

King Charles III(2022-)

King Charles III, the oldest son of Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip, is king of the United Kingdom. He ascended to the throne after the death of his mother Queen Elizabeth II on September 8, 2022. He is the oldest person ever to assume the British throne.

As a public figure, Charles came off to many as intelligent, aloof and a bit awkward. He was used to having every move he made scrutinized by the press, but even he could not have imagined what a sensation his relationship with Lady Diana Spencer would cause. The two had known each other when they were young but were reintroduced in the late 1970s. Despite a 13-year age difference as well as divergent interests, the couple became engaged in February 1981. The public took a strong liking to his shy, former kindergarten teacher fiancée, finding her more accessible than the reserved prince at the time. They were married on July 29, 1981, in a lavish ceremony that was broadcast around the world and watched by millions of people. Charles and Diana had two children together. Unfortunately, their common love for their children was not enough to hold what was billed as a fairy tale marriage together. The union became strained over the years with royal responsibilities, personal conflicts, media pressures and infidelities. Charles reportedly reignited a relationship with his former flame, Camilla Parker Bowles, while married to Diana. The couple officially separated in 1992 and divorced in 1996. Diana, Princess of Wales, died in a car crash in Paris in August 1997. During her funeral procession, he walked with their sons—William, 15, and Harry, 12—and Diana's brother, Earl Spencer. Charles took his role as father to his grieving sons seriously, asking the media for privacy for his family.

Among his many philanthropic and environmental endeavors are the Prince's Trust and the Prince's Rainforest Project.

Queen Elizabeth II (1952- 2022)

Queen Elizabeth II of Great Britain was the longest-reigning monarch in British history. She celebrated 70 years on the throne in June 2022 with her Platinum Jubilee. Queen Elizabeth II became queen on February 6, 1952, and was crowned on June 2, 1953. At the time of her birth, most people did not realize Elizabeth would someday become the queen of Great Britain. Elizabeth, nicknamed Lilibet, got to enjoy the first decade of her life with all the privileges of being a royal without the pressures of being the heir apparent. With the outbreak of World War II in 1939, Elizabeth and her sister largely stayed out of London, having been relocated to Windsor Castle. From there she made the first of her famous radio broadcasts in 1940, with this particular speech reassuring the children of Britain who had been evacuated from their homes and families. The 14-year-old princess, showing her calm and firm personality, told them "that in the end, all will be well; for God will care for us and give us victory and peace."

When Elizabeth's grandfather George V died in 1936, his eldest son became King Edward VIII. Edward, however, was in love with American divorcée Wallis Simpson and had to choose between the crown and his heart. In the end, Edward chose Simpson and abdicated the crown. The event changed the course of her life, making her the heir presumptive to the British crown.

Elizabeth's long and mainly peaceful reign was marked by vast changes in her people's lives, in her country's power, how Britain is viewed abroad and how the monarchy is regarded and portrayed. As a constitutional monarch, Elizabeth did not weigh in on political matters, nor did she reveal her political views. However, she confers regularly with her prime ministers.

When Elizabeth became queen, post-war Britain still had a substantial empire, dominions and dependencies. However, during the 1950s and 1960s, many of these possessions achieved independence and the British Empire evolved into the Commonwealth of Nations. Elizabeth II thus made visits to other countries as head of the Commonwealth and a representative of Britain,, which garnered international attention and widespread respect.

For much of her life, the queen surrounded herself with dogs. She was especially known for her love of corgis, owning more than 30 descendants of the first corgi she received as a teenager, until the death of the final one, Willow, in 2018. Elizabeth was also a horse enthusiast who bred thoroughbreds and attended racing events for many years.

Not one for the spotlight, Elizabeth liked quiet pastimes. She enjoyed reading mysteries, working on crossword puzzles and, reportedly, even watching wrestling on television.

George VI (r.1936-1952)

George VI was crowned the king of the United Kingdom in 1937 and was an important symbolic leader for the British people during World War II. He supported Winston Churchill completely throughout the war and even visited armies on the battlefronts. He was succeeded by his daughter, Queen Elizabeth II, after he died of lung cancer in 1952. The second son of King George V and Victoria May, the Duchess of York (Mary of Teck), Prince Albert's youth was not easy. Though affectionate with his mother, affection was not always returned, and his father was harsh and critical. His tutors forced him to write with his right hand, though he was naturally left-handed.

At around age eight, the future King George VI developed a stammer, and he suffered the indignity of wearing leg braces to correct his knock knees. Often ill and easily frightened, Prince Albert was somewhat prone to tears and tantrums—traits that he carried throughout much of his adult life. King George VI's father, King George V, had reservations about his first son, Prince Edward (Duke of Windsor), taking the throne. He once said, "I pray God that my eldest son will never marry and that nothing will come between Bertie [Prince Albert] and Lilibet [Albert's daughter] and the throne."

On January 20, 1936, King George V died, and Edward ascended to the throne as King Edward VIII. In less than a year, he abdicated his role to Prince Albert so that he could marry his mistress, Wallis Simpson, a twice-divorced American socialite. Prince Albert was crowned on May 12, 1937, and took on the name George VI to emphasize continuity with his father and restore confidence in the monarchy.

