The Puritan Revolution

1642-1660
1. Parliament Wins the Civil War (1642-1645)

Parliament rallied the middle class, the small landowners, and the Puritans – groups collectively called the Roundheads. Charles had the support of the nobility, the wealthy landowners, the high Anglican clergy, and the Catholics – groups collectively called the Cavaliers. The Parliamentary forces were led by an ardent Puritan, Oliver Cromwell. He decisively defeated the Cavalier, or Royalist armies.
2. Charles I is Beheaded (1649).

Charles was captured by his enemies. His most bitter foes in Parliament accused him of treason, murder and tyranny and placed him on trial. Charles was convicted and executed. Although this extreme measure shocked many people, it reaffirmed that English monarchs rule, not by “divine right,” but in accordance with the law.
Oliver Cromwell Rules England (1649-1658)

England was declared a republic, or Commonwealth, and Cromwell, the victorious Puritan general, ruled as a military dictator. In 1653 he took the title of Lord protector. A highly capable leader, Cromwell

• suppressed rebellions in Ireland and Scotland,
• furthered economic prosperity,
• maintained a successful anti-Spanish foreign policy.
Nevertheless, Cromwell’s Puritan rule did not gain popular support. Many English people objected to
a. Cromwell’s dictatorial government and heavy taxes,
b. The role of the Puritans in executing Charles I,
c. Puritan intolerance of the Anglican religion – whose members were far more numerous than the Puritan minority, and
d. The severe Puritan moral code, which prohibited dancing, athletic games, theatrical performances, and other amusements.

After Cromwell’s death, Puritan rule ended.
The Stuarts Rule Again in England(1660-1688)
1. Charles II Defers to Parliament (1660-1685)

Upon Parliament’s invitation, Charles II returned to England and assumed the throne. He pledged to observe Magna Carta and the Petition of Right and to respect the authority of Parliament.

Mindful of his father’s fate, Charles II avoided antagonizing Parliament or the people.
In 1679 Charles approved the Habeas Corpus Act. This act limited the monarch’s powers by requiring that the prisoner brought before the judge and given a statement of charges. Thereafter, the prisoner may be released on bail, pending a speedy jury trial. It protects against arbitrary arrest and imprisonment.

A convert to Catholicism, James outraged the people and Parliament by
a. His pro-Catholic acts and
b. His efforts to dominate Parliament and revive “divine right” rule.

The birth of his son aroused fear of continuing Catholic rule in England.
The Glorious Revolution (1688-1689)
1. Parliament Overthrows James II.

Parliament secretly offered the English crown to William, Protestant ruler of Holland, and his wife Mary (Protestant daughter of James II). They accepted.

When William arrived in England, James fled the country. Parliament proclaimed William and Mary the new king and queen.

By this bloodless revolution in 1688, Parliament
a. ended “divine right” in England and
b. reaffirmed its supremacy over the monarch
2. Parliament Passes Laws Furthering Democracy

• The Bill of Rights (1689)
  1. The monarch may not make or suspend laws, levy taxes, or maintain an army without the consent of Parliament;
  2. The monarch may not interfere with Parliamentary elections or debates;
  3. Parliament must meet frequently;
  4. The monarch must be Anglican;
  5. The people are guaranteed basic civil liberties: the right to petition the government, and to an impartial, speedy jury trial and protection against excessive bails and fines and cruel and unusual punishments.
The Toleration Act (1689) granted freedom of worship to non-Anglican Protestant sects.