

**EARLY MODERN  
ENGLAND: ENGLISH  
CIVIL WAR AND  
GLORIOUS REVOLUTION**



# EARLY MODERN ENGLAND: ENGLISH CIVIL WAR AND GLORIOUS REVOLUTION

## Description

Students in this lesson will identify, understand and be able to explain the basic facts of the English Civil War, the establishment of Commonwealth rule under Oliver Cromwell and the Glorious Revolution that brought William and Mary to the throne by the end of the century. As part of this lesson, students will also examine the English Bill of Rights, a document passed by Parliament in Dec 1689 that laid out not only the provisions and limits on the monarch's power and the relationship between the crown and Parliament, but also established certain basic fundamental rights such as freedom of petition, freedom of speech and no cruel and unusual punishments for all English citizens. These same rights, so essential to our founding fathers a century later, would find their way into the American Bill of Rights of 1791.

## Subjects

European History, World History, US History

## Grade Level

11-12

## Duration

90 minutes

## Tour Links

- Westminster Abbey
- Parliament

## Essential Questions

- What was the English Civil War of 1640? What were its causes? Who were its leaders?
- How did Parliament take control of the British government during the Commonwealth period?
- Why was the English monarchy restored in 1660?
- Why did the English return to a limited constitutional monarchy in the Glorious Revolution of 1688?
- How did the English Bill of Rights of 1689 lay the foundation for the American Bill of Rights of 1791?
- How were the English Civil War and Commonwealth periods seen as models for and precursors to other European and American political revolutions in the Era of Revolutions (1688-1789)?

## Academic Summary

If upon a due consideration of all these circumstances Your Highness shall think fit to adventure upon the attempt, or at least to make such preparations for it as are necessary (which we wish you may), there must be no more time lost in letting us know your resolution concerning it, and in what time we may depend that all the preparations will be ready, as also whether Your Highness does believe the preparations can be so managed as not to give them warning here, both to make them increase their force and to secure those they shall suspect would join with you. We need not say anything about ammunition, artillery, mortar pieces, spare arms, etc., because if you think fit to put anything in execution you will provide enough of these kinds, and will take care to bring some good engineers with you; and we have desired Mr. H[erbert] to consult you about all such matters, to whom we have communicated our thoughts in many particulars too tedious to have been written, and about which no certain resolutions can be taken till we have heard again from Your Highness.

*From the "Invitation to the Prince of Orange, 30 Jun 1688"*

Civil War... to American students, the words often conjure images of "Johnny Reb" facing off against "Billy Yank" across the fields of Gettysburg or the ramparts of Vicksburg. Few students in the United States even realize that our English forefathers had a civil war of their own, and fewer still understand how that conflict set a precedent for the American and French Revolutions over a century later. In the span of a mere half-century between 1640 and 1688, one English monarch lost his head (literally) to revolution, another was forced to step down and two others were "invited" to rule by Parliament.

Through an in-depth analysis of primary and secondary sources, students in this lesson will identify, understand and be able to explain the basic facts of the English Civil War, the establishment of Commonwealth rule under Oliver Cromwell and the Glorious Revolution that brought William and Mary to the throne by the end of the century. As part of this lesson, students will also examine the English Bill of Rights, a document passed by Parliament in Dec 1689 that laid out not only the provisions and limits on the monarch's power and the relationship between the crown and Parliament, but also established certain basic fundamental rights such as freedom of petition, freedom of speech and no cruel and unusual punishments for all English citizens. These same rights, so essential to our founding fathers a century later, would find their way into the American Bill of Rights of 1791.

## Objectives

1. Students will identify, understand and be able to explain the events surrounding the English Civil War, the Commonwealth period, the restoration of the Crown in 1660 and the Glorious Revolution of 1688.
2. Students will identify, understand and be able to explain the reasons how Parliament took control of the British government during the Commonwealth period.
3. Students will identify, understand and be able to explain the link between English Civil War and the Commonwealth period and the liberal ideas held by many of the founding fathers during the era of the American Revolution decades later.
4. Students will be able to identify, understand and explain how the concepts of the English Bill of Rights served as a foundation for ideas behind limited government and basic human rights and freedoms found in the US Bill of Rights of 1791.

