

THE BRITISH

The Lancaster Dynasty

- 1399-13 Henry IV
- 1413-22 Henry V
- 1422-61, 70-71 Henry VI

The York Dynasty

- 1461-70, 71-83 Edward VI
- 1483 Edward V
- 1483-85 Richard III

The Tudor Dynasty

- 1485-1509 **Henry VII (Henry Tudor)**

Henry Tudor ended the **War of the Roses** (a dynastic conflict between the houses of Lancaster & York) when he assumed the throne in 1485/Henry VII is considered one of the “New Monarchs” because of his work towards centralizing & strengthening the power of the English King/Henry is best known for his use of the **Court of Star Chamber** (a court based on **Roman Law** that allowed Henry to put Nobles on trial with his own judges rather than a jury of peers) to seize power from the English Lords, and his financial frugality/Henry would leave a sizable budget surplus to his son Henry VIII

- 1509-47 **Henry VIII**

Henry VIII assumed power at a young age and enjoyed a long & consequential reign/During his youth Henry was obsessed with making a name for himself through waging foreign wars/Henry’s excessive spending on war soon depleted the large surplus left to him by his father/Henry’s reign was a continuation of the strengthening of the monarchy which became the hallmark of the Tudor Dynasty, however his excessive borrowing of funds to keep the government running laid the groundwork for the later Stuart Dynasty conflict with Parliament and the eventual emergence of a Constitutional Monarchy in Britain/In this way, Henry’s reign & excesses can be seen as one of the reasons why Absolutism did not succeed in Britain/Of course Henry is best known for his 6 marriages, especially the first to **Catherine of Aragon** (daughter of Ferdinand & Isabella, aunt to Emperor Charles V)/In 1527 Henry sought a papal annulment of his marriage so that he could marry his mistress **Anne Boleyn**/When the Pope refused (probably due to his imprisonment by Charles V) Henry took matters into his own hands/In 1532, Lord Chancellor **Thomas More** (author of Utopia) was replaced in office by **Thomas Cromwell** because he did not support the King’s divorce/Cromwell helped Henry sever ties with the Catholic Church & secure his annulment/**The Act of Supremacy (1534)** made the split with Rome final and made Henry VIII the head of the Church of England/Thomas More was beheaded for his continued resistance to the King’s divorce & the Act of Supremacy

- 1547-53 Edward VI
- 1553-58 **Mary I “Bloody Mary”**

Daughter of Henry VIII & Catherine of Aragon, Mary reversed the move towards Protestantism during the reigns of Henry VIII & Edward VI and brought Catholicism back to England/Her persecution & execution of Protestants earned her the nickname “Bloody Mary”/Mary was wed to Phillip II, King of Spain/This gave Phillip a claim on the English throne after Mary’s death which he tried to act on when he sent the Spanish Armada against England in 1588

- 1558-1603 **Elizabeth I**

Elizabeth, daughter of Henry VIII & Anne Boleyn is one of the most beloved rulers in British history/She played an important role in European politics in an age when few women were allowed into the halls of power/Her reign was an important milestone in many regards: she was the last of the Tudors, the **Church of England became more Protestant in theology**, England became a world naval power after the defeat of the **Spanish Armada (1588)**, and England began exploring and settling the New World/The power of her personality and her skill in politics masked deep economic problems in the English government/Essentially the country was deeply in debt and a conflict was brewing between the Crown & Parliament for the future control of the country/The “**Virgin Queen**” never married and died without an heir ending the Tudor Dynasty

The Stuart Dynasty

- 1603-25 **James I (James VI of Scotland)**

When Elizabeth I died without an heir in 1603, the throne went to her cousin James VI of Scotland (son of **Mary, Queen of Scots**), thus beginning the **Stuart Dynasty**/James assumed the English crown and thereby unified the Scotland & England under a single ruler/The reign of James I was peaceful, but marked by internal strife/The financial difficulties left by the Tudor Dynasty and James insistence on his prerogative as King led to continual conflict with **Parliament**/James survived several assassination attempts during his reign including the famous **Gunpowder Plot** resulting in the arrest of **Guy Fawkes**

