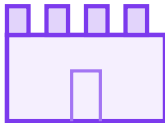


Absolutism and Constitutionalism

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** 政治主权 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** 英国内战 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** 光荣革命, **protected the rights of the gentry and aristocracy from absolutism** 绝对主义 by asserting the rights of **Parliament** 议会.

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** 农业革命 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 传统限制 imposed by governments and corporate bodies such as guilds.
- The putting-out system, or cottage industry 家庭手工业, expanded as more labourers produced for market in homes and workshops.
- The market economy produced new financial practices and institutions 金融制度.

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.

Economic Development and Mercantilism

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

The Dutch Golden Age

The **Dutch Republic** 荷兰共和国, established by a Protestant revolt against the Habsburg monarchy, developed an **oligarchy of urban gentry and rural landholders** 城市士绅与乡村地主寡头 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.

Balance of Power

	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 distinction this unit turns on

Balance of Power

The **competitive state system** 竞争性国家体系 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** 波兰被瓜分 by Prussia, Russia, and Austria – the clearest demonstration in the course that failure to centralise had a price.

Absolutist Approaches to Power

The CED's named cases:

- **Louis XIV** 路易十四 and his finance minister **Jean-Baptiste Colbert** 柯尔贝尔 extended administrative, financial, military, and religious control over the French state.
- **Peter the Great** 彼得大帝 "westernised" the Russian state and society, transforming political, religious, and cultural institutions; **Catherine the Great** 叶卡捷琳娜大帝 continued that programme.

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.

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.