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# Could you make it through the English Civil War?

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## Activity

It's the mid-1600s, and England is in turmoil. In 1642, protest against King Charles I's rule erupted in the form of the English Civil War. The Parliamentarians didn't like the way the king ruled without Parliament, and they wanted to limit his power. The Royalist side supported Charles and believed in his God-given right to rule. But who won?

Answer the questions below to piece together the story of the Civil War in Elmbridge. Add up your points when you're done (over the page) to see how you would have fared in these troublesome times!



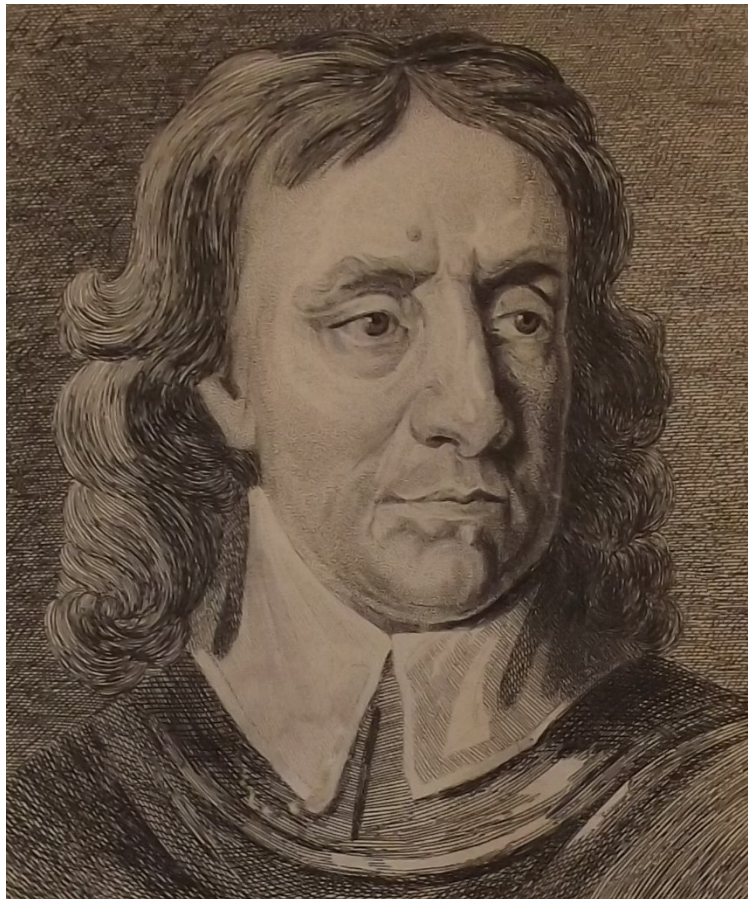
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1. Pick a side to support:
  - a. The Royalists
  - b. The Parliamentarians
  - c. No one - I'm staying neutral
  
2. What's your opinion on how England should be ruled?
  - a. We should have a king with lots of personal power.
  - b. Parliament should have a say in how the country is run.
  - c. I just want everyone to be equal.
  
3. You are injured in the first battle of the Civil War, the notorious Battle of Edgehill, in October 1642. What do you do?
  - a. Bandage the wound with raw onions.
  - b. Ram cloth into the wound to stem the blood loss.
  - c. I wouldn't have survived – most died in battle.
  
4. It's December 1645. What are you doing for Christmas this year?
  - a. I'm going to eat goose for Christmas dinner with my family.
  - b. I'm going to a Christmas church service.
  - c. I'm not celebrating Christmas.
  
5. It's now 1650. The king has been dead for a year and most of the fighting is over for now. Where will you choose to settle down?



- a. Oatlands Palace in Weybridge.
- b. London
- c. A small village or town in Elmbridge, near a river.

Look on the next page for the answers and to add up your points!



