

BRITISH CIVILISATION
**Chronology of
significant dates in
British history**

Prehistory	British-Irish islands once part of European land mass: warmer conditions alternated with Ice Ages
500,000 BC	earliest human bones found in southern England
250,000 BC	nomadic Old Stone Age (Palaeolithic) peoples
50,000 BC	warmer climate encouraged the arrival of distant ancestors of the modern populations
10,000 BC	end of Ice Ages. Population consisted of hunter-gatherers and fishers
5000 BC	contemporary islands gradually separated from continental Europe
600 BC	settlement of the Celts (Iron Age) began
55–54 BC	Julius Caesar's exploratory expeditions
AD 43	Roman conquest of England, Wales and (temporarily) lowland Scotland by Claudius. Christian influences
122–38	Hadrian's Wall built between Scotland and England
409	Roman army withdrew from Britain
410	Germanic (Anglo-Saxon) invasions began; Anglo-Saxon kingdoms created from the 450s in England. Mainly Celtic peoples in Wales, Ireland, parts of Scotland and Cornwall
789–95	Scandinavian (Viking) raids began
878	Vikings defeated in England by King Alfred of Wessex
1066	William the Conqueror defeated King Harold at Hastings and ascended the English throne. Feudalism introduced
1215	King John signed Magna Carta, which protected English feudal (aristocratic) rights against royal abuse
1258 and 1264	first English parliamentary structures
1275	the Model Parliament (first regular English Parliament)
1337	Hundred Years War between England and France began
1348–49	Black Death (bubonic plague) destroyed a third of the islands' population
1362	English replaced French as the official language
1381	Peasants' Revolt in England
1407	the House of Commons became responsible for taxation

1415 the Battle of Agincourt; England defeated France
1455–87 Wars of the Roses between Yorkists and Lancastrians
1534–40 English Reformation; Henry VIII broke with Papacy and became Head of the English Church (Roman Catholic)
1547–53 Protestantism became official religion in England under Edward VI
1553–58 Catholic reaction under Mary I
1558–1603 Elizabeth I. Protestant ascendancy
1558 Calais, England's last possession in France, lost
1588 defeat of Spanish Armada
1642–48 Civil Wars between King and Parliament
1649 execution of Charles I, monarchy abolished
1653–58 Oliver Cromwell ruled as Lord Protector
1660 monarchy restored under Charles II
1665 the Great Plague in England 1666 the Great Fire of London
1760s–1830s Industrial Revolutions
1775–83 American War for Independence; loss of 13 Colonies
1801 Act of Union joined Great Britain and Ireland (United Kingdom)
1901 death of Queen Victoria (born 1837)
1914–18 First World War
1916 Easter Rising against Britain in Dublin
1921–22 Irish Free State established; Northern Ireland remained part of the United Kingdom
1931 the Commonwealth officially formed
1939–45 Second World War (W. Churchill, Prime Minister 1940)
1947 Independence for India and Pakistan
1949 Irish Free State became Republic of Eire. NATO created
1952 accession of Elizabeth II
1968 protest and violence erupted in Northern Ireland
1973 Britain entered European Economic Community (now EU)
1979 Margaret Thatcher: Britain's first woman Prime Minister
1982 the Falklands War with Argentina
1994 the Channel Tunnel between France and Britain opened
1997 referendums on devolution for Scotland and Wales
1999–2000 devolution structures in Scotland (a Parliament) and Wales and Northern Ireland (Assemblies)