

Summer Reading Assignment
Modern World History
St. Thomas High School



The English Civil Wars
by Blair Worden

This summer we will be reading Blair Worden's history of the English Civil Wars. England in the mid-seventeenth century was a nation undergoing great political, military, and religious upheaval. The civil wars that erupted during the 1640s and 1650s were a complex set of conflicts fought between a number of different forces – the king and Parliament, republicans and monarchists, the Church of England and Puritans – over questions concerning who should rule England and the manner in which it should be ruled. These wars resulted in the execution of King Charles I, the abolishment of the House of Lords, and the establishment of both a republic and military rule. While the monarchy was eventually restored with the ascension of King Charles II to the throne in 1660, this tumultuous period has had a long-lasting impact on the development of Western political and social thought.

Instructions

You will be responsible for reading the first three chapters of *The English Civil Wars* (pp. 1-103). The reading will be incorporated into our first LAP of the semester in the form of class discussions and several short-answer test questions.

Reading Objectives

While you read, focus on the following topics:

1. The underlying political, social, and economic causes of the conflict.
2. The major players in the civil wars; their beliefs, goals, and actions.
3. King Charles and the monarchy as a lightning rod for political anger and discontent.
4. The role that religion plays in political conflict.
5. Factors leading to the success of Cromwell and the Roundheads in taking power away from the monarchy and re-writing the nation's political framework.