

# Absolutism in Europe

*The Emergence of the First  
Global Age (1450–1750)*



The Spanish Empire

Absolutism in France

The rise of absolute monarchs

Limiting British monarchs

## Thematic Icons



Economics and business



Geography and environment



Historical concepts and questions



Politics, government and citizenship



Religion and thought



Society and culture



War, diplomacy and foreign policy

**Icons:** For more detailed instructions, see the *User Guide*



Flash activity (these activities are not editable)



Teacher notes included in the Notes page



By the end of this section, you will have learned about the limiting of British monarchs, and be able to answer the following key questions:

- What factors led to the English Civil War?
- Who fought in the English Civil War and what was its result?
- How was the monarchy restored in England?
- What limitations did Parliament place on English monarchs?

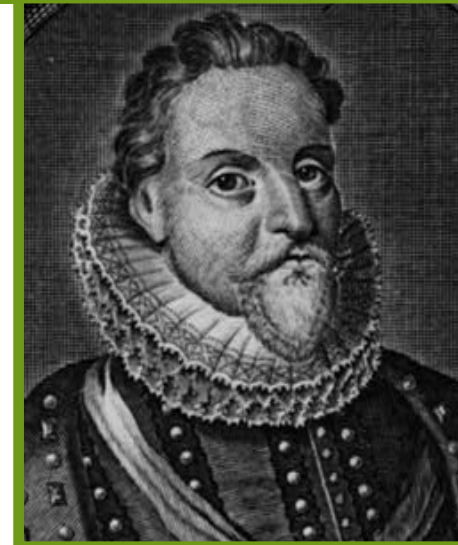


# Parliament and the monarchy

Although Henry VIII was head of the English Church, neither he nor his successors were absolute monarchs. This was partially because Parliament controlled the national treasury.

This caused frequent problems between Parliament and the monarchy. When Queen Elizabeth I died in 1603, she left a huge debt for her successor, James Stuart, King of Scotland.

**James I** clashed with Parliament over money and with **Puritans** who had hoped he would remove all Catholic elements from the Church of England.





# Charles I



James' son became King **Charles I** in 1625. He asked Parliament to fund his wars against France and Spain, but Parliament refused.

In response, Charles dissolved Parliament. However, his financial problems forced him to call it again in 1628.

Parliament refused to grant Charles' requests until he signed the **Petition of Right**. The Petition stated that the king could not imprison subjects without due cause, levy taxes without Parliamentary consent, house soldiers in private homes, or impose martial law during peacetime.

Charles signed the Petition and then ignored it. However, his actions had shown that a king could be subject to the law.

Can you think of another time such issues have caused conflict with a British king?





Charles I dissolved Parliament again in 1629. He attempted to raise funds by imposing fines on his people.

Charles lost more popularity by marrying Henrietta Maria, a French Catholic. English Protestants worried that Charles' heirs would be Catholic, too.



In 1637, Charles further offended Puritans when he tried to force Scottish Presbyterians to use the Anglican prayer book. The Scottish threatened to invade England, and Charles was forced to recall Parliament to ask for the funds to fight them.

Why did the Anglican prayer book offend Puritans?





# The English Civil War



In 1641, the new Parliament passed laws limiting royal power. Outraged, Charles tried to have the members of Parliament arrested. Riots broke out across London and Charles fled to Northern England.

Press **start** to begin.

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What was each side fighting for?



# Oliver Cromwell

Oliver Cromwell was a strict Puritan. He outlawed pastimes such as dancing, sports and theater. Public swearing could result in a prison sentence.

In 1649, Irish Catholics rebelled against Protestant control. In response, Cromwell's forces massacred hundreds of thousands of Irish Catholics, seized their homes and sold many of them into slavery.



Cromwell ruled until his death in 1658. Soon after, his government collapsed and Parliament voted to invite Charles I's son to return from exile in France.





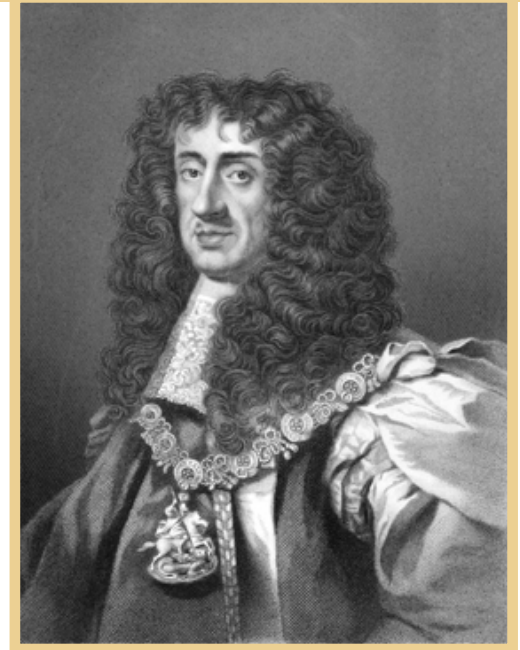


In 1660, Charles I's son was crowned King **Charles II**. The period of his reign is known as the **Restoration**.

Parliament retained the rights it had gained under the Petition of Right. It also passed the **Habeus Corpus Act** in 1679.

Habeus Corpus meant that no one could be imprisoned indefinitely, or simply for defying the monarch.

As Charles II aged, he failed to produce an heir. Parliament decided that Charles' Catholic brother James should rule next.





When Charles II died in 1685, his brother became King **James II**. James soon angered Parliament by appointing Catholic officials, which was against the law. When Parliament protested, James dissolved it.

When James' wife had a son in 1688, Parliament worried that England would have a line of Catholic kings. The hopes of English Protestants rested on James' daughter, Mary, who had married a Dutch prince called William of Orange.

In 1688, Parliament invited William and Mary to overthrow King James II. William led an army to England and James fled to France. The bloodless coup came to be known as the **Glorious Revolution**.

In what ways did Parliament limit the monarchy?



# Bill of Rights



In 1689, Parliament presented William and Mary with the **Bill of Rights**, which outlined the liberties of citizens against the monarchy. Press on the highlighted sections of text to learn more about this important document.

Press **start** to begin.

start



How does this Bill of Rights compare to America's?



Test your knowledge of absolutism in Europe with this quiz. Choose the correct answer to each question to see how much you can remember.

Press **start** to begin.

start







Test your understanding of absolutism in Europe by recapping key terms and important people using this glossary. Press on the tabs and then each term to see a definition.

Press **start** to begin.

**start**

