Democracy Develops in England

**BEFORE YOU READ**
In the last section, you read about the ideas of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. In this section, you will learn how democracy developed in England.

**AS YOU READ**
Use the time line below to take notes on the events that led to the development of democracy in England.

### Reforms in Medieval England
(pages 18–20)

**How did democracy develop in England?**

In 1066, William of Normandy, a French duke, invaded England. He claimed the English throne. This conquest gradually led to the end of feudalism in England. Feudalism was the political and economic system of the Middle Ages. The conquest also set in motion events that led to the development of democracy in England.

An early development in English democracy was a form of trial by jury. It began in the 12th century. Unlike modern juries, these early juries did not decide whether someone was guilty or innocent. Instead, they were asked by a judge to answer questions about the facts of a case.

Another way that democracy developed in England was through common law. Common law
was not like Roman law, which included things the ruler wanted. Common law was made up of customs and principles established over time. It became the basis of the legal systems in many English-speaking countries, including the United States.

In 1215, King John became involved in a conflict with the English nobles. They presented their demands to him in the Magna Carta. This document contained important principles that placed limits on the power of the English monarch.

One of the Magna Carta’s 63 clauses said that the king could not demand taxes. He had to ask for consent from the people. Another clause had to do with an accused person. The accused had a right to a jury trial and to the protection of the law. This right has come to be called due process of law. Over time, the clause that said the king could not tax people without their consent was interpreted to mean without the consent of Parliament. Parliament was England’s lawmaking body.

In 1295, King Edward I needed money to pay for a war. He called together all the lords, plus some knights and leading citizens from the towns. They helped Edward make decisions. This gathering has come to be known as the Model Parliament.

1. How did the Magna Carta change the way people were taxed?

Parliament Grows Stronger
(pages 20–21)

How did Parliament increase its power?

Over the centuries, Parliament had begun to see itself as a partner to the monarch in governing. Its power had grown. It voted on taxes, passed laws, and advised on royal policies.

In the 17th century, European monarchs began to claim greater authority. They insisted their power came from God. It was their divine right. Conflicts soon arose. In England, Parliament clashed with James I over the rights of the people. When James’s son, Charles, became king, Parliament tried to limit royal power. In 1628 they tried to force him to accept the Petition of Right.

The Petition was very important in constitutional history. It demanded an end to:

- taxing without consent
- imprisoning citizens illegally
- housing troops in citizens’ homes
- military government in peacetime

Charles signed the petition. Later, he ignored the promises he made. Conflicts between those who supported Charles and those who supported Parliament eventually caused civil war in 1642. Several years of fighting followed. The king’s opponents, led by Oliver Cromwell, won control of the government. Charles was executed in 1649.

2. Why did Parliament force the monarch to sign the Petition of Right?

Establishment of Constitutional Monarchy (pages 22–23)

What was the Glorious Revolution?

Oliver Cromwell ruled briefly. Then, a new parliament restored the monarchy. Charles’s son became king as Charles II. Things had changed, however. The monarch could not tax without Parliament’s consent. Also, Parliament passed the Habeas Corpus Amendment Act, which kept authorities from wrongly arresting or holding a person.

Charles II was followed by his brother, who ruled as James II. James was a believer in the divine right of kings. Within a few years, Parliament withdrew its support of James. Instead, it offered the throne to James’s daughter, Mary, and her husband, William of Orange, ruler of the Netherlands. This change in rulers was called the Glorious Revolution. It showed that Parliament had the right to limit a monarch’s power. And it had the right to control who would succeed to the throne. As a result, England became a constitutional monarchy. In a constitutional monarchy, a ruler’s powers are controlled by a constitution and the laws of the country.

In 1689, William and Mary accepted a bill of rights from Parliament. It listed the rights and liberties essential to the people and limited the power of the monarchy. Democratic protections included free speech in Parliament, and no taxation without the consent of Parliament.

3. What event led to England’s becoming a constitutional monarchy?