The English Civil War: King Against Parliament

KS4 HISTORY Ages 11-14 ⏰ 3 min read

What Was the English Civil War?

Between **1642 and 1651**, England wasn't fighting a foreign enemy. Instead, English people fought each other in a terrible conflict called the **English Civil War**. On one side was **King Charles I**, who believed he had all the power. On the other side was **Parliament**—a group of people chosen to help run the country—who thought they should have a say too.

Think of it like two teachers in a school arguing about who gets to make all the decisions. One teacher thinks they should decide everything, but the other teachers say everyone should have a voice.

Why Did It Happen?

The war started because of **money and power**. King Charles I wanted to tax people heavily without asking Parliament's permission. He also believed in something called **Divine Right**—the idea that God had given him all his power, so no one could tell him what to do. Parliament disagreed. They wanted more control over taxes and laws.

There was also trouble with **religion**. Many people in Parliament were **Protestants** who didn't trust the King's Catholic beliefs. They worried he might make everyone Catholic.

Think of it like a parent who won't listen to their children and refuses to explain why the house rules exist. Eventually, the children get so frustrated they refuse to obey.

Why Was It Important?

The English Civil War changed **everything** about how Britain is governed. Before the war, kings had almost total power. After the war, Parliament became much stronger. This meant ordinary people (well, rich men at least!) had more say in how the country was run.

The war also led to **democracy** developing in Britain. It showed that a king couldn't rule alone and ignore what people wanted. This idea spread around the world and inspired other countries to create governments where power is shared, not held by one person.

The war was incredibly **bloody** and killed thousands of people. But it taught an important lesson: power should be shared, and no one person should have complete control.

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