Louis XIV declared his goal was "one king, one law, one faith." Analyze the methods the king used to achieve this objective and determine if he was a successful or unsuccessful king.

Such was the central government of France in the period of 1661 to 1683. It is necessary to remind oneself that most of its actual work was performed in committees, subcommittees of the councils, and in the bureaus functioning under the various ministers.

The duchess of the king was carried to the kingdom by the "Sovereign" parliaments. The chief of these parliaments...was that at Paris. The natural head, excluding the king of all these courts was the chancellor of France...

The financial administration of the kingdom, was carried on by the intendants with their subordinates.

During the personal reign of Louis XIV, these powers were even more organized and the monarchy assumed the form which was retained almost to the end of the ancien regime.

Under the regime of Colbert and Louis XIV, the intendant assumed the part of delegate administrator in the most obscure sections that the royal power penetrated.....The intendants were the legal "eyes" of the monarchy.

These ideas were expressed by King Louis XIV of France in 1660:

The head alone has the right to deliberate and decide, and the functions of all the other members consist only in carrying out the commands given to them... The more you grant... [to the assembled people], the more it claims.. The interest of the state must come first.

I made a beginning by casting my eyes over all the different parties in the state with a glance of experience carefully watching what the occasion and the state of affairs will permit...Everywhere was disorder, my court as a whole was still very far removed from the sentiments in which I can trust you will find it. There was no governor of a city who is not difficult to govern...the finances were entirely exhausted.

I laid a rule on myself to work regularly twice every day. There was no moment when I did not permit people to talk to me, provided they were urgent.

The function of the king consist principally in allowing good sense to act...I have never failed to impress upon you the great respect you should have for religion.

Posterity owes them an eternal debt of gratitude for the examples they have given, even when their achievements have been surpassed, and this well deserved glory is their only reward it was certainly the love of this source of glory that inspired Louis XIV when, as soon as he began to govern for himself, he set out to reform his kingdom, embellish his court and perfect the arts.

Not only did he impose upon himself the duty of working regularly with each one of his ministers but any man of repute could obtain the private audience with him, every citizen was free to pre sent him with petitions and projects.....The projects were examined in the counsel when they deserved it and their authors were more than once admitted to discus their proposals with the ministers in the King's presence. In this way Louis XIV's absolute power, the nation could still communicate with monarch.
Duke de Saint-Simon: The Court of Louis XIV

Not only did he expect all persons of distinction to be in continual attendance at Court, but he was quick to notice the absence of those of inferior degree; at his lever, his coucher, his meals, in the gardens of Versailles (the only place where the courtiers in general were allowed to follow him), he used to cast his eyes to right and left; nothing escaped him, he saw everybody.

If any one habitually living at Court absented himself he insisted on knowing the reason; those who came there only for flying visits had also to give a satisfactory explanation; any one who seldom or never appeared there was certain to incur his displeasure. If asked to bestow a favour on such persons he would reply haughtily: "I do not know him"; of such as rarely presented themselves he would say, "He is a man I never see"; and from these judgements there was no appeal.

He always took great pains to find out what was going on in public places, in society, in private houses, even family secrets, and maintained an immense number of spies and tale-bearers. These were of all sorts; some did not know that their reports were carried to him; others did know it; there were others, again, who used to write to him directly, through channels which he prescribed; others who were admitted by the backstairs and saw him in his private room. Many a man in all ranks of life was ruined by these methods, often very unjustly, without ever being able to discover the reason; and when the King had once taken a prejudice against a man, he hardly ever got over it....

Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, October 22, 1685

IV. We enjoin all ministers of the said R.P.R., who do not choose to become converts and to embrace the Catholic, apostolic, and Roman religion, to leave our kingdom and the territories subject to us within a fortnight of the publication of our present edict, without leave to reside therein beyond that period, or, during the said fortnight, to engage in any preaching, exhortation, or any other function, on pain of being sent to the galleys. . . .

VII. We forbid private schools for the instruction of children of the said R.P.R., and in general all things what ever which can be regarded as a concession of any kind in favor of the said religion.

