Florence developed remarkable techniques for its manufacture into cloth, and employed thousands of works in the manufacturing process.

The economic foundations of Florence were so strong that even severe crises could not destroy the city such as huge debts of King Edward III or the Black Death.

Northern Italian cities were communes, worn associations of free men seeking complete political and economic independence from local nobles and fought for and won independence.

Marriage vows often sealed business contracts between the rural nobility and the mercantile aristocracy forming the new social class, an urban nobility.

New class made citizenship in the communes dependent on a property qualification, years of residence within the city, and social connections.

A new force, popolo, disenfranchised and heavily taxed, bitterly resenting their exclusion from power, wanted places in the communal government.

Throughout the fourteenth century popolo used violence to take over the city governments.

Because they practiced the same sort of political exclusivity as had the noble communes, the popolo never won the support of other groups.

The popolo could not establish civil order within their cities and the movements for republican government failed and by 1300, signori (despots) or oligarchies (rule of merchant aristocracies) had triumphed everywhere.

Nostalgia for the Roman form of government, combined with calculating shrewdness, prompted the leaders of Venice, Milan, and Florence to use the old forms.

In the fifteenth century, political power and elite culture centered at the princely courts of despots and oligarchs who flaunted their patronage of learning and the arts by munificent gifts to writers, philosophers, and artists.
Men frequently believed that in becoming learned, a woman ceased to be a woman.

Women were supposed to know how to attract artists and literati to her husband’s court and how to grace her husband’s household, whereas an educated man was supposed to know how to rule and participate in public affairs.

In Castiglione’s *The Courtier*, the woman was to make herself pleasing to the man; with respect to love and sex, the Renaissance witnessed a downward shift in the women’s status.

Educational opportunities being severely limited, few girls received an education (social divide) but apart from that, the works of the Renaissance had no effect on ordinary women.

Rape was not considered a particularly serious crime against either the victim or society. Noble youths committed a higher percentage or rapes than their small numbers.

The rape of a young girl on, a marriageable age or a child under twelve was considered a graver crime than the rape of a married woman.

By contrast, the sexual assault of a noblewoman by a man of working-class origin, which was extraordinarily rare, resulted in a sever penalization because the crime had social and political overtones.

Early medieval penitential and church councils had legislated against abortion and infanticide.

Infanticide -- some were simply abandoned outdoors; some were said to have been crushed to death while sleeping in the same bed with their parents; some died from “crib death” or suffocation and occurred to frequently to have all been accidental.
• All three rulers used methods that Machiavelli would have praised -- ruthlessness, efficiency, and secrecy

• The Parliament had been the arena where nobles exerted their power and because the monarchy was dependent on the Lords and the Commons for revenue, the king had to call Parliament and he lived on his own financial resources

• Edward conducted foreign policy on the basis of diplomacy avoiding expensive wars

• Henry VII used these assemblies primarily to confirm laws and Parliament remained the highest court in the land and a statute approved there by the lords, bishops, and Commons gave the appearance of broad national support plus thorough judicial authority

• The center of royal authority was the royal council which handled any business the king put before it -- executive, legislative or judicial

• The council also prepared laws for parliamentary ratification

• Henry VII set up the court of Star Chamber to prevent aristocratic interference in the administration of justice and to combat fur-collar criminal activity

• Unlike Spain/France, England had no standing army or professional civil service bureaucracy

• The Tudors won the support of the influential upper middle class because the Crown linked government policy with the interests of that class

• Henry VII rebuilt the monarchy and encouraged the cloth industry and merchant marine

• Henry VII crushed an invasion from Ireland and secured peace with Scotland

• He left a country at peace both domestically and internationally, a substantially augmented treasury, and the dignity and role of the royal majesty much enhanced