

# The Return of Parliament

KS3 History - Lesson 4 of 6

**Enquiry: Why did the Civil War break out in 1642?**

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# Long Parliament Begins

In November 1640 Charles I recalled Parliament. Charles was in desperate need of money after paying the **Covenanters** £850 a day. Charles expected to be quickly granted the money, but parliament had other ideas. Some MPs were sympathetic to the Covenanters as they also disagreed with the Church reforms and Charles' absolute power. Once Parliament was in session, John Pym began publicly criticising Charles' evil councillors for bringing ruin to England. Pym targeted the Earl of Strafford who was **impeached** and then imprisoned in the Tower of London. Parliament grew in confidence as they freed puritans from prison, declared ship money to be illegal and most importantly passed the Triennial Act which stated that Parliament must be in session at least once every three years.



# Trial of Strafford

Pym's main evidence of Strafford's illegal actions came from a speech Strafford made whilst preparing for the Bishops' War. Here Strafford had told Charles, 'you have an army in Ireland that you may employ to reduce this kingdom into obedience.' Pym argued that Strafford had committed **treason** by encouraging Charles to use the Irish army to crush England as well as Scotland, however, this was weak evidence of illegal activity. Soon the case against Strafford started to collapse. Pym acted quickly by passing the Act of Attainder, this stated that someone could be convicted of treason if Parliament agreed they were most likely guilty. Charles did not agree to pass this law and swore to protect Strafford from harm.



# **Strafford's Execution**

Social unrest increased as violent crowds (numbering 15,000 people) marched to Whitehall Palace where Charles was based. The crowd demanded justice. Pressure increased as Charles' closest advisors told him he was weakening his power by defending Strafford. It was then that Strafford secured his own **execution**. Strafford wrote to the king telling him to pass the Act of Attainder so that his own 'death might free the kingdom,' from its troubles. Charles immediately agreed to this as he saw it as a solution to his problems. The Act of Attainder was passed, and Strafford was publicly executed. The Strafford problem had been solved. But by allowing his friend to be executed, Charles showed Parliament that they had power to push the king around.



# Glossary

**Covenanters** - Term given to the soldiers fighting to protect the Presbyterian faith in Scotland..

**Impeached** - – The process of Parliament placing people of high importance on trial.

**Treason** - The crime of betraying one's country (especially by attempting to kill/ overthrow the king or government

**Execution** – Killing someone once a court has sentenced them to death.



# Comprehension Questions

1. Who did John Pym publicly criticise once Parliament opened?
2. How else did the Long Parliament challenge the king's power? (Choose at least three)
3. Why was the Earl of Strafford accused of treason?
4. What was the purpose of the Act of Attainder?
5. How did the Earl of Strafford cause his own execution?

