Magnificent Monarchs

What is a monarchy?

A monarchy is a country that has a king or queen as head of state. The king or queen is known as the monarch.

Monarchy in the United Kingdom



Elizabeth II

There have been over 60 monarchs since Alfred the Great in AD 871. Queen, Elizabeth II, was the longest reigning British monarch until she died in 2021. King Charles III is our current monarch.



Charles III

Power of the monarchy

The power of the monarchy has changed over time. In the past, some monarchs had absolute power. This meant that they could do whatever they wanted. Today, there is a constitutional monarchy. This means that the monarch is controlled by parliament and the government.

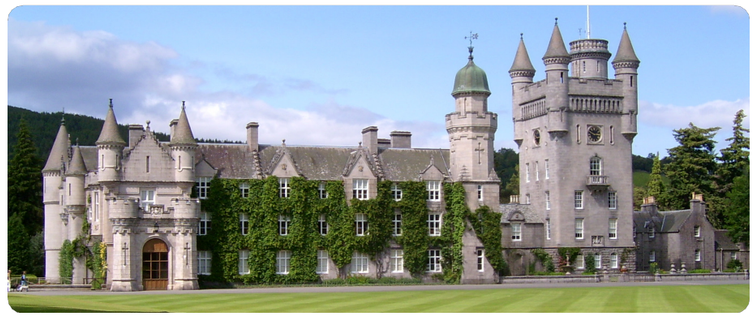


Royal residences

Royal residences include palaces, castles and stately homes. Some of them are used for official royal business and some are used as holiday or private homes.



Buckingham Palace is in London, England. It was Queen Elizabeth's main residence.



Balmoral Castle is in Aberdeenshire, Scotland. It is used mainly as a holiday home for the Royal Family.



Osborne House is on the Isle of Wight, England. This was Queen Victoria's favourite holiday home.

Royal portraits

Royal portraits show a monarch in the way that they wish to be seen. The pose, objects, background, clothes and facial expression give messages to the viewer about the monarch's power and personality.



Elizabeth I

Elizabeth I's direct stare and straight back show her strength and confidence. The orb, sceptre and crown show her authority. The Tudor roses on her dress show that she is a Tudor monarch.



Charles I

Charles I is holding a baton while riding a horse. He is not wearing his helmet. This shows that he is a brave warrior. There are grand pillars and an archway in the background, which show his pride.



George III

George III's crown shows his authority and his robes display his wealth. The pillar represents strong leadership. He is staring into the distance, showing that he is quiet and thoughtful.

Timelines

A timeline shows important events in chronological order. This is a timeline of six significant sovereigns. The numbers represent the dates of their reigns.



Six significant sovereigns



Alfred the Great was a wise and brave king. He converted his Viking enemy to Christianity and they became friends. He united the English kingdoms. He valued education and created schools to teach his people.



William the Conqueror invaded England and defeated Harold II at the Battle of Hastings. He had absolute power. He created the feudal system and built many castles to protect his kingdom.



Henry VIII was famous for marrying six times and creating the Church of England. He was also power hungry so he closed the monasteries, strengthened the Royal Navy and made laws without parliament.



Elizabeth I was intelligent, brave and loved by her people. She spoke many languages and sponsored playwrights like William Shakespeare. She never married and proved that a woman could rule a kingdom alone. She supported explorers and defeated the Spanish Armada.



Queen Victoria reigned for 63 years. She supported charities, new technologies and inventions and increased the size and power of the British Empire. She was married to Prince Albert and had nine children.



Elizabeth II was the monarch and the Head of the Commonwealth for 70 years. She performed many royal duties, such as opening parliament and giving awards. She led the country's celebrations, supported charities, hosted state banquets and met world leaders.

Glossary

absolute power	Complete control over someone or something especially of a monarch or government over their people.
AD – *anno Domini*	The years after Jesus Christ was born.
feudal system	A hierarchy where people are put into different groups based on their class and roles.
government	A group of people who control a country and make laws or important decisions.
head of state	The public representative of a country, such as a president or monarch.
hierarchy	The order of people or things from most important to least important.
monarch	A king or queen who rules a kingdom.
parliament	A group of people who make the laws for a country.
reign	The period of time that a king or queen rules over a country.
sovereign	A king or queen.
Spanish Armada	A fleet of Spanish ships that tried to invade England.