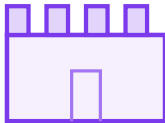


Absolutism and Constitutionalism

AP European History ■ Unit 3

AP European History



What we will cover

- 1 Contextualizing State Building
- 2 The English Civil War and the Glorious Revolution
- 3 Continuities and Changes to Economic Practice
- 4 Economic Development and Mercantilism
- 5 The Dutch Golden Age
- 6 Balance of Power



Contextualizing State Building

Unit 3 covers 1648 to 1815, and its organising claim is that **different models of political sovereignty** affected the relationship among states, and between states and individuals.

Everything in this unit follows from that: the state must now raise revenue, field armies, and manage an economy in permanent competition with rivals who are doing the same.



The English Civil War and the Glorious Revolution

The **English Civil War** was a conflict among the **monarchy, Parliament, and other elites** over their respective roles in the political structure – not a conflict between the crown and the people.

Its outcome, together with the **Glorious Revolution** , **protected the rights of the gentry and aristocracy from absolutism** by asserting the rights of **Parliament** .



Continuities and Changes to Economic Practice

Early modern Europe developed a market economy that provided the foundation for its global role. The CED lists the components, and questions reward naming several:

- The **Agricultural Revolution** raised productivity and increased the supply of food and other agricultural products.
- The importation and transplantation of American crops contributed further to the food supply.
- Labour and trade in commodities were increasingly freed from traditional restrictions imposed by governments and corporate bodies such as guilds.

Economic practice: finance and mercantilism

- The **putting-out system**, or **cottage industry** , expanded as more labourers produced for market in homes and workshops.
- The market economy produced **new financial practices and institutions** .

Continuities and Changes to Economic Practice, continued

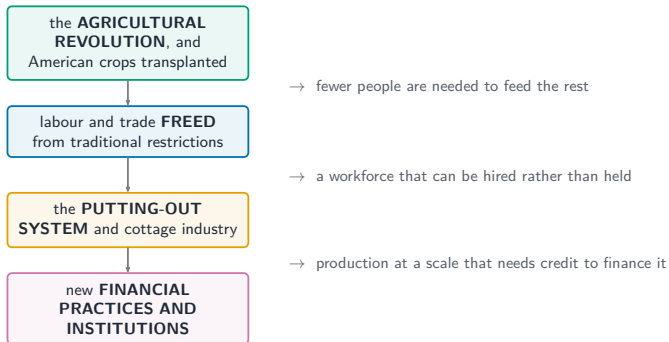
The chain worth holding: more food supports more people, freed labour and cottage industry let those people produce for market, and new finance moves the resulting capital.

Each link is separately examinable, and together they are the foundation on which Unit 6's industrialisation is built.

Four links to a global role

- The **Agricultural Revolution** raised productivity and increased the supply of food and other agricultural products.
- The **importation and transplantation of American crops** contributed further to the food supply.

Four links to a global role, in detail



The **importation and transplantation of American crops** contributed further to the food supply.



Economic Development and Mercantilism

The **European-dominated worldwide economic network** contributed to the **agricultural, industrial, and consumer revolutions** in Europe.

Mercantilism, and what 1688 actually settled

mercantilism

the state promotes **exports**, restricts imports, and acquires colonies to supply raw materials and buy finished goods

the assumption

world wealth is fixed, so one country gains at another's expense

the instruments

tariffs, navigation acts, chartered monopoly companies

the Glorious Revolution

read it carefully – it is easy to overstate

what it protected

the rights of a **propertied elite** against royal power, not popular rights

what followed

parliamentary supremacy, a national bank, and secure public debt – which funded a century of war

“Constitutional” in 1689 means **limited monarchy under a landed parliament**. Reading it as democracy is the standard essay error.



The Dutch Golden Age

The **Dutch Republic**, established by a Protestant revolt against the Habsburg monarchy, developed an **oligarchy of urban gentry and rural landholders** to promote trade and religious toleration.

The Dutch case matters because it is neither absolutism nor English constitutionalism – a third model, commercially dominant, that shows political form and economic success were not tied together in a single formula.



Two models of sovereignty, compared

The **competitive state system** led to **new patterns of diplomacy** and **new forms of warfare**.

After 1648, **dynastic and state interests**, along with **expanding colonial empires**, drove European diplomacy.

Two models of sovereignty, compared, in detail

	Absolutism	Constitutionalism
Where does sovereignty sit?	in the crown alone	in the crown together with Parliament
What of the nobility in government?	excluded from governance	represented, and its rights protected against the crown
The named cases	Louis XIV and Colbert; Peter and Catherine the Great	England after the Civil War and the Glorious Revolution
Both preserve the aristocracy's social position and legal privileges. Neither is popular government.		

The **competitive state system** led to **new patterns of diplomacy** and **new forms of warfare**.