- 1625-49 **Charles I**

The conflicts between Parliament & James I were magnified during the reign of his son Charles I/Charles had even less tact than his father and dreamed of establishing an Absolutist style regime in Britain/This conflict finally erupted in the **English Civil War (1642-49)**, fought between the **Cavaliers** (supporters of the King), and the **Roundheads** (supporters of Parliament)/The Parliamentarians won the war, Charles I was beheaded, and the Parliament assumed control of the government (without a king), led by **Oliver Cromwell**

The Commonwealth & Protectorate

- 1649-59 **Oliver Cromwell**

After their victory in the **English Civil War**, the English Parliament declared the **Commonwealth of England (1649-53)**/This was a republican government ruled directly by the **Rump Parliament** (Parliament purged of those who did not support Cromwell and the Puritan faction)/The Commonwealth lasted until 1653 when it was replaced by **The Protectorate (1653-59)**/The Protectorate was essentially a dictatorship led by Oliver Cromwell, **Lord Protector**/Cromwell ruled with an iron fist and tried to legislate morality by closing theatres, pubs, etc. and banning card playing, dancing, and other forms of merriment

Stuart Restoration

- 1660-85 **Charles II**

The English people soon grew tired of Oliver Cromwell (for obvious reasons), and began to clamor for a return of the Stuart Dynasty/In 1660 the Stuarts were returned to the throne in the form of Charles II (son of Charles I)

- 1685-88 **James II**

The Glorious Revolution

- 1689-1702

William of Orange & Mary Stuart

After the restoration of the Stuart Dynasty in the form of Charles II and his brother James II, it became obvious that the sons of the beheaded Charles I had learned nothing from their father's early demise/They both attempted to increase their own personal power at the expense of Parliament while harboring secret Catholic sympathies/In 1689 James II's daughter Mary Stuart and her husband William of Orange were invited to invade Britain from the Netherlands/They took the offer and met no resistance as James II fled the country/William & Mary were given the throne after signing the **English Bill of Rights** guaranteeing the supremacy of Parliament in the English government

-1702-14

Anne

The Hanoverian Dynasty

- 1714-27

George I

- 1727-60

George II

- 1760-1820

George III

The third Hanoverian king and the first to be born in England (not Germany), George III ruled through some of the most eventful years in European history/His reign saw the **Enlightenment** explode into action when the **American colonists declared & won independence** from Britain/He also ruled through the **French Revolution & Napoleonic Wars** when Britain often faced the French Empire alone/George III suffered from insanity in his later years

- 1820-30

George IV

- 1830-37

William IV

- 1837-1901

Victoria

The longest reigning British monarch, Victoria's reign saw some of the most radical changes in European society and the English government: the **2nd Industrial Revolution** (electricity, automobile, flight, etc.), the rise of **Mass Politics**, the **Age of Imperialism**, etc./Her closest political ally was the Conservative leader **Benjamin Disraeli**

- 1901-10

Edward VII

The Windsor Dynasty

- 1910-36

George V

George V created the very English sounding House of Windsor in the midst of WWI/During the war there was a lot of animosity among the English people towards the Germans (possibly due to the proliferation of propaganda portraying Germans as monsters)/George felt that having a German dynasty rule England just wasn't right/He changed his family name from the **House of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha** (a branch of the Hanovers) to the much more English **House of Windsor**

- 1936

Edward VIII

- 1936-52

George VI

- 1952-present

Elizabeth II

The current Queen of England/Elizabeth II has reigned for 57 years/Her reign has seen sweeping changes including the **dissolution of the British Empire**, the **Cold War**, the **rebuilding of post-war Europe**, and the advent of the computer age