but the king maintains final authority over all state affairs.

4.

In 1922 Benito Mussolini became Prime Minister of Italy. Within several years Mussolini eliminated all conventional and constitutional restraints on his power. In 1928 he outlawed political parties and abolished parliamentary elections. Through his complete control of the military and a massive campaign of propaganda, Mussolini was able to subjugate the minds of the Italian people and create a fascist state. He eventually became dictator of Italy and gained complete control of the Italian government.