3 Absolutism: claiming and building authority – Part 1

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Vocabulary

Write each word three times.

English	**Write it 3 times** (English)
Absolutism	

Recall

- You know a claim to power has to be believed to work.
- You have seen a building designed to impress rather than to be used.
- You know a government needs money before it can do anything.

New ideas

Read these first. Each idea has a short worked example. Then do the Practice below.

1 The claim

Absolutism claimed that sovereign authority rested in one ruler answerable to God alone. The claim had to be made, argued and displayed - it was never simply held.

Worked example. A palace built to be seen is an argument about authority as much as a residence.

2 The machinery

Claims required money and administration. Rulers built standing armies, professional bureaucracies and new tax systems, and each of these outlived the claim that justified it.

Worked example. A tax office created to fund a king's army still exists when the king does not.

■ 3 Resistance

Nobles, provinces, estates and towns held privileges that absolutism threatened. Resistance to centralisation is as much part of the story as the centralising itself.

Worked example. A province defending its old tax exemption is defending a limit on the crown.

Watch out: Absolutism describes a claim and a project, not an achieved condition. No European ruler actually governed without limits.

Practice

2.1 State the claim absolutism made. [2]

2.2 Name three parts of the machinery rulers built. [3]

2.3 Explain why the machinery outlived the claim. [2]

2.4 State who resisted centralisation and why. [2]

2.5 State why absolutism is a claim rather than a condition. [1]