



# VERSAILLES

## TREASURES FROM THE PALACE

Activities for Year 5-6  
and entry level Years 7-8

Visual arts  
French  
Design and technology

**NGA**  
National Gallery of Australia

## Introducing Versailles

Versailles is a world in itself: three palaces, two gardens and extensive parklands. Spanning the reigns of three kings—Louis XIV (1643–1715), Louis XV (1715–1774) and Louis XVI (1774–1792)—it grew from modest beginnings when Louis XIV transformed his father’s (Louis XIII) hunting lodge into a vast, luxurious palace.

As Versailles became the official seat of power from 1682, as well as the home of kings, queens and nobles, it was the heart of French politics and cultural life for more than 130 years.

Leisure and luxury were fundamental to Versailles with many festivities taking place for the enjoyment not only of royalty and nobility, but other visitors as well. An incredible number of French and European artists, performers and craftsmen worked on and in the great palace, its gardens and the subsequent buildings such as the Trianon and Petit Trianon, and Queen Marie-Antoinette’s Hamlet.

Versailles was an important showcase for French art, ingenuity and technical ability. As a place for people to visit from all around the globe, the glory of Versailles was a demonstration of the power and wealth of the king and of France, an influential site of trade and diplomacy.



### Acknowledgements

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French resources have been developed by the Modern Language Teachers Association ACT, French network in collaboration with the NGA.

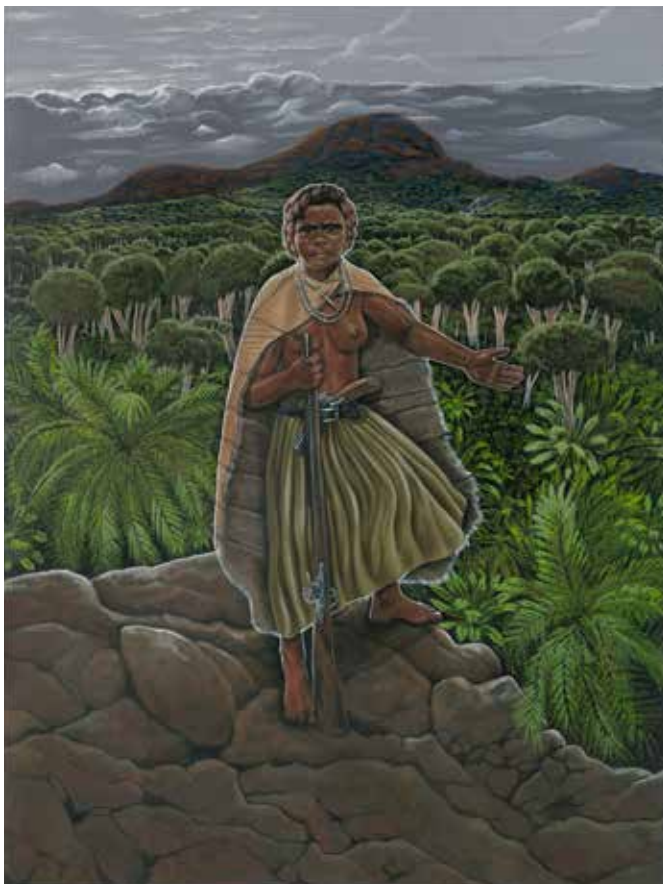
Cover image: **Manufacture des Gobelins after Charles Le Brun** *The king’s visit to the Gobelins factory, 15 October 1667* 1729–34 from the series *Life of the king*, wool, silk and gold thread 370 x 576 cm, National Furniture Depository © RMN-Grand Palais (Château de Versailles) / Christian Jean / Jean Schormans

## People, power, portraiture: kings and queens

The portraits in *Versailles: Treasures from the Palace* give us a unique insight into the world of kings, queens and nobles. Across the period of the three kings, Louis XIV, XV and XVI, these works of art display beauty, ceremony, fashion and most notably, power in France during the 17th and 18th centuries.

In the grand portrait of King Louis XIV (1701–12) from the studio of Rigaud he stands on a decorative platform, signalling to his subjects from above. Like the sun, he is the centre and everything revolves around him. It was Louis XIV that moved the court from Paris to Versailles. As an absolute monarch Louis XIV, known as *Roi Soleil* (The Sun King), had ultimate power over the French regimes, the three estates of clergy, noblemen, and commoners.

