V. England from the Golden Age to the Glorious Revolution

Teaching Idea
Tell students about the first child born of English parents in North America. She was named Virginia Dare. No one knows any more about her than her name. She was born on Roanoke Island, the site of the “Lost Colony,” in 1587. John White, the governor of the colony, was her grandfather.

Teaching Idea
Many of the wars in Europe between the 1500s and 1700s were over religious concerns. Often, political concerns were an equal part of the conflicts. For example, students may remember, northern German princes supported Luther in part because they wanted to stop paying support to the pope in Rome.

Discuss with students some of the ways that people have used religion for their own ends, and what this means. For example, Roman emperors before Constantine persecuted Christians because the emperors thought if Christianity spread, it would weaken the emperor’s hold on power. Christians refused to worship the emperor. The Crusades tried to rout the Muslims from the Holy Land to honor God but also to have access to the riches of trade with Asia. Muslims seized territory in praise of Allah and to enrich themselves. The conquistadors attempted to convert native Americans to Christianity because they believed it was the right thing to do, but also because it would turn their adversaries into peaceful workers.

been friendly to the colonists when they first arrived. White was never able to search for the colonists, however, because storms intervened, and he returned to England without knowing what had happened.

Between 1607, when Jamestown was founded, and 1732, when a group of proprietors were given a charter for Georgia, the English established thirteen colonies along the eastern seaboard of North America. All but Georgia were founded during the time of Elizabeth I’s immediate successor, James I, and the Glorious Revolution. You can read more about these colonies on pp. 154–156 of this book.

B. From the English Revolution to the Glorious Revolution

Background
While Elizabeth managed to quiet religious conflict during her long reign, it resurfaced after her death. Childless, she acknowledged James VI of Scotland, the son of her deceased cousin Mary, Queen of Scots, as the legitimate heir to the English throne.

Upon Elizabeth’s death in 1603, James also became James I of England. Although he was a Presbyterian, he supported the Church of England, and supervised a translation of the Bible that is still much cited and read today, the King James Bible (1611). James also attempted to ease some of the restrictions against Catholics. This only worsened the conflict. However, his greatest problem with his new subjects was not religion, but his belief in the divine right of kings. This philosophy had been embraced by the French and Austrian monarchies. According to this theory, the monarch received from God his or her right to govern and, therefore, answered only to God, not the governed. Any opposition to the monarch was opposition to God.

Unfortunately for James, Parliament had evolved a number of rights of its own since the Magna Carta was signed in 1215, including control of the nation’s finances. When James called Parliament into session to ask for new taxes, it refused. He then dismissed Parliament and ruled without it, which he was able to do so long as he had no need for new taxes.

The English Revolution

When James died in 1625, his son became King Charles I (1625–1649). Like his father, Charles believed in the absolute authority of the monarchy. The stage was set for a series of confrontations between king and Parliament. Religion also entered into the disputes.

King Charles I, Puritans, and Parliament

By 1628, Charles I had already held and dismissed two sessions of Parliament that had refused to grant him all the money he had requested to pay for his foreign wars. Before Parliament would grant Charles his money in 1628, the members forced him to sign the Petition of Right, in which he agreed that only Parliament could levy new taxes.
Charles dismissed Parliament and did not call it back into session until 1640. By then, he had angered his subjects in Scotland and needed money to put down their revolt. Under the guidance of William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury and head of the Anglican Church, Charles had tried to impose the Book of Common Prayer and the hierarchy of bishops and archbishops on Presbyterian Scotland. This led to war with Scotland. However, Laud had also attempted to clamp down on religious dissenters in England, notably Puritans. For example, he had the Puritan pamphleteer William Prynne thrown in jail and even had Prynne's ears chopped off. Many of the Puritans who came to America in the 1620s and '30s were fleeing from Laud and his regulations.

When Charles called Parliament into session, his opponents in Parliament seized the opportunity to stage their own revolt against him. The king and the Long Parliament, as it came to be known (it met irregularly from 1640 to 1653), goaded each other in a series of escalating actions. Parliament had several of Charles's advisors, including Archbishop Laud, arrested, tried, and executed. Charles had little choice but to make peace with Scotland. Parliament forced Charles to agree that Parliament could not be dismissed without its consent, that only Parliament could approve new taxes, and that Parliament must be called into session every three years.

By 1641, the Puritans had gained enough power to force passage of a bill requiring Parliament's approval of the king's advisors. In retaliation, Charles marched into the House of Commons at the head of a group of soldiers to arrest the leaders of the opposition. They escaped, but the political rivalry had turned into civil war.

Civil War: Cavaliers and Roundheads

The English Civil War lasted from 1642 to 1649. The followers of the king were known as Cavaliers, meaning gallant gentlemen. His opponents were known as Roundheads. The name came from the men's habit of cropping their hair close to their heads, rather than wearing their hair in the long, flowing style of the aristocrats who supported the king.

For the first two years of the war, the king and his forces were successful. However, in 1645, the Roundheads chose Oliver Cromwell, a Puritan, as their general. Cromwell turned the forces supporting the dissidents in Parliament into the New Model Army, a highly disciplined and efficient military organization that believed that God supported it and that it fought with divine help. By 1646, Charles had surrendered, but the civil war was not over.

Cromwell's supporters seized control of Parliament by ousting the majority of members who wanted a monarchy limited by constitutional guarantees for the rights of the people and Parliament. Cromwell installed the Rump Parliament, 100 members who agreed with his idea of eliminating the monarchy in favor of a republic. Another round of fighting broke out. Though Cromwell's supporters were in the minority, they controlled the army and within a few months had defeated the supporters of the king.

Execution of Charles I

Cromwell had Charles tried for treason. The verdict was guilty, and on January 30, 1649, a sentence of immediate execution was handed down to that "tyrant, traitor, murderer, and public enemy." He was taken to his own Palace of