

# CAUSES OF THE ENGLISH CIVIL WAR

**1. Reading comprehension activity:** read the text and answer the multiple-choice questions below.

The English Civil War had many causes, but the personality of Charles I must be counted as one of the major reasons. Few people could have predicted that the civil war, which started in 1642, would have ended with the public execution of Charles. His most famous opponent in this war was Oliver Cromwell – one of the men who signed the death warrant of Charles.

No king had ever been executed in England and the execution of Charles was not greeted with joy.

## **Causes**

Charles had a very different personality compared to James. Charles was arrogant, proud and a strong believer in the divine rights of kings. He had witnessed the damaged relationship between his father and Parliament, and considered that Parliament was entirely at fault. He found it difficult to believe that a king could be wrong. His proud and arrogance were eventually what led to his execution.

From 1625 to 1629, Charles argued with parliament over most issues, but money and religion were the most common causes of arguments.

In 1625, Charles I married Henrietta Maria of France. As she was a catholic, King Charles started having problems with the Protestants. Charles I also copied his father. He refused to let Parliament meet. Members of Parliament arrived at Westminster to find that the doors had been locked with large chains and padlocks. They were locked out for eleven years (1629-1640) – a period they called the Eleven Years Tyranny. During that period King Charles I ruled without the parliament.

Charles ruled by using the Court of Star Chamber. For instance, in 1627 to raise money for the king, the Court heavily fined those brought before it. Rich men were persuaded to buy titles. If they refused to do so, they were fined the same sum of money it would have cost for a title anyway. More and more wealthy landowners refused to pay.

In 1635 Charles ordered that everyone in the country should pay Ship Money. This was historically a tax paid by coastal towns and villages to pay for the upkeep of the navy. The logic was that coastal areas most benefited from the navy's protection. Charles decided that everyone in the kingdom benefited from the navy's protection and that everyone should pay.

In one sense, Charles was correct, but such was the relationship between him and the powerful men of the kingdom, that this issue caused a huge argument between both sides. One of the more powerful men in the nation was John Hampden, who had been a Member of Parliament, refused to pay the new tax as Parliament had not agreed to it. At this time Parliament was also not sitting as Charles had locked the MP's out. Hampden was put on trial and found guilty. However, he had become a hero for

standing up to the king. There is no record of any Ship Money being extensively collected in the areas Charles had wanted it extended to.

1. In which year did the English Civil War begin?

- a) 1625   b) 1627   c) 1640   d) 1642

2. Charles I most famous opponent was...?

- a) John Hampden   b) Henrietta Maria   c) Oliver Cromwell   d) James

3. Charles is described as...

- a) proud   b) strong   c) arrogant   d) all are correct

4. For how many years did King Charles rule without the Parliament?

- a) eleven   b) ten   c) twelve   d) none

5. Who had to pay "Ship money"?

- a) the MP's   b) everyone   c) people in coastal areas   d) wealthy landowners

**2. Matching activity: match the causes of the Civil War to the years in which the events took place. There are two extra numbers.**

**1625 – 1627 – 1629 – 1635 – 1639 – 1640 – 1641 – 1642**

1. The civil war started.

2. Rich men were persuaded to buy titles.

3. Charles raises a tax called Ship Money.

4. Charles marries a Catholic.

5. Up to this year, Charles ran Britain without Parliament.

6. Since this year, Charles runs Britain without a Parliament.

**3. Vocabulary activity: find the following words in the word search.**

I	G	E	X	E	C	U	T	E	D	B	T	N	Y	S
J	Q	L	R	E	L	I	G	I	O	N	V	K	J	U
P	A	R	L	I	A	M	E	N	T	L	A	W	Z	G
E	H	E	N	R	I	E	T	T	A	M	A	R	I	A
F	E	P	T	M	X	O	R	I	O	T	Y	F	H	T
R	B	P	K	J	M	C	T	A	X	E	S	M	W	Q
P	R	O	T	E	S	T	A	N	T	S	G	U	Y	H
D	R	C	V	G	Q	P	Q	I	D	X	O	Q	W	C
B	I	S	H	O	P	S	A	R	M	Y	Y	A	Q	I
I	R	I	S	H	S	H	I	P	M	O	N	E	Y	V
A	V	E	C	F	R	L	V	I	O	S	G	D	Q	I
D	K	C	A	T	H	O	L	I	C	S	S	M	N	L
H	D	I	V	I	N	E	R	I	G	H	T	M	D	W
N	C	E	R	S	C	O	T	S	E	C	O	P	B	A
V	T	P	T	C	H	A	R	L	E	S	I	M	R	R

PARLIAMENT  
CATHOLIC  
PROTESTANTS  
CIVIL WAR  
HENRIETTA MARIA  
EXECUTED

RELIGION  
SCOTS  
CHARLES  
SHIP MONEY  
TAXES  
DIVINE RIGHT