Edward VIII (Jan-Dec 1936)

Edward VIII was a popular member of the British royal family and heir to the throne? born on June 23, 1894, in Richmond, London, England. In 1911, after his father's ascension, Edward became the Prince of Wales. Dashing and charming, he became known in the American press as the "arbiter of men's fashions, a fearless horseman, tireless dancer, idol of bachelors, dream of spinsters." In 1931, then known as the Prince of Wales, Edward met and fell in love with American socialite Wallis Simpson. After George V's death, the prince became King Edward VIII. In 1936, the prince succeeded his father, George V, becoming King Edward VIII. He was a popular king, although those who worked around him found him irresponsible in regard to his official papers. On December 11, 1936, he abdicated the throne in the face of opposition to his proposed marriage to Simpson, proclaiming to the public, "I have found it impossible to carry the heavy burden of responsibility and to discharge my duties as king as I would wish to do without the help and support of the woman I love." Edward was then given the title of Duke of Windsor, and in 1937, he married Simpson in a small private ceremony in France.

The couple lived in Paris; The duke made a couple of attempts to revive his political career, including a trip to Nazi Germany in October 1937, which only served to worsen his reputation as a supporter of Adolf Hitler. Edward, Duke of Windsor, died on May 28, 1972. in France. He was buried at Windsor Castle, and 14 years later, Simpson was buried beside him. Their undying romance in the face of opposition is still regarded today as one of the greatest love stories of our time.

George V (r. 1910-1936)

King George V of Great Britain was the unpromising second son of Edward VII. Initially, he sought a career in the British Navy, but the untimely death of his brother, Albert, placed him on the throne. He became king in 1910 and played an active role supporting the troops during World War I. Though lackluster in personality, he won the loyalty of the middle class and many in Great Britain with his steadfast dedication to his country. In his early years, he was educated alongside his older brother, Albert, by tutors and nannies. At age 12, George and Albert enrolled in the naval training academy.

The reign of George V saw many changes within the British Empire. Rebellion in Ireland in 1916 resulted in an independent Irish parliament and later a geographic division along religious lines. The post-World War I period also brought change to the empire itself as Canada, New Zealand, Australia and South Africa demanded and received the right of self-governance and formed the Commonwealth of Nations in 1931. India followed, achieving some degree of self-determinism in 1935. Though he probably neither understood nor fully appreciated the changes that occurred in his empire, he used his influence as a voice of reason and moderation to help Britain weather the changes of the early 20th century.

Victoria (r. 1837-1901)

Victoria was born at Kensington Palace, London, on 24 May 1819. She was the only daughter of Edward, Duke of Kent, fourth son of George III. Her father died shortly after her birth and she became heir to the throne because the three uncles who were ahead of her in the succession - George IV, Frederick Duke of York, and William IV - had no legitimate children. Queen Victoria was queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland from 1837 to 1901 — the second-longest reign of any British monarch. Victoria's reign saw great cultural expansion; advances in industry, science and communications; and the building of railways and the London Underground. Despite a feisty temperament, Victoria was famously tiny in stature, measuring just 4 feet 11 inches tall. Victoria ascended to the throne at age 18 on June 20, 1837, and she served until her death at the age of 81 on January 22, 1901.

During Victoria's reign, Britain expanded its imperial reach, doubling in size and encompassing Canada, Australia, India and various possessions in Africa and the South Pacific. The Queen was emblematic of the time: an enthusiastic supporter of the British Empire, which stretched across the globe and earned the adage: "The sun never sets on the British Empire."

Though the English constitutional arrangement denied her powers in foreign affairs, she ruled her family with an iron hand that helped keep Great Britain away from the intrigues of European politics.

During Victoria's reign, the political climate in British Parliament went through a major transition. The Tory Party split, forming the Liberal and Conservative parties, and started a succession of opposing administrations. Victoria played a crucial role as a mediator between arriving and departing prime ministers.

Henry VIII (r.1509-1547)

Henry VIII, king of England, was famously married six times and played a critical role in the English Reformation, turning his country into a Protestant nation.

Henry Tudor was the king of England from 1509 until his death in 1547. The son of Henry VII of England and Elizabeth York, Henry became king of England following the death of his father. As a young man and monarch, second in the Tudor Dynasty, Henry VIII exuded a charismatic athleticism and diverse appetite for art, music and culture. He was witty and highly educated, taught by private tutors for his entire upbringing. He loved music and wrote some as well.

A lover of gambling and jousting, he hosted countless tournaments and banquets. In 1534, Henry VIII declared himself supreme head of the Church of England, separating from the Christian church. He married six times, beheading two of his wives, and was the main instigator of the English Reformation. His only surviving son, Edward VI, succeeded him after his death.

William I 'The Conqueror' (r. 1066-1087)

The policies of William the Conqueror, king of England from 1066 until his death in 1087, may be largely responsible for eventually making Britain the most powerful nation in Europe. At the age of eight, William the Conqueror became duke of Normandy and in 1042, King Henry I of France knighted William. Taking a new stand on political events, William finally gained firm control of his duchy (although his enemies commonly referred to him as "The Bastard" due to his illegitimate birth). By 1064 he had conquered and won two neighboring provinces — Brittany and Maine. In the meantime, the childless king of England — Edward the Confessor, whose mother was a sister of William's grandfather — promised William succession to the English throne.

William the Conqueror had four sons and five daughters, and every monarch of England since has been his direct descendant.









