

Reading Essentials and Study Guide



Conflict and Absolutism in Europe, 1550–1715

Lesson 2 War and Revolution in England

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

What effect might social, economic, and religious conflicts have on a country?

Reading HELPDESK

Academic Vocabulary

commonwealth a nation, state, or other political unit founded on law and united by agreement for and by the people

restoration a bringing back to a former position or condition

convert to change from one belief to another

Content Vocabulary

divine right of kings the belief that the king gets his power from God and not from his subjects

Puritans English Protestants who believed that the Church of England needed further reform and sought to simplify and regulate forms of worship

Cavaliers supporters of King Charles I in the English Civil War

Roundheads supporters of the Parliament in the English Civil War

natural rights rights with which all humans are born, including the rights to life, liberty, and property

TAKING NOTES: *Summarizing*

ACTIVITY As you read, use a chart like the one below to identify which conflicts were prompted by religious concerns.

Conflicts in England	Results

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IT MATTERS BECAUSE

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were a time of great social and political change in England. These changes raised important questions about how to balance the government's power with the need to keep order. England's answers to these questions were important to modern democracies, including that of the United States.

Revolutions in England

Guiding Questions *How did disagreements over rule between the Stuarts and Parliament lead to the English Civil War? What were the causes and effects of the Glorious Revolution?*

In addition to the Thirty Years' War, many rebellions and civil wars occurred in Europe during the seventeenth century. The most famous conflict was the civil war in England, which is known as the English Revolution. It was a struggle between the king and the Parliament. They were fighting over what role each should play in governing England. It took another revolution to resolve the issues. The struggle did not end until late in the century.

The Stuarts and Divine Right

When Queen Elizabeth I died in 1603, the Tudor dynasty came to an end. Elizabeth's cousin, the king of Scotland, became James I of England. He began the Stuart line of monarchs.

James believed that he received his power from God and that he was responsible only to God. This idea is called the **divine right of kings**. Parliament, however, did not agree with the idea of the divine right of kings. It thought that the monarch ruled England together with the Parliament.

Religion was an issue too. The **Puritans** were English Protestants who were influenced by Calvinist ideas. They did not like the king's strong defense of the Church of England. The Puritans were members of the Church of England, they wished to remove any remaining resemblances to Catholicism from their church. They wanted a simpler form of worship. Many of England's gentry, who were mostly wealthy landowners, had become Puritans. They formed an important part of the House of Commons, which is the lower house of Parliament. For this reason, it was important for the king to have a good relationship with the Puritans.

The conflict between king and Parliament that began during the reign of James grew much worse during the reign of his son, Charles I. Charles, like his father, believed in the divine right of kings. In 1628, Parliament passed a Petition of Right. The petition placed limits on the ruler's ability to tax, imprison citizens without cause, quarter troops, and institute martial law. At first, Charles accepted this petition. However, he ignored it after he realized the limits it put on his power.

Charles also tried to force more ritual on the Church of England. Charles tried to force Puritans to accept his policy. However, thousands of Puritans decided to leave England and go to America rather than accept Charles's changes in church ceremonies. This is an example of how the struggles during the English Reformation influenced American history.

Civil War and Commonwealth

The conflicts grew until a civil war started in England in 1642 between the king and Parliament. The king's supporters were called the **Cavaliers** or the Royalists. The parliamentary forces were called the **Roundheads**. They got this name because they wore their hair short at a time when most men had

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long hair. Parliament eventually won. This was largely because of the New Model Army. The army was led by Oliver Cromwell, who was a military genius.

The New Model Army chiefly consisted of more extreme Puritans, who were called the Independents. The Independents believed they were doing battle for God. Cromwell wrote that God was the cause of their victories and all the glory went to Him. It was true, however, that Cromwell's soldiers were well-disciplined and were trained in the new military tactics of the 1600s.

The victorious New Model Army immediately took control of the government. Cromwell purged any members of Parliament who had not supported him. What was left was the so-called Rump Parliament. They had Charles I executed on January 30, 1649. The execution of the king horrified much of Europe. Parliament next abolished the monarchy and the House of Lords, the upper House of Parliament. They declared England a **commonwealth**, a type of republic.

Cromwell found it difficult to work with the Rump Parliament, and he finally ended it by force. He told the Parliament they had driven him to the action and he had no choice. After he had destroyed both king and Parliament, Cromwell began a military dictatorship.

The Restoration

Cromwell ruled until his death in 1658. The army realized that it had lost popularity in the country, and it decided to restore the monarchy. Charles II, the son of Charles I, became king.

The **restoration**, or return, of the Stuart monarchy gave its name to this period in English history, which is known as the Restoration. The king was back, but this did not mean that the work of the English Revolution was undone and that things went back to the way they were before. Parliament was also back. It kept much of the power it had won during the civil war, and it continued to play an important role in government. The principle that Parliament must give its consent to taxation was accepted. King Charles continued to put forward and push his own ideas. However, many English people did not agree with a number of the king's ideas.

Charles was sympathetic to Catholicism, and his brother James did not hide the fact that he was a Catholic. James was the heir to the throne. Parliament was concerned about the support of Catholicism by the king and his brother. Charles boldly suspended the laws that Parliament had passed against Catholics and Puritans after the restoration of the monarchy. Parliament was strongly opposed to this action, and it forced the king to end the policy. Parliament then passed a Test Act. This act rose out of strong anti-Catholic feelings. The act stated that only Anglicans, or members of the Church of England, could hold military and civil offices.