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# Answers

## 1. Pick a side to support:

- a. **The Royalists.** Oh no! You've chosen the losing side. Although the Civil War went on for nearly 10 years and divided the country, the Royalists (who supported King Charles) saw their king executed for treason in January 1649. Although Charles' son, Charles II, was restored to the throne in 1660.  
**(1 point)**
- b. **The Parliamentarians.** Well done, you've chosen the winning side. Most of Surrey was on Parliament's side during the Civil War.  
**(3 points)**
- c. **No one - I'm staying neutral.** With many territories in England switching hands between the Royalists and Parliamentarians, not taking a side might have worked well for you for a while. But in all likelihood, you'll eventually have to support someone – whether it's through putting up soldiers in your home or paying forced taxes to the king or parliament.  
**(2 points)**

## 2. What's your opinion on how England should be ruled?

- a. **We should have a king with lots of personal power.** This was the opinion of the royalist side. They thought the king had 'divine right' (God-given authority to rule). Even though many in 17<sup>th</sup> Century society wanted the king's power restricted, most wouldn't have dreamt of getting rid of the king altogether. When Oliver Cromwell became Lord Protector after deposing the king, he also still had vast amounts of personal power.  
**(1 point)**
- b. **Parliament should have a say in how the country is run.** This is what many had come to believe after long years of personal rule under King Charles I. It's part of the reason parliament decided to rebel against him and begin the Civil War.  
**(3 points)**
- c. **I just want everyone to be equal.** This was what the Diggers wanted. They were a radical group led by a Cobham labourer named Gerrard Winstanley,



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and they started a commune on St. George's Hill in Weybridge in April 1649 where everyone lived equally. Unfortunately for them, they were soon forced out by Parliamentary troops and angry locals who wanted their land back.

**(0 points)**

3. You are injured in the first battle of the Civil War, the notorious Battle of Edgehill, in October 1642. What do you do?

a. **Bandage the wound with raw onions.** Correct! This is how some physicians reportedly treated wounded soldiers. Although it's not a guarantee that you'll get better, the onion helped to counteract the effects of the gunpowder.

**(3 points)**

b. **Ram cloth into the wound to stem the blood loss.** This would have been a risky move. Many open wounds were at risk of infection, and ramming a dirty cloth into it may have resulted in blood poisoning or gangrene. However, depending on the severity of the wound this option might have kept you alive for a few weeks after the battle.

**(1 point)**

c. **I wouldn't have survived – most died in battle.** Not true – actually, more men died of their wounds than died in battle. Out of the estimated 200,000 that died, it's thought that around 85,000 of those died in combat, and the remaining 115,000 died of their wounds or disease. You're more likely to have died in camp from infection, cholera, typhus, malaria, and any number of other diseases than in the battle itself.

**(0 points)**

4. It's December 1645. What are you doing for Christmas this year?

a. **I'm going to eat goose for Christmas dinner with my family.** No, you're not! From 1645, Christmas celebrations were officially cancelled by Oliver Cromwell's Puritan parliament. The Puritans believed that Christmas should be a time of contemplation rather than greediness and celebration. Anyone flouting the rules got into serious trouble!

**(0 points)**



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b. I'm going to a Christmas church service. You wouldn't have been able to do this either! Special Christmas services were also cancelled. You would, however, have still been able to go to church for a regular service on Christmas Day.

**(1 point)**

c. I'm not celebrating Christmas. Correct! From the time it was cancelled in 1645, right up to the Restoration in 1660, no one was allowed to celebrate Christmas.

**(3 points)**

5. It's now 1650. The king has been dead for a year and most of the fighting is over for now. Where will you choose to settle down?

a. Oatlands Palace in Weybridge. Unfortunately, you won't be able to live here! Oatlands Palace, which had been partially built using materials from the demolished Chertsey Abbey under the Tudors, was a royal residence for Charles I's wife Henrietta Maria before the Civil War. After Charles' death, many royal properties were sold off by the Commonwealth government to pay parliamentary debts, and Oatlands Palace was one of these properties. It's buyer, Robert Turbridge, sadly had it demolished in 1650.

**(0 points)**

b. London. Not a bad choice – London was the clear capital of England by now and many traders made large sums of money here. Trade had, however, become very unstable during the Civil War, and London was only just recovering. It was also prone to outbreaks of plague and disease, which spread quickly throughout the densely packed population.

**(2 points)**

c. A small village or town in Elmbridge, near a river. Excellent choice! Living near a river was a great idea, because you could often make money from trade. When Oatlands Palace was demolished, many of its bricks were used to form the new River Wey Navigation at Weybridge. This aided trade in the local area, and many towns across Surrey became wealthier as a result.

**(3 points)**



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## Results



10 – 15 points

You're a Civil War Pro!



5 - 10 points

You're on the right track



0 - 5 points

You might need to rethink your strategy...



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