

Kings and Queens of England Cheat Sheet

Sidebar

History · Kings and Queens of England Cheat Sheet

The continuous line from Alfred the Great to Charles III — organized by royal house, in reign order, with one genuinely fun fact wherever there's a good one. "England" is used here the way most people actually mean it; see the closing note on when that stops being technically accurate.

HOUSE OF WESSEX

- Alfred the Great

871–899 — the only English monarch ever formally called "the Great"
- Edward the Elder

899–924
- Æthelstan

927–939 — first king to actually rule all of England
- Edmund I

939–946
- Eadred

946–955
- Eadwig

955–959
- Edgar the Peaceful

959–975
- Edward the Martyr

975–978 — murdered at Corfe Castle; sainted afterward
- Æthelred the Unready

978–1013, 1014–16 — "Unready" = badly advised, not unprepared; briefly deposed by the Danish Sweyn Forkbeard
- Edmund Ironside

1016 — reigned 7 months, died fighting Cnut

HOUSE OF DENMARK

- Cnut the Great

1016–1035 — also ruled Denmark and Norway
- Harold Harefoot

1035–1040
- Harthacnut

1040–1042 — reportedly died at a wedding toast

HOUSE OF WESSEX (RESTORED)

Edward the Confessor 1042–1066 — founded Westminster Abbey

Harold Godwinson 1066 — last Anglo-Saxon king, killed at Hastings

HOUSE OF NORMANDY

William I "the Conqueror" 1066–1087 — won at Hastings, commissioned the Domesday Book

William II "Rufus" 1087–1100 — died in a suspicious hunting "accident"

Henry I 1100–1135 — reportedly died from eating too many lampreys

Stephen 1135–1154 — "The Anarchy"; rival claimant Empress Matilda held parts of the country from 1141 but was never crowned

HOUSE OF PLANTAGENET

Henry II 1154–1189

Richard I "the Lionheart" 1189–99 — spent maybe 6 months of his reign actually in England

John 1199–1216 — forced to sign Magna Carta, 1215

Henry III 1216–1272

Edward I "Longshanks" 1272–1307

Edward II 1307–1327 — deposed

Edward III 1327–1377 — started the Hundred Years' War

Richard II 1377–1399 — deposed by his own cousin

HOUSE OF LANCASTER

Henry IV 1399–1413

Henry V 1413–1422 — Agincourt, 1415

Henry VI 1422–1461, 1470–71 — became king at 9 months old

HOUSE OF YORK

Edward IV 1461–1470, 1471–83

Edward V 1483 — never crowned; one of the "Princes in the Tower"

Richard III 1483–85 — killed at Bosworth Field; found under a Leicester car park in 2012

HOUSE OF TUDOR

Henry VII 1485–1509 — won the crown on the battlefield

Henry VIII 1509–1547 — six wives, split from Rome

Edward VI 1547–1553

Jane Grey 1553 — the "Nine Days' Queen"; disputed, never widely recognized

Mary I 1553–1558 — "Bloody Mary"

Elizabeth I 1558–1603 — defeated the Spanish Armada, 1588

HOUSE OF STUART

James I 1603–1625 — already James VI of Scotland; Union of the Crowns

Charles I 1625–1649 — the only English monarch ever executed

(Interregