Modern European History

Unit 5 – Absolutism

Louis XIV Essay

Webster's dictionary defines the term “splendid” as: “magnificent and sumptuous” or “distinguished or glorious.” Louis XIV brought France to its peak in terms of its respect and social status in the world, indeed, making France the most splendid place in the world at this time. During his reign France became the authority on all that was proper and elegant. Although this may seem trivial, it was very important to the people of the upper class, and as usual, they were controlling the world. There is no question that Louis XIV took France to an entirely new level in the world view as, during his reign, the French empire grew vastly and was greatly respected. Louis XIV possessed a passion for the splendor of the material world that led him to become one of the greatest leaders France has ever seen. To this day he remains a French hero and is often viewed as the greatest monarch that ever lived.

So we know that Louis was splendid. But was he “great?” What does “great” mean? This is what you are going to find out.

Your task is to read the attached primary source documents, specifically looking for information (evidence) of Louis XIV’s “greatness.” This will be done in several steps.

**Step 1: Primary Source Evaluation**

Read and annotate each of the primary source documents, underlining or highlighting those passages you believe would support the statement, “Louis XIV was great.” You should have several passages from each document.

*What about the picture?*

Does the picture make him look “great?” If so, how? Write out your interpretation of the greatness displayed in the picture (write it underneath the picture right on the paper).

**Step 2: Outline**

You will then take the information you identified as evidence of Louis XIV’s “greatness” and write an outline for a five-paragraph essay.

Remember, this is the outline format:

I. Introduction with enumerated thesis statement

II. Argument #1

A. evidence with source

B. evidence with source

III. Argument #2

A. evidence with source

B. evidence with source

IV. Argument #3

A. evidence with source

B. evidence with source

V. Conclusion