King Louis XIV considered himself a great and powerful leader, and in this way he is presented as a strong and confident figure in this portrait. He is surrounded by all the royal finery of a king.



## Art

Compare Louis XIV with the subject of another portrait in the NGA's permanent collection: *Walyer, 2006* by contemporary Aboriginal artist Julie Dowling. *Walyer* is a powerful image of a Tasmanian Aboriginal woman resistance fighter standing strong, but from a very different perspective.

- What are the similarities and differences between the clothing of these two figures, their body language, and the settings that they are shown in? Why has the artist chosen to show them this way?
- Paint or draw your own powerful image of an important Australian person living today. Where will you set the portrait? What will they have with them to tell us about their story?
- Plan an exhibition of your portraits and critique who your class considers important Australians. Compare what each artist has conveyed about their subject or sitter and how they did this.

## French

Describe Louis XIV's appearance in French.

- What does his hair look like?
- What is he wearing?
- What about his facial expression?
- What accessories can you see?
- In a thought bubble, write what he is thinking. Be as creative as you want!

In French describe the room Louis XIV is in.

- What are the various things in the room?
- What part of the palace do you think he is in?
- What makes you think that?

How well do you know roman numerals? Practise them with French numbers!

**Julie Dowling** *Walyer* 2006, synthetic polymer paint and red ochre on canvas, 200 x 150 cm, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, Purchased 2007, © Julie Dowling. Licensed by Viscopy

Opposite page: studio of Hyacinthe Rigaud *Louis XIV* 1701–12, oil on canvas 131 x 97.3 cm, Palace of Versailles © Château de Versailles, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Christophe Fouin



## People, power, portraiture: kings and queens

The portrait of Queen Marie-Antoinette (overleaf), wife of King Louis XVI, was painted by the French artist, Elisabeth Louise Vigée Le Brun in 1783. It was the preferred official portrait of the queen after marrying Louis XVI, and was intended as a gift for the queen's mother in Austria.



**Hilda Rix Nicholas** *The scorned flowers (Les fleurs dédaignées)* 1925, oil on canvas, 193 x 128.5 cm, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. Purchased 2008, © Bronwyn Wright

## Art

- Why do you think the artist painted Marie-Antoinette in this way? Consider the elements of this painting, like Marie-Antoinette's expression, clothing, hairstyle and what she is holding. What clues do these elements give us about Marie-Antoinette and what the artist is trying to say about her?
- Compare your observations of Queen Marie-Antoinette with another portrait of a well dressed French woman, *Les fleurs dédaignées* (The scorned flowers) 1925 by Australian artist Hilda Rix Nicholas.
- Create a self-portrait using drawing materials like pencils and paper, a mirror, or digital drawing applications. What elements will you include to tell us something about yourself?

## French

Describe Marie-Antoinette's appearance in French.

- What does her hair look like?
- What is she wearing?
- What about her facial expression?
- What accessories can you see?
- What do you think she is thinking about?
- If she had a mobile phone, who would she text and what would she be saying?

In French describe the room Marie-Antoinette is in.

- What part of the palace do you think she is in? Why do you think this?
- Using her newly acquired mobile phone, Marie-Antoinette is taking selfies in the palace to show her friends. Using technology or drawings, design two selfies and add underneath in French the explanation she would add about where she is and what she is doing. You need to make sure we can see which room of the palace she is in.



## Portraiture: groups and relationships

Group portraits not only identify a number of people, but they can tell us about their relationships, connections and more. From royal families to the work of ruling an expanding empire, take a look at these two paintings to see what you can discover.

### Art

Choose either the French school's *The Royal Family 1782* or Nicholas-André Monsiau *Louis XVI giving instructions to La Pérouse, 29 June 1785* (1817) overleaf.

- Describe how the artist has created a sense of connection between the people in the portrait.
- What do their gestures, body language or the arrangement of the figures tell you about how they feel about each other?
- What other visual elements help to connect the characters in this image?
- What is the overall story the painting conveys?



French school 18th century *The royal family in 1782* 1782, oil on canvas 97 x 129.4 cm, Palace of Versailles © Château de Versailles, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Christophe Fouin

### French

Discuss this painting of the royal family in French.

- Who is in this picture?
- How many people?
- What is their relationship with each other?
- Who are the people with the blue sash?
- What are they doing?
- How old do you think they are?