On his deathbed, Charles II decided to **convert**, or change his religion, to Catholicism. After Charles's death in 1685, his brother James II became king. James was an open and devout Catholic. James began to name Catholics to high positions in the government, army, navy, and universities. Religion was once again a cause of conflict between king and Parliament.

Parliament opposed James's policies but stopped short of rebellion. Members knew that James was an old man. They thought his Protestant daughters Mary and Anne, born to his first wife, would succeed him on the throne. However, in 1688, James and his second wife, a Catholic, had a son. Now, a Catholic monarchy was a real possibility.

A Glorious Revolution

The Dutch leader William of Orange was married to Mary, the daughter of King James II. A group of English nobles invited William to invade England. They told William that most of the people in the

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networks

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kingdom wanted a change in government. Their invitation put William in a difficult position because it would be a terrible act for Mary to fight against her father, James. However, William was already a foe of France's Catholic king Louis XIV. For this reason, William welcomed an opportunity to become ruler of England and use England's resources to fight his enemy, France.

William began to prepare to invade England in early 1688. He kept his plans secret. It was only in early October that James found out about William's intentions. In November 1688, William's forces landed at Torbay and began their march toward London. James and his army rode out to meet them. However, many of James' soldiers deserted, and even his daughter Anne and her husband defected. James retreated to London. He made plans for his wife and son to flee to France, and he later joined them there.

With almost no bloodshed, England had experienced what was called a "Glorious Revolution." From then on, the issue was not if there would be a monarchy, but who would be monarch.

In January 1689, Parliament offered the throne to William and Mary. William and Mary accepted the throne, but they also had to accept a Bill of Rights, which was written by Parliament. This bill contained many of the same ideas as the Petition of Right. The Bill of Rights set forth Parliament's right to make laws and to levy taxes. It also made it impossible for kings to oppose Parliament or rule without it. It stated that standing, or permanent, armies could be raised only with Parliament's consent. The rights of citizens to keep arms and to have a jury trial were also confirmed. The Bill of Rights helped create a system of government based on the rule of law and a freely elected Parliament. This bill was the basis for a limited, or constitutional, monarchy. The monarch's power now had clear limits.

Another important action of Parliament was the Toleration Act of 1689. This act gave Puritans the right to worship in public freely. Catholics, however, were not given the same right. The act was a turning point in English history because few English citizens were ever again persecuted for their religion.

Parliament had deposed one king and established another. With this action, it had destroyed the theory of the divine right of kings. Since Parliament had chosen William as king, it was clear that he was not chosen by the grace of God. Parliament had declared its right to be part of the government. Parliament did not have complete control of the government, but it now had the right to participate in affairs of state. Over the next century, Parliament would gradually show itself to be the real authority in the English system of constitutional monarchy. It gained more power over time.



Reading Progress Check

Identifying Central Issues In what important way was the monarchy of William and Mary different from the previous Stuart monarchy?

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Legal and Political Thought

Guiding Question *How did the English Revolution influence political thought?*

People in the seventeenth century were concerned with order and power, and these concerns were clear in the political thought of the time. William Blackstone was a judge and a professor of law in the eighteenth century. He wrote a famous book called *Commentaries on the Laws of England* to argue his beliefs. He argued that making English common law (its legal traditions and principles) important again was the best way to achieve political stability. Two English political thinkers in the seventeenth century provided their own responses to the English revolutions of the seventeenth century. They were Thomas Hobbes and John Locke.

Thomas Hobbes was worried by the revolutionary upheavals in England. He wrote a work on political thought called *Leviathan*, which was published in 1651. Hobbes wrote the book to try to deal with the problem of disorder. Hobbes argued that before society was organized, humans were not guided by reason and moral ideals, and their life was a difficult struggle just to survive. Then people made a social contract and agreed to form a state. They did this to stop themselves from destroying one another. People agreed to accept government by an absolute ruler. This ruler had unlimited power because the ruler’s task was to suppress rebellion. Hobbes felt that an absolute ruler was needed to preserve order in society. Hobbes called the state “that great Leviathan” to which people owe their peace and safety.

John Locke viewed political power quite differently from Hobbes. Locke published his *Two Treatises of Government* in 1690. In this work, Locke argued against the absolute, or total, rule of one person. In contrast to Hobbes, Locke believed that before society was organized, humans did not live in a state of war. Instead, they lived in a state of equality and freedom. Locke believed that all humans had certain **natural rights**, or rights with which they were born. These included rights to life, liberty, and property.

Like Hobbes, Locke believed that some problems did exist when humans lived in the state of nature. People found it difficult to protect their natural rights, and so they agreed to establish a government. The government ensured the protection of these rights and punished those who violated these rights. The role of the government was to protect the rights of the people, and in return, the people would act reasonably toward government. It was possible, however, for a government to break its contract with the people—for example, if a monarch failed to protect citizens’ natural rights. If that happened, the people had the right to remove or change the government because it had betrayed their trust. If the people chose to remove the government, they then could form a new one.

To Locke, “*people*” meant the aristocracy that owned land. He was not an advocate of democracy. His ideas gained a great deal of importance in the eighteenth century. Locke’s ideas were used to support demands for constitutional government, the rule of law, and the protection of rights. Locke’s ideas can be found in both the American Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution.



Reading Progress Check

Drawing Inferences Did Hobbes or Locke have more trust in self-governance? Why?
