

## How did revolutions change early modern England?

**TASK:** Read the story of the unit, to find out more about what we're going to study in the next six lessons. Then, answer the questions at the bottom of the page (use a separate piece of paper).

In the early modern period (roughly 1500-1700), several different **revolutions** took place: these were big, long-lasting changes that affected many aspects of life.

One of the most important of these was **religious**, as England went through a **Reformation**. Henry VIII kickstarted this process with his **break from Rome**: divorce was not allowed in the **Catholic** Church, so Henry made himself Head of the Church of England. After this, England officially became a **Protestant** country. This did not mean, however, that everyone in England immediately changed their religious beliefs and practices.



There were also important changes in **politics**, and in the way England was governed. Charles I was a very unpopular king, and in 1642 a **Civil War** broke out. Charles' **Royalist** forces fought against the **Parliamentarians**, and eventually the Parliamentarians won. Charles I was the first King of England to be executed at the hands of his own people, and England became a '**republic**' - and had no Monarch. Oliver Cromwell became **Lord Protector**, and never again would kings and queens have supreme, unchallenged power in England.

The years 1500-1700 also saw a **Scientific Revolution**, as developments in mathematics, physics, astronomy, biology and chemistry changed the way people viewed and understood the



natural world. Key individuals linked with the Scientific Revolution included **Copernicus** (who suggested that the planets revolve around the Sun, rather than the Sun revolving around the Earth) and **Newton** (who began to explain how gravity works). This period also saw big changes in the way that scientific work was carried out, as methods like experimentation and classification became more usual.

Along with these religious, political and scientific changes, there were many changes in the way that ordinary people lived their lives. First, it became much easier for people to find out about the big changes that were happening in the world, as the **printing press** had recently been invented: this allowed books and texts to be published in large numbers so more people could read them. Second, people's ideas about God and other kinds of authority began to change (some even began to doubt the ideas in the Bible, and to question whether kings or queens had the right to rule over their subjects). One of the best ways of finding out more about the early modern period is to study the lives of 'ordinary' people.



**TASK:** Answer the questions below:

- 1: Name some of the different kinds of 'revolution' that took place in the early modern period.
- 2: What happened after Henry's 'break from Rome'?
- 3: Who fought in the English Civil War?
- 4: Name some of the changes/discoveries of the Scientific Revolution.
- 5: What impact did the invention of the printing press have?