Balance of Power

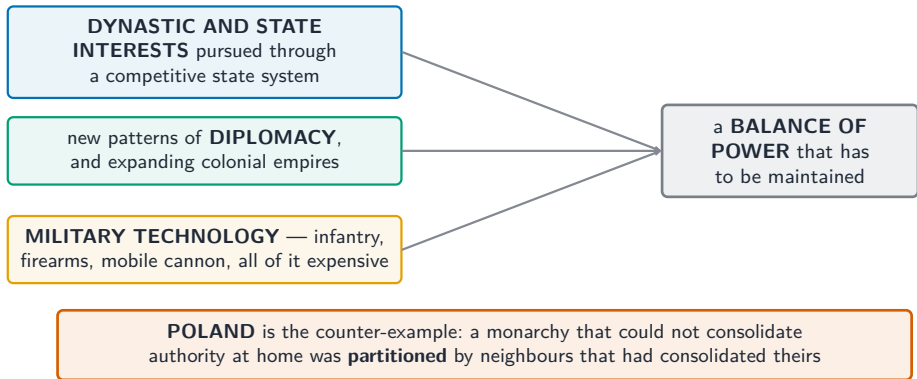
The **competitive state system** led to new patterns of diplomacy and new forms of warfare. After 1648, dynastic and state interests, along with expanding colonial empires, drove European diplomacy.

And the inability of the Polish monarchy to consolidate authority over its nobility led to **Poland's partition** by Prussia, Russia, and Austria – the clearest demonstration in the course that failure to centralise had a price.

Poland is the evidence, not a separate topic

- **Louis XIV** and his finance minister **Jean-Baptiste Colbert** extended **administrative, financial, military, and religious control** over the French state.
- **Peter the Great** “westernised” the Russian state and society, transforming political, religious, and cultural institutions; **Catherine the Great** continued that programme.

Poland is the evidence, not a separate topic, in detail



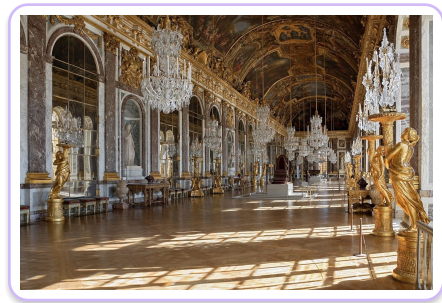
The system rewarded consolidation - Poland is the evidence, not a separate topic



Absolutist Approaches to Power

The CED's named cases:

- **Louis XIV** and his finance minister **Jean-Baptiste Colbert** extended administrative, financial, military, and religious control over the French state.
- **Peter the Great** "westernised" the Russian state and society, transforming political, religious, and cultural institutions; **Catherine the Great** continued that programme.



the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles

A bargain, not a defeat

TAKEN — a share in governing

administrative, financial, military and
religious control pulled to the crown

Louis XIV, Peter the
Great, Catherine the Great

KEPT — everything
that made them noble

social position
legal privileges, including exemptions
land, and the income from it

Not a defeat – a **bargain**. The nobility gave up power and kept status, which is why it held, and why England's settlement went the other way



Comparison in the Age of Absolutism

The unit's reasoning skill is **comparison** – the CED's own task is to compare the different forms of political power that developed from 1648 to 1815.

Worked example – a difference in shared terms

“Explain one difference between absolutist and constitutionalist government, 1648–1815.”

- **Full marks:** *“They differed in where sovereignty was located. In absolutist France, Louis XIV concentrated administrative, financial and military authority in the crown and excluded the nobility from governance. In constitutionalist England, the Civil War and 1688 settlement placed sovereignty in king-in-parliament.”*
- State the axis first – *where sovereignty sits* – then place both cases on it.

Two descriptions side by side are not a comparison. The shared term is what makes it one.

Exam tips

- The English Civil War was a conflict **among elites** about their roles. Do not turn 1688 into democracy.
- Absolutism **limited political participation but preserved social privilege**. That trade answers many questions.
- Keep a **third model** ready – the Dutch Republic. It breaks the simple two-way comparison and shows examiners you know the period.
- **Poland's partition** is the cost of failing to centralise. It is the counter-example the other cases need.
- The economic topics are a **chain**: agriculture, freed labour, cottage industry, finance. Name several links, not one.
- For comparison questions, choose **one axis** and measure both cases on it. Two separate descriptions are not a comparison.



Period 3 – key takeaways

1

1688

a conflict among elites – not
democracy

2

Absolutism

limits participation, preserves
privilege

3

Third model

keep the Dutch Republic ready

4

Poland

partition is the cost of failing to
centralise

Check yourself

- 1 Do not turn 1688 into what?
- 2 What trade does absolutism make?
- 3 Which third model breaks the two-way comparison?
- 4 What does Poland's partition show?

Answers: democracy ▪ less politics, kept privilege ▪ Dutch Republic ▪ cost of not centralising