Louis XIV, commenting on the Code Louis, 1670

"Complaints and petitions arrived in great numbers but I did not allow that to put me off...They enabled me to inform myself in detail about the condition of my people...When cases of injustice came to my attention I made further inquiries and sometimes stepped in to rectify them. One or two examples of this kind prevented a thousand similar abuses."

Document 5
The Palace of Versailles, was built by Louis XIV (France). Below is the view of Versailles from the Avenue de Paris", ca. 1662 by Pierre Patel.
Bussy-Rabutin on the reception of the king's induction into the French Academy as Protector, 1670

"After the king's Mass a dozen members of the Academy were informally present at the dinner of His Majesty, who was served at a small table. Monsieur le Duc was there, Monsieur le Prince de Conti.....the archbishop. The king said to Monseigneur de Vendome: 'You, sir, who are a man of parts, should belong to the Academy.' 'I have no merit, sire, but perhaps they might overlook that, since no great intelligence is necessary.' 'What!' exclaimed the king. 'Not necessary? Look at Monsieur the archbishop, Monsieur de Bussy and all these other gentlemen, if you consider intelligence not necessary.' Then they spoke of the difficulties of effective oratory. The discussion lasted throughout the king's dinner; after this, the archbishop, the ten Academicians and I went to dine with the Chamberlain. The king had commanded Livry to serve us well. We were six hours at the table, where the health of the Protector of the Academy was not forgotten..."

De Montmeran's view of Louis XIV's rule over France, 1683

"Yet while God has created all men according to His image...it is nonetheless true that it is in the person of kings that He has imprinted the most vivid colors, and it is there that He carved the most perfect characters of divinity...There is only one God in the world, and in the kingdom there is only one king to whom alone one should render honor and duty...the power of kings is without limits...God loves all His creatures, but not equally...one cannot doubt that, among all the mortal creatures, kings and monarchs are the most cherished by God..."

Inscription on an Architectural arch in Tournai, 1680

"Louis the Great, the sun that gives light to the day...the sun that makes the birds sing..."

Letter from Crown Prince Frederick of Denmark to his father on his trip to the court of Louis XIV, 1701

"The people of the court are like a foreign nation within the state, made up of men drawn from many different places. They are not men of intelligence, but they are all possessed of an admirable politeness, which serves them in its stead....The courtiers are prey to profound boredom, but they would not leave for anything in the world."

- Passage from the abbe de Saint Real describing the life of a courtier, 1700

"I have every reason to be satisfied since the very Christian king has treated me most civilly and others have done all that they can to give me pleasure..."

- Letter from Crown Prince Frederick of Denmark to his father on his trip to the court of Louis XIV, 1701
Louis signing the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, 1685

Madame de Maintenon, April 5, 1681
"...By this date the king is receiving almost daily reports of the conversion of whole towns to the Catholic church. The king, somewhat taken aback, has concluded that God wishes to make use of him to bring to perfection the holy work he has begun which is the conversion of all his subjects...he is the invincible hero destined by eternal wisdom to destroy the terrible monster of heresy..."

-Orator of the Assembly of the Clergy reporting after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, September 15, 1685
"If God grants the King life, in twenty years time there will not be a single Huguenot in France."

Saint-Simon, who claimed that Louis slighted him, criticised him thus:
"There was nothing he liked so much as flattery, or, to put it more plainly, adulation; the coarser and clumsier it was, the more he relished it."

According to Philippe de Dangeau’s Journal, Louis on his deathbed advised his heir:
"Do not follow the bad example which I have set you; I have often undertaken war too lightly and have sustained it for vanity. Do not imitate me, but be a peaceful prince, and may you apply yourself principally to the alleviation of the burdens of your subjects".

From The Memoirs of the Duke de Saint-Simon
His mind was occupied with small things rather than with great, and he delighted in all sorts of petty details, such as the dress and drill of his soldiers, and it was just the same with regard to his building operations, his household, and even his cookery. He always thought he could teach something of their own craft even to the most skilful professional men, and they, for their part, used to listen gratefully to lessons which they had long ago learnt by heart. He imagined that all this showed his indefatigable industry; in reality, it was a great waste of time, and his Ministers turned it to good account for their own purposes, as soon as they had learnt the art of managing him, they kept his attention engaged with a mass of details, while they contrived to get their own way in more important matters.