

Read the following article and answer the questions that follow:



Louis XIV was born at the Royal chateau in Saint-Germain-en-Laye in 1638. He was only five when he became king on the death of his father, Louis XIII. The regency, confided to his mother, Anne of Austria, was marked by a period of rebellion known as the Fronde (1648-1653), led first by the nobility and later by the urban commoners. The boy felt both humiliated by arrogant nobles and threatened by the people of Paris and would never forget it.

In 1660, Louis XIV married Maria Theresa, Infanta of Spain. The following year, on the death of his godfather and prime minister, Cardinal Mazarin, the 23-year-old monarch announced that he himself would govern. No one believed him. Yet he insisted on convening a council on a daily basis, from which he excluded grand nobles, surrounding himself instead with ministers who owed him all.

The first twenty years of the king's personal reign were the most brilliant. With his minister Colbert, he carried out the administrative and financial reorganization of the kingdom, as well as the development of trade and manufacturing. With the Marquis de Louvois, he reformed the army and racked up military victories. Finally, Louis encouraged an extraordinary blossoming of culture: theatre (Molière and Racine), music (Lully), architecture, painting, sculpture, and all the sciences (founding of the royal academies). These accomplishments would be depicted on the ceiling of the Hall of Mirrors of the Palace of Versailles – originally a hunting lodge, but chosen by Louis XIV as his main home because it was situated outside of Paris and away from the nobles he distrusted.

Louis XIV chose the sun as his emblem. The sun was associated with Apollo, god of peace and arts, and was also the heavenly body which gave life to all things, regulating everything as it rose and set. Like Apollo, the warrior-king Louis XIV brought peace, was a patron of the arts, and dispensed his bounty. The regularity of his work habits and his ritual risings and retirings (levee and couche) were another point of solar comparison. Throughout Versailles, decoration combines images and attributes of Apollo (laurel, lyre, tripod) with the king's portraits and emblems (the double LL, the royal crown, the sceptre and hand of justice). The Apollo Salon is the main room of the Grand Apartment of Versailles because it was originally the monarch's state chamber. The path of the sun is also traced in the layout of the gardens.

Multiple Choice (Select the best or most correct answer.)

- _____ 1. In what year did Louis XIII die?
- a) 1638
 - b) 1648
 - c) 1643
 - d) 1925
- _____ 2. The rebellion during Louis XIV's reign was known as ...?
- a) World War I
 - b) Infanta
 - c) the Saint-Germain-en-Laye
 - d) the Fronde
- _____ 3. Louis XIV married ...?
- a) a French princess
 - b) Anne of Austria
 - c) Maria Teresa of Spain
 - d) Cardinal Mazarin
- _____ 4. In what ways did the country flourish during the first 20 years of his reign...?
- a) stock market
 - b) art, music, architecture, literature
 - c) trade
 - d) all of the above
- _____ 5. Molière was ...?
- a) an architect
 - b) a composer
 - c) an artist
 - d) a writer
- _____ 6. The symbol most associated with Louis XIV is ...?
- a) a crown
 - b) laurel
 - c) the sun
 - d) Versailles

What famous French landmarks do you know?

Why would you like to travel to France one day?
