During her reign Queen Elizabeth I of England had had frequent conflicts with parliament (the legislative body of England) many of the arguments were over money, because the treasury did not have enough funds to pay the queen’s bulls. By the time Elizabeth died in 1603, she had left a huge debt for her successor to deal with. Parliament’s financial power was one obstacle to English rulers’ becoming absolute monarchs. The resulting struggle between Parliament and the monarchy would have serious consequences for England;

**Monarchs ignore Parliament:**

Elizbeth had not child, and her nearest relative was her cousin, James Stuart. Already the King of Scotland, James Stuart became King James I of England in 1603. Although England and Scotland were not united, they now shared a king.

James inherited the unsettled issues of Elizabeth’s reign. His worst struggles with Parliament were over money. In addition, James offended the Puritan members of Parliament. The Puritans hoped he would enact reforms to purify the English Church of Catholic practices. Except for agreeing to a new translation of the bible, however, he refused to make Puritan reforms

In 1625 James I died, Charles I, took the throne. Charles always needed money, in part because he was at war with both Spain and France. Several times when Parliament refused to give him funds, he dissolved it.

By 1628, Charles was forced to call parliament again, This time it refused to grant him money until he signed a document known as the ***Petition of Right***. In this petition, parliament tried to lessen the power of the King. The king agreed to four main points:

* He would not imprison subjects without due cause
* He would not levy taxes without Parliament’s consent
* He would not house soldiers in private homes
* He would not impose martial law in times of peace

After agreeing to this petition, Charles ignored it. Even so, the petition was important. It set forth the idea that the law was higher than the King and that the King did not have absolute control of England, In 1629, Charles dissolved parliament and refused to call it back into session. To get money, he imposed all kinds to taxes and fines on the English’s people, His popularity decreased year by year.

**The English Civil War:**

Charles offended Puritans by upholding the rituals of the Church of England (Anglican Church). In addition, in 1637, Charles tried to force the Presbyterian Scots to accept the Anglican prayer book. He wanted both of his kingdoms to follow one religion. The Scots rebelled, assembled a huge army, and threatened to invade England. Charles needed money to fight. When Charles called a new Parliament to get money, it quickly passed laws to limit his power Charles responded by trying to arrest its leaders. Mobs of Londoners raged outside the palace Charles fled London and raised an army in the north of England.

Soon England was fighting a civil war. The English Civil War lasted from 1642 to 1649. Those who remained loyal to Charles were called Royalist, or ***Cavaliers.*** On the other side, were the Puritans supporters of parliament. Because these men wore their hair short over their ears, they were called ***Roundheads***

At first neither side could gain an advantage. However, under the leadership of ***Oliver Cromwell***, the forces of the Puritans won. They tried and executed Charles for treason against parliament. This was the first time a king had faced a public trial and execution.

Cromwell now held the reins of power. In 1649, he abolished the monarchy and t he House of Lords. He established a commonwealth, a republican form of government. In 1653. Cromwell sent home the remaining members of Parliament and drafted a constitution, the first written constitution in any modern European country. However, Cromwell eventually tore it up and became a military dictator, ruling until 1658.

He crushed a rebellion in Ireland and tried to reform society at home. He made laws that promoted Puritan morality and abolished activities they found sinful, such as theater, sporting events and dancing Although he was a strict Puritan, Cromwell favored religious toleration for all Christians except Catholics.

**Restoration and the Glorious Revolution**

Soon after Cromwell’s death in 1658, the government collapsed. The newly formed Parliament asked Charles’s oldest son to rule England. Charles II began to rule in 1660. The period is called the Restoration because Charles II restored the monarchy.

Charles II’s reign was calm. Parliament passed an important guarantee of freedom called *habeas corpus.* It gave every prisoner the right to get an order to be brought before a judge. The judge would then decide whether the prisoner should be tried or set free. This kept monarchs from putting people in jail just for opposing them. It also meant that people would not stay in jail forever without a trial.

After Charles II’s death in 1685, his brother became King James II. His pro-Catholic policies angered and worried the English. They feared Catholicism. Finally, in 1688, seven members of parliament contracted James’ older daughter, Mary, and her husband, William of Orange, prince of the Netherlands. Both were Protestants. The members of Parliament wanted William and Mary to replace James II on the throne. James was forced to flee to France. When that took place, *the Bloodless Revolution* was called the ***Glorious Revolution***.

**Limits on the Monarch’s Power**:

William and Mary agreed to rule according to the laws made by Parliament. That is, parliament became their partner in government. England was now a ***Constitutional Monarchy*.** Where laws limited the ruler’s power.

William and Mary also agreed to accept the ***English Bill of Rights***. It guaranteed the English people and Parliament certain rights. These rights included:

* No suspending of Parliament’s laws
* No levying taxes with the approval of Parliament
* Freedom of Speech
* Freedom to Petition

By the 1700’s, it was clear that the government of England would come to a standstill if the monarch disagreed with Parliament or vice versa. This led to the development of the ***cabinet***. This group of government ministers became the first link between the monarch hand the majority in parliament. This system of English government continues today