## Procedure

### I. Anticipatory Set

- Writing / Question: What are the basic and fundamental rights due all citizens? (5 min)
- Handouts – Copies of the English Bill of Rights of 1689 and readings from the websites listed below (5 min)

### II. Body of Lesson

- Lecture / PPT – the English Civil War, the Commonwealth period and the Glorious Revolution of 1688 (20 min)
- Independent Activity – students read the articles on the English Civil War, the Commonwealth period and the Glorious Revolution from the UK and US national archives, taking notes as appropriate (30 min)
- Suggestion: Have the students read some of these articles for homework the night before class.
- Video – Michael Barone interview (5 min)
- Group Activity – Discussion on the English Civil War, the Glorious Revolution and the English Bill of Rights as a foundation for civil, political and human rights and how these events formed the foundation for the ideas of the founding fathers, the US Constitution of 1787 and the Bill of Rights of 1791 (15 min)

### III. Closure

- Exit Ticket / Assessment – Essay: What provisions of the English Bill of Rights of 1689 laid the foundation for political thought and basic human rights as articulated by the founding fathers in the American Bill of Rights of 1791? Be sure to give examples from the texts.
- Homework Assignment: Identify the rights and basic freedoms modern US citizens hold today. Give examples and be prepared to discuss in class.

## **Extension**

### **On tour: Westminster (Cromwell statue)**

While on tour, students visit Westminster, where they can see for themselves a monument to Oliver Cromwell. A controversial figure in British history, Cromwell gained full control of England during the 1650s as “Lord Protectorate” of Parliament. He was even formally offered the Crown, but turned it down. He was a staunch Puritan who tried to heal the deep divisions in his own church, but to no avail. After the Restoration of the Crown in 1660, Cromwell’s body was exhumed (he had died 2 years earlier) and “executed” by hanging and then his corpse was beheaded. The corpse was then thrown into an unmarked pit, but the head was put on display at Westminster until 1960 (300 years later), when it was finally buried in a chapel in Cambridge.

## Web Links

### Lesson Plan Websites

- [bcw-project.org/](http://bcw-project.org/)  
BCW Project: British Civil Wars, Commonwealth and Protectorate, 1630-1660 (website)
- [englishcivilwar.org/](http://englishcivilwar.org/)  
English Civil War website
- [passports.com/group\\_leaders/on\\_the\\_road/the\\_united\\_kingdom/london](http://passports.com/group_leaders/on_the_road/the_united_kingdom/london)  
On the Road: London – city facts on London from Passports Educational Travel
- [passports.com/group\\_leaders/on\\_the\\_road/the\\_benelux\\_countries](http://passports.com/group_leaders/on_the_road/the_benelux_countries)  
On the Road: Country Profile: The Benelux Countries from Passports Educational Travel
- [historyguide.org/earlymod/lecture7c.html](http://historyguide.org/earlymod/lecture7c.html)  
“Lecture 7: The English Civil War” – The History Guide: Lectures on Early Modern European History.
- [parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/evolutionofparliament/parliamentaryauthority/civilwar/](http://parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/evolutionofparliament/parliamentaryauthority/civilwar/)  
“The [English] Civil War” – The UK Parliament website. Also contains great links to such topics as the Long Parliament, Cromwell’s rule and the Restoration of the monarch in 1660.
- [parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/evolutionofparliament/parliamentaryauthority/revolution/](http://parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/evolutionofparliament/parliamentaryauthority/revolution/)  
“Living Heritage: The Glorious Revolution” – UK Parliament website.
- [parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/evolutionofparliament/parliamentaryauthority/revolution/overview/billofrights/](http://parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/evolutionofparliament/parliamentaryauthority/revolution/overview/billofrights/)  
“Living Heritage: The Glorious Revolution: The Convention and Bill of Rights” – UK Parliament.
- [fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1689billofrights.asp](http://fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1689billofrights.asp)  
“Modern History Sourcebook: The Bill of Rights of 1689 (full text)” – Fordham University.
- [teachingchannel.org/videos/choosing-primary-source-documents?fd=1](http://teachingchannel.org/videos/choosing-primary-source-documents?fd=1)  
Reading Like a Historian: Primary Source Documents (video) – great 2 minute video on how to incorporate primary sources into the Common Core and history classes – from Shilpa Duvoor of Summit Preparatory Charter High School in Redwood City, CA – highly recommended for teachers.
- [youtube.com/watch?v=ScMkiUSjILM](http://youtube.com/watch?v=ScMkiUSjILM)  
“How our founders differed from the English Bill of Rights” – Interview with Michael Barone, a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute and author of "Our First Revolution: The Remarkable British Upheaval That Inspired America's Founding Fathers."

## **Key Terms**

British Library

Cavaliers

Commonwealth

Constitution

English Bill of Rights

Human rights

Oliver Cromwell

Parliament

Political rights

Restoration

Rule of law

Tories

William and Mary



