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# A-level HISTORY

## The Sun King: Louis XIV, France and Europe, 1643–1715

Paper 2F

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Specimen 2014

Morning Time allowed: 2 hours 30 minutes

### Materials

For this paper you must have:

- an AQA 12-page answer book.

### Instructions

- Use black ink or black ball-point pen.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book. The **Paper Reference** is **2F**.
- Answer **three** questions.  
In **Section A** answer Question 01.  
In **Section B** answer **two** questions.

### Information

- The marks for questions are shown in brackets.
- The maximum mark for this paper is 80.
- You will be marked on your ability to:
  - use good English
  - organise information clearly
  - use specialist vocabulary where appropriate.

### Advice

- You are advised to spend about:
    - 60 minutes on Question 01
    - 45 minutes on each of the two questions in Section B.
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**Section A**Answer Question 01.

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**Source A**

An extract from the 'memoires' of Primi Visconti, an Italian guest at the French court 1673–1683. This extract refers to 1673.

The King does what he can to demonstrate that he is not at all dominated by his ministers, and no prince was ever less dominated. He wants to know everything. In addition, his life is much regulated. He always gets up at eight o'clock, stays in his council meeting from ten to half past noon, when he always goes to Mass. Thanks to this intense desire to preside over all affairs of government, he has become a skilful ruler. In addition, the King has destroyed the chieftains and their factions and abolished the practice of patronage. The least positions at court and in the kingdom are now at his disposal. There are no intermediaries. If you want something, you have to go directly to him and not to anybody else. The King wants his ministers to bring all requests before the council because he wants the government to function in perfect harmony. The King has an extraordinary memory and he expects that every appeal, no matter what it is, will be reported to him so that he can issue a pardon or do justice. A simple glance from the King that they are imprecise is a reproach that leaves the ministers devastated.

**Source B**

An extract from a letter written by Bishop Fenelon in 1694 and addressed to Louis, although the letter was not intended to be read by him. Fenelon had been appointed as tutor to Louis' grandson in 1689, but was critical of the theory of the Divine Right of Kings.

Your people, whom you ought to love as your children, and who hitherto have been so devoted to you, are starving to death. Agriculture is all but abandoned; all trade is at an end. You have thus destroyed half of the real strengths within your State in order to make and to defend vain conquests outside it. Instead of extracting money from the poor people, the people should be given alms and food. The whole of France is desolate and unprovided for. You have brought all these difficulties upon yourself. So flourishes this great kingdom under a king every day held out to be the people's joy, and who would indeed be so had he not been poisoned by flattering counsels. The very people which so adored and trusted you begins to lose its love, its trust and even its respect for you. Little by little the flame of sedition is everywhere arising. Popular uprisings, for so long unknown, are becoming commonplace. The magistrates are obliged to tolerate the insolence of the insurgents and to bribe them into submission. You are reduced to a shameful extremity; either to leave sedition unpunished or inhumanely put down peoples whom you bring to despair by tearing from them, through your taxes for this war, the bread which they try to earn by the sweat of their brow.

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**Source C**

An extract from Louis' recommendations to his own son on how he should rule France. He is recollecting the nature of France at the start of his personal rule in 1661, compared with the situation in the 1670s and 1680s. Parts of the 'Memoires for the Instruction of the Dauphin' were probably penned by various ministers and then checked by Louis.

Disorder reigned everywhere. The finances were so exhausted that there hardly seemed to be any recourse left. Many of the necessary expenses for my house or my own person were supported solely through credit. Affluence prevailed, meanwhile, among the financiers, who covered their irregularities by all kinds of artifices. The least of the defects in the order of the nobility was the infinite number of usurpers in its midst, without any title or having a title acquired by purchase rather than service. The tyranny that it exercised over its vassals and its neighbours in some of my provinces could neither be tolerated nor could it be suppressed without examples of severity and rigour.

All these evils fell primarily upon the lower class, burdened, moreover, with taxes and pressed by extreme poverty. Two things were necessary for me, a great deal of work on my part and a careful choice of persons who were to support me in it. I resolved, above all, not to have a prime minister. For this purpose it was absolutely necessary to divide my confidence and the execution of my orders without entirely trusting it to anyone, assigning these various persons to various functions in keeping with their various talents. I could undoubtedly have cast my eyes on persons of higher standing, but on none with greater qualifications. But to be perfectly honest with you, it was not in my interest to select individuals of greater eminence.

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With reference to these sources and your understanding of the historical context, assess the value of these three sources to an historian studying Louis XIV's monarchy.

**[30 marks]**

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**Section B**

Answer **two** questions.

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**0 2**

'Cardinal Mazarin had a damaging influence over the French monarchy in the years 1643 to 1661.'

Assess the validity of this view.

**[25 marks]**

**0 3**

'The strength of France's enemies best explains the failure of Louis XIV's foreign policy in the years 1685 to 1715.'

Assess the validity of this view.

**[25 marks]**

**0 4**

'The financial problems of the French Crown were entirely caused by Louis XIV's wars.'

Assess the validity of this view.

**[25 marks]**

**END OF QUESTIONS**

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