

**Lesson
Three****Aftermath and
restoration****Aims**

In this lesson we are going to learn about:

- the restoration of the monarchy
- history's judgement on Oliver Cromwell

Context

Now that we have looked at the civil war and the events that led up to Charles I's execution, we will ask the obvious question: what happened next?



Oxford Open Learning

Activity 1

For just one minute, think about what life must have been like for ordinary people in the 1650s. What do you think they thought of Oliver Cromwell? Jot down some ideas.

**Richard Cromwell and Restoration**

Oliver Cromwell died on 3rd September 1658. His body was preserved in spices and it was kept on show for ten weeks in London. People came from over the country to see his body and he was given a grand state funeral. Cromwell's son Richard inherited the title 'Lord Protector'.



However, Richard (above) did not want to be a quasi-king (pretend king). He was a farmer and he wanted to go back to his farm. He was weak, ineffectual and disinterested and he was removed after less than a year in power.

Meanwhile, leading politicians were in touch with Charles I's son, also called Charles. Charles had been hiding on the continent since his father was overthrown (and since his own abortive attempt to regain control shortly after).

In April 1660 Charles signed the **Declaration of Breda**, in which he promised that he would listen to Parliament and that he would not punish those who had killed his father if he became King. He was invited to come back and take the throne. He was crowned Charles II. This is called the **restoration** – the monarchy was restored. Charles was welcomed back to England with noisy crowds coming in to

the street to celebrate his return. They were the same crowds who had mourned Cromwell's death.

"There were 20,000 soldiers...shouting with joy; the streets covered with flowers, the bell ringing, fountains running with wine." John Evelyn, in his diary, May 1660.

Charles II broke his promise. The men who signed Charles I's death warrant were hanged. Oliver Cromwell's body was dug up and he was hanged. His head was put on a pole in Westminster for everyone to see.

Did he really deserve this fate?

Assessing Oliver Cromwell

We have now looked at England's brief time as a republic. The monarchy was overthrown and Oliver Cromwell was Lord Protector, an almost-King. What do you think of Oliver Cromwell? Historians have been divided, just as people were in his lifetime.



Was he a great leader, strong, inspirational and forward-thinking?

Or was he just an ambitious, hypocritical and murderous man who wanted to be King?

In the nineteenth century, Cromwell was viewed as an admirable reformer and a man of great principle. He organised the army and offered strong leadership. He reformed the politics of this country. Nowadays, Parliament has the real power and the monarch is a ceremonial head of state – this idea comes from Cromwell's time.

Some modern historians have been horrified by Cromwell's actions, however. He murdered hundreds of people and justified it by saying it was God's will. He was ruthless and brutal. Cromwell's actions in Ireland were particularly gruesome. He transformed England into a dull Puritan nation. Theatres were closed and dancing was banned. Christmas Day was declared a day for fasting not feasting. Soldiers were told to confiscate meat they saw being cooked on Christmas Day.

Investigate!

Carry out some research into what Cromwell's army did in Ireland. Find out about his actions in Drogheda and Wexford. What did he do? Did Cromwell keep to the 'rules of warfare' that were accepted in 17th century? Find out.

Activity 2

Here are two opinions from men who lived at the time. They seem to differ in their opinion of Cromwell. What are they arguing? Whose opinion do you most agree with and why?

"He loved the praise of men, and took flattering titles...He allowed tithes and false worship and other popish stuff... He persecuted and imprisoned people for criticising things that were popish." Edward Burroughs, a Quaker, 1660.

"Everybody do nowadays reflect upon Cromwell and praise him...what brave things he did and made all the foreign princes fear him." Samuel Pepys

Cromwell as "king"

Although Cromwell always refused to take on the title of King (and it was offered to him) he did start behaving in an increasingly King-like way. He asked for his son Richard to be his heir, and he dismissed MPs when he did not like how they were acting.

Was the "world turned upside down"?

A contemporary writer commented that the world had turned upside down. Was this true? Certainly the civil wars were nasty, traumatic and violent. Families were divided over whether to support King or Parliament and some families never recovered. Many men died and many women were widowed and therefore desperately poor. The civil wars were followed by the execution of the King – traumatic whichever

side you were on – and then rule by a ruthless and bloody Cromwell. Yet, by 1660 the monarchy had been restored.

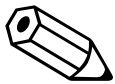
The Puritan touches were removed. Christmas was allowed once again, and theatres were re-opened. Puritans, in fact, suffered after the Restoration as Charles II was not kind to them. Anti-Puritan laws were passed, whilst tight laws on Catholics were loosened.

More than this, though, is that the idea of the ‘divine right’ of the monarch had been lost forever. England had executed her own King. It had not been a pleasant experience, but they had survived. God had not punished them. This gave the English confidence for the future and must also have served as a warning to future monarchs – listen to your Parliaments, or else!

Activity 3

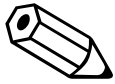
Construct a timeline for the years 1635 (the Ship Laws) to 1660. Add in details from the last few lessons to show what happened in these years. Colour code your timeline. If it is something to do with politics, write it in blue. If it is to do with religion, write it in green. If it is a battle, write it in red.

When you have completed your timeline, look at the colours. What is most dominant? What do you think life was like?



Activity 4

Cromwell said once: "I did not push myself into this position. I could not refuse the power God put in my hands." How far do you think this is true? Answer this question, with reference to:



- his early skills in the civil wars
- his actions against opposition in Ireland and at home
- his attitude and his religion

Use the sources quoted in the lesson in your answer too.

You may answer this question as a short essay or as a spider diagram.