Using this text that describes the painting, collect all the adverbs of location from the text. Then using a photo or drawing of your own family, describe the position of each person in the picture, using similar structure.

*Voici une photo de famille de Louis XVI. Louis XVI est au milieu, avec Marie-Antoinette, sa femme, et le bébé, Louis-Joseph. On appelle le fils du roi, le Dauphin.*

*Devant, il y a la grande sœur de Louis-Joseph, Marie-Thérèse-Charlotte.*

*A droite, il y a la Comtesse d'Artois, avec une robe violette. Elle est mariée au Comte d'Artois, le frère de Louis XVI. Le Comte d'Artois est derrière la Comtesse d'Artois, à côté de Madame Elisabeth, la sœur de Louis XVI. Madame Elisabeth porte une robe verte.*

*A gauche, on voit une dame avec une robe jaune. C'est la Comtesse de Provence. Elle est la femme du Comte de Provence, le deuxième frère de Louis XVI. Le Comte de Provence est derrière le canapé.*

*Les trois petits enfants, à gauche, sont les enfants du Comte et de la Comtesse d'Artois.*

Who was La Pérouse?

- Why is he important to Australia?
- Looking at a map of Red Hill, ACT, can you find connections to France and La Pérouse?
- Where else in Australia are there place names connected to France and La Pérouse?

Using the texts from the teacher notes, create identity (ID) cards for the following explorers:

- La Pérouse
- Bruny d'Entrecasteaux
- Huon de Kermadec

Opposite page: **Nicholas-André Monsiau** *Louis XVI giving instructions to La Pérouse, 29 June 1785* 1817, oil on canvas 178 x 231 cm, Palace of Versailles © Château de Versailles, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Christophe Fouin



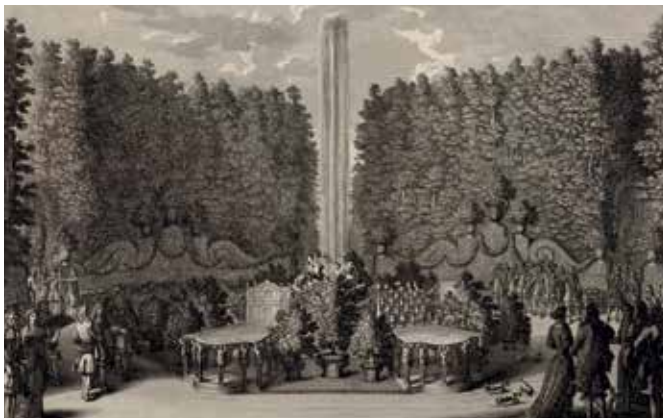


## Leisure at Versailles: garden festivities

Versailles was a place of leisure. Sometimes parties would last a month, with banquets, balls, performances, fireworks and fountain displays.

The gardens of Versailles were like outdoor rooms, incorporating many statues of ancient myths and parables. There were groves of exotic fruit such as oranges and pomegranates and fountains added beauty, with their jets of water shooting high into the sky for special occasions.

This series of highly detailed engravings by Jean Lepautre documents the festivals of Versailles, conveying their variety. These events were known as 'Divertissements', like diversions and entertainments perhaps? As a group of images we get a sense of the crowds, types of events and their lavish design in each highly organised and symmetrical image.



Jean Lepautre *Meal in the Petit Parc at Versailles* from *Divertissements of Versailles, 18 July 1668 1678*, engraving 31 x 42 cm, Palace of Versailles © RMN-Grand Palais (Château de Versailles) / Gérard Blot

Jean Lepautre *Fifth day: fireworks on the canal at Versailles* from *Divertissements of 1674 1676*, engraving 31.5 x 41.5 cm, Palace of Versailles © RMN-Grand Palais (Château de Versailles) / Gérard Blot

## French

- Look at these black-and-white engravings of leisure activities at Versailles. List the activities that they are doing in French.
- Read an entry from Louis' diary (teacher notes) and identify the verbs. Translate it into English for your parents. Then write your own diary entry about activities you did on the weekend, using passé-composé.



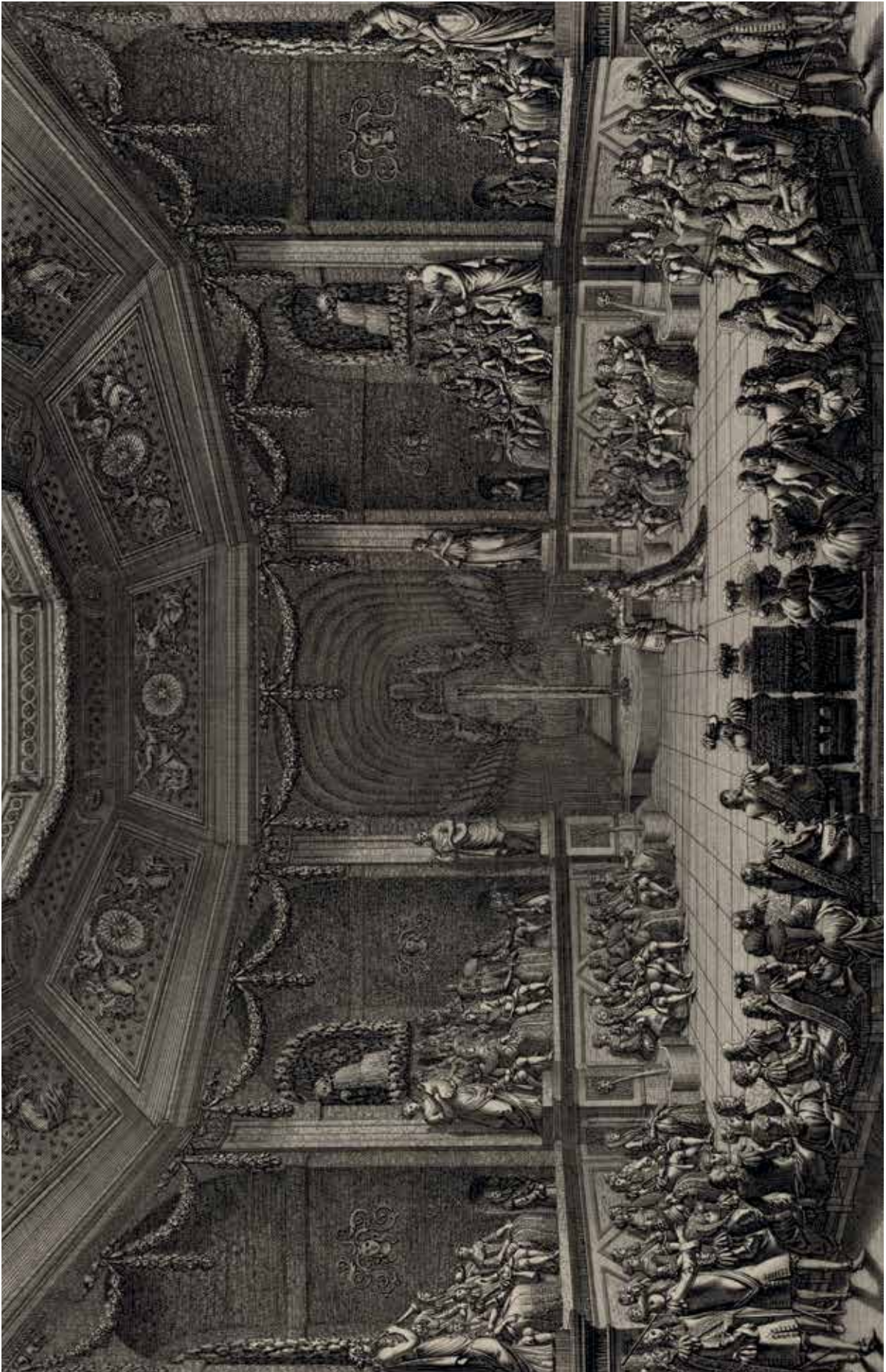
French School *The Marais Grove in the gardens of Versailles* 18th century, oil on canvas 61 x 119 cm, Palace of Versailles © RMN-Grand Palais (Château de Versailles) / Gérard Blot

## Art

At the centre of *The Marais grove* there appears to be a tree. It is in fact a metal tree, a fountain. The garden is geometric and the artist makes us feel as though we are in a stately room, which was the intention of the king and his chief landscape architect, André Le Nôtre, in designing Versailles' gardens. Anyone could visit these gardens, even animals!

- Take a look at an Australian garden designer such as Paul Bangay, who draws inspiration from the formal gardens of Europe.
- Using sculpture materials create a model of your very own Versailles-inspired garden. Consider the shape of your garden, the type of trees you might have, taking inspiration from our Australian landscape. Who is visiting your garden? What are they doing?

Opposite page: Jean Lepautre *Ball in the Petit Parc at Versailles* Plate IV from *Divertissements of Versailles, 18 July 1668 1678*, engraving 31.5 x 41.5 cm, Palace of Versailles © RMN-Grand Palais (Château de Versailles) / Gérard Blot



## Leisure at Versailles: music and flowers

Music was important to the life of Versailles. Kings and queens supported court musicians and composers to create new works. Playing a musical instrument was considered a suitable way for women to display their talents and education. Marie-Antoinette played the harp and is even known to have composed a number of pieces. You can listen to the music of Versailles as part of the music tour via the free NGA Versailles Tours app while the exhibition is on show.

Flowers were grown and admired in the gardens of Versailles. They came inside the palace and the smaller Petit Trianon, not only as cut flowers, but also as the subject of sumptuous still-life paintings.



### French

Describe this object (pictured above) in French by considering these questions:

- What is it?
- What is it made from?
- Who plays this instrument?

Look at this portrait of a family of musicians from the Versailles palace overleaf.

- Describe what they are doing in French?
- Do you or someone in your family play an instrument? If so, which instrument?
- Survey your classmates and display your findings in a table or a graph.

### Art

The *Gold vase with flower garlands* c 1699 represents the style of the times; highly decorative and elaborate. There were 60 of these paintings by Jean-Baptiste Belin de Fontenay that decorated various French royal residences.

- What kind of flowers can you see in these still-life works?
- Looking at works *Waratah* 1925 and *West Australian banksia* 1929 by the Australian artist Margaret Preston, compare these with Fontenay's flower paintings. Describe their similarities and differences.
- What types of flowers can be found near you? Arrange a still life using flowers found at your home or school and create a drawing, painting and/or print based on your arrangement.
- Plan a display of your still-life works of art.



**Jean-Henri Nadermann** *Marie-Antoinette's harp* 1775, gilded and painted wood, metal, bronze, pearl and glass beads 160 x 60 x 76 cm, Palace of Versailles © Château de Versailles, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Christophe Fouin

**Jean-Baptiste Belin de Fontenay** or **Blin de Fontenay** *Gold vase with flower garlands* c 1699, oil on canvas 115 cm (diam) Palace of Versailles © RMN-Grand Palais (Château de Versailles) / Gérard Blot

Opposite page: **François-Hubert Drouais** *The Souches family* 1756, oil on canvas 324 x 284 cm, Palace of Versailles © Château de Versailles, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Christophe Fouin



## Daily life: living in Luxury

Versailles was filled with luxury. In 1662 Louis XIV acquired the Gobelins workshop in order to support the furnishing of the palace. Each of the kings of Versailles were tastemakers of their time as fashions changed and design shifted.

During times of peace Louis XIV would employ his soldiers to build Versailles. On one such occasion Louis XIV decided to add a magnificent hall of mirrors, a corridor that would reflect the light from outside and illuminate the entire space, complete with tapestries, ceiling paintings, marble and beautiful statues. This space became a favourite place for festivities and functions.

Contrastingly, during lengthy periods of war, the construction at Versailles would cease, and the king would need to melt down his silver vases, urns and candlesticks to feed and pay his soldiers.

## French

What is the medium of the work of art that is pictured overleaf?

- Describe what you can see (je vois, on voit) in French. What is in the room? ( Il y a)
- What are these people doing? Describe their actions by using simple verbs. (Ils ...)

The Gobelins Manufactory wants to modernise its activities and plans to create a tapestry about a school yard. Imagine and describe in French what you would see on the tapestry.

## Art and design

The Gobelins Manufactory tapestry was created, after a design by the king's painter, Charles Le Brun.

- All the craftsmen are hurrying about. Why are they so busy?
- Notice the detail in the image; the skin tones and shading. How would you produce these subtle effects?
- Find materials like wool, cotton, linen, twine, or other fibres and weave your own tapestry, basket or bowl.

Opposite page: Manufacture des Gobelins after Charles Le Brun  
*The king's visit to the Gobelins factory, 15 October 1667* 1729–34 from the series *Life of the king*, wool, silk and gold thread 370 x 576 cm, National Furniture Depository © RMN-Grand Palais (Château de Versailles) / Christian Jean / Jean Schormans



## Daily life: the seat of power

Hand-crafted furniture was expertly made to the size and taste of kings and queens. From eating to sleeping, beautiful objects made by highly-skilled craftsmen surrounded the king, royal family and courtiers displaying the new French style.

The chair pictured overleaf is fit for a queen, especially made for Marie-Antoinette, wife of Louis XVI. Though she did not have direct power, as the queen with the ear of the king, she certainly had influence, especially over fashion and the style of the court.



**Gordon Andrews** *Rondo chair* 1956, aluminium, marine plywood, fibreglass, cotton and linen, 78 x 78 x 70 cm, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. Purchased 1986

## Art and design

Study the intricate carving, painting and embroidery on Marie-Antoinette's chair.

- Respond with your own drawing of a decorative chair. Consider colour, line, shape, size, its purpose and who it is intended for.
- Look at Gordon Andrew's *Rondo chair* 1956, compare how objects were made during the 17th and 18th century to how they are made today.
- What is different about the materials, techniques and design style?
- Which do you prefer and why?

## French

Answer the following questions in French.

- What is it?
- Who does it belong to?
- In which room of Versailles would you find this object?

Look at a modern chair, [Gordon Andrew's Rondo chair](#).

- Using a Venn diagram, compare the two chairs and write sentences of similarities and differences in French.

This chair is very old but has been restored by professionals whose job is to make sure objects and works of art are kept to their best for everyone to admire. At Versailles, there are many different jobs needed to maintain the palace. You have decided to apply for work experience at Versailles.

Look at the jobs (les métiers) and determine what they are in English.

- Fontainier
- Jardinier
- Conservateur
- Architecte
- Restaurateur
- Archéologue

In pairs, discuss what sort of qualities do you think you will need to do these jobs. List some adjectives.

Pretend you are applying for a summer work experience (un stage) at Versailles. Prepare your application. Write a small introduction about yourself and tell them why you think you would be good for it.





## Daily life: the Dauphin's desk

The education of the future king, the Dauphin, was very important!

The first French prince to be called le Dauphin was Charles V. Le Dauphin originated when Guy VIII, Count of Vienne, had a dolphin on his coat of arms and had been nicknamed le Dauphin, which French for dolphin.

### French

Take a look at the image overleaf.

- What is it?
- In your opinion, in which room of the palace could you find this piece of furniture?

We have found Louis XIV's timetable as a child.

- What subjects is he learning?
- Read it and imagine you are sitting at the desk of the Dauphin. Using the template writing paper (teacher notes), write a letter as if you were the dauphin. Talk about what you are going to do on one of the days on the timetable. Use the near future and 'avant, après'. (ex: Avant l'italien, je vais étudier le français – Mardi, après les mathématiques, je vais apprendre les leçons de bonne tenue ... Je déteste ça!)

Louis XIV wrote a short letter to his future son, giving him advice on how to become a king. Read the letter and answer the questions. Notice what forms of the verbs he is using to talk to his son.

- Do you think it is the usual way a father talks to his son?
- Why do you think he is using the Vous form of the verbs?
- What sort of information does it give you on the personality of the king?

Lettre de Louis XIV à son fils dans ses mémoires:  
(librement adapté de Histoire Junior- Octobre 2011- Numéro 1, p26)

*“A mon fils ,*

*Pour être un bon roi :*  
*Travaillez régulièrement tous les jours*  
*Apprenez à parler en public*  
*Apprenez à bien écouter*  
*Élevez votre esprit*

*Vous êtes né pour être roi ! “*

### L'emploi du temps de Louis XIV

	lundi	mardi	mercredi	jeudi	vendredi	samedi	dimanche
Le matin	Français - lecture	Français - écriture	histoire	Français - écriture	droit	architecture	catéchisme
	maths	italien	latin	maths	Leçons de bonne tenue	Français lecture	art
L'après-midi	catéchisme	équitation	sabre	musique	italien	équitation	sabre
	Jeu de paume	droit	maths	Leçons de bonne tenue	danse	histoire	danse

Opposite page: Bernard van Risenburgh II or Van Reisen Burgh II *Desk of the Dauphin, son of Louis XV* 1745, oak and amaranth, gilded bronze, leather 80 x 178 x 87 cm, National Furniture Depository, Paris  
© Château de Versailles, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Christophe Fouin



## Daily life: dining in style

Returning from the hunt, the king and his men would bring back meat and game. Chefs would create exquisite banquets for all to feast accompanied by music and maybe even some dancing.

Queens and ladies of the court even designed their own crockery, patterning them with their favourite flowers.



Royal Porcelain Factory of Sèvres, Nicolas Catrice, porcelain painter  
*Dessert plate from Madame Du Barry's 'Heavenly blue ribbons' service*  
1770, soft-paste porcelain, enamel and gold 2.5 x 25 cm, Palace of Versailles © Château de Versailles, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Christophe Fouin

## French

Take a look at the works of art on this page and overleaf and respond in French.

- What is it?
- What is it used for?
- According to you, what could be eaten at the king's court?

In pairs, imagine a recipe for a soup for the king.

- List the ingredients in French? Look for the words in a dictionary or using an online tool and create a word bank for everyone to use. (You can use padlet for example.)
- How do you make this soup? Explain using the imperative form.
- Present your recipe orally to the king's court.

## Art and design

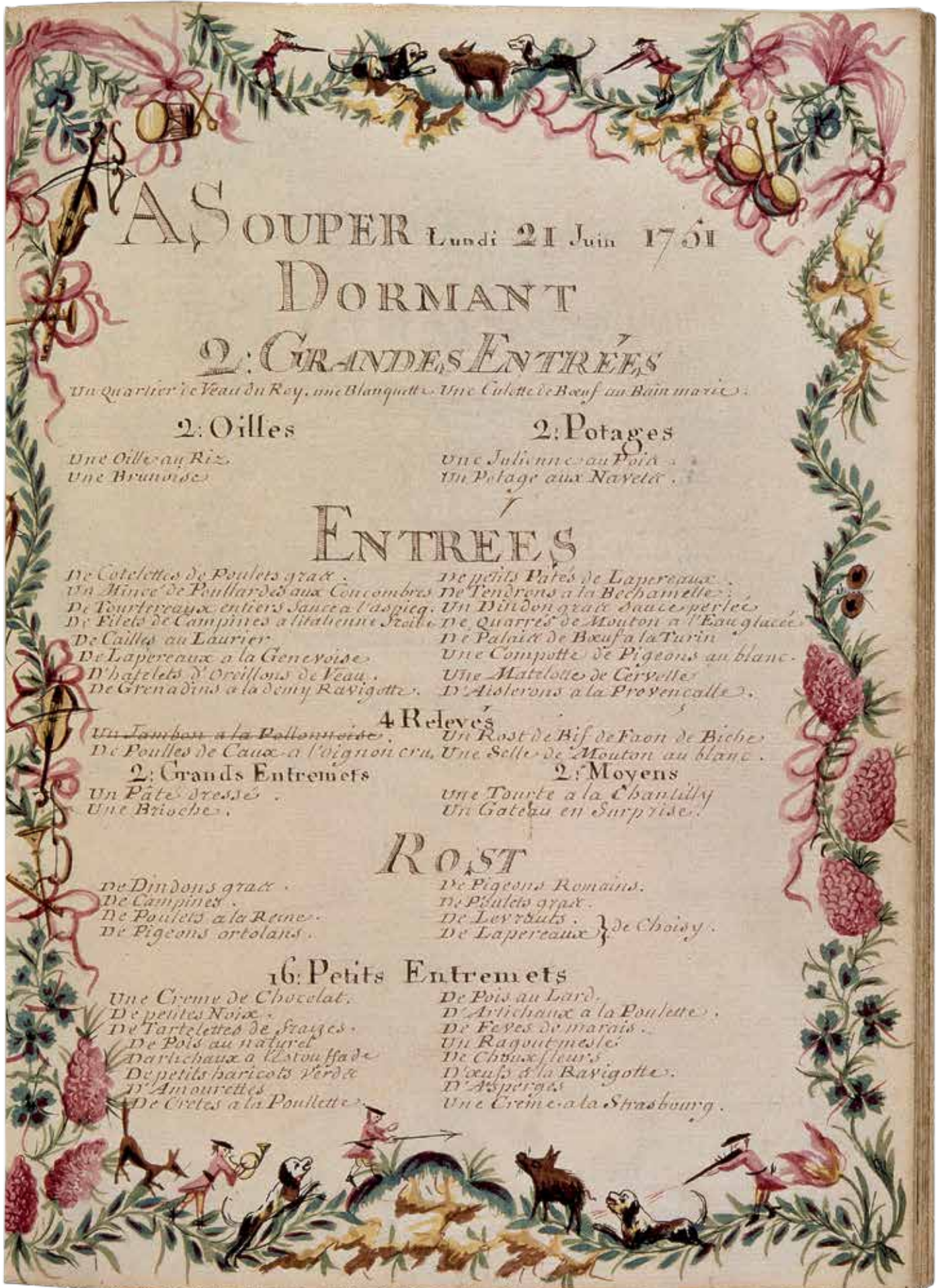
How neat is your writing?!

- Could you design and draft a menu by hand that is fit for a king or queen?
- Have a go! What is on the menu?

Develop a design for your own crockery using a repeated pattern in a circular design.

- Will it be floral, inspired by the gardens of Australia or Versailles? Or will it be sleek, modern or abstract?
- Try creating the initial image and using digital tools on printmaking to repeat the pattern, but make sure you plan how the ends connect as they repeat.

**François-Pierre Brain de Sainte-Marie** (chef) *The kings travels to chateau de Choisy with the lodgings of the court and the menus of his majesty, for the year 1751* 1751, ink and watercolour on paper 26.3 x 19.3 cm, Palace of Versailles © RMN-Grand Palais (Château de Versailles) / Gérard Blot



ASOUPER Lundi 21 Juin 1751  
DORMANT

2: GRANDES ENTRÉES

*Un quartier de Veau du Roy, une Blanquette, Une Culette de Boeuf au Bain marie.*

2: Oilles

*Une Oille au Riz,  
Une Brunoise.*

2: Potages

*Une Julienne au Poix,  
Un Potage aux Navets.*

ENTRÉES

<i>De Cotelettes de Poulets gras.</i>	<i>De petits Pates de Lapereaux.</i>
<i>Un Mince de Poullardes aux Concombres.</i>	<i>De Tendrons a la Bechamelles.</i>
<i>De Tourteraux entiers sauce a l'aspic.</i>	<i>Un Dindon gras sauce perlee.</i>
<i>De Filets de Campines a l'italienne fraiche.</i>	<i>De Quarrés de Mouton a l'Eau glaciee.</i>
<i>De Cailles au Laurier.</i>	<i>De Palmes de Boeuf a la Turin.</i>
<i>De Lapereaux a la Genevoise.</i>	<i>Une Compotte de Pigeons au blanc.</i>
<i>D'hafelots d'Oreillons de Veau.</i>	<i>Une Matelotte de Cervelle.</i>
<i>De Grenadins a la demy Ravigotte.</i>	<i>D'Aislerons a la Provencale.</i>

4 Relevés

*Un Tambon a la Polonoise,  
Un Rost de Bis de Faon de Biche,  
De Poules de Caux a l'oignon cru,  
Une Selle de Mouton au blanc.*

2: Grands Entremets

*Un Pate dressé,  
Une Brische.*

2: Moyens

*une Tourte a la Chantilly  
Un Gateau en Surprise.*

ROST

<i>De Dindons gras.</i>	<i>De Pigeons Romains.</i>
<i>De Campines.</i>	<i>De Poulets gras.</i>
<i>De Poulets a la Reine.</i>	<i>De Levrduts.</i>
<i>De Pigeons ortolans.</i>	<i>De Lapereaux.</i>

*} de Choisy.*

16: Petits Entremets

<i>Une Creme de Chocolat.</i>	<i>De Pois au Lard.</i>
<i>De petites Noix.</i>	<i>D'Artichaux a la Poulette.</i>
<i>De Tartelettes de fraises.</i>	<i>De Fèves de marais.</i>
<i>De Pois au naturel.</i>	<i>Un Raquimmesle.</i>
<i>De Harichaux a l'estouffade.</i>	<i>De Choux fleurs.</i>
<i>De petits haricots verds.</i>	<i>D'oeufs a la Basigotte.</i>
<i>D'Amourettes.</i>	<i>D'Aspergas.</i>
<i>De Cretes a la Poulette.</i>	<i>Une Creme a la Strasbourg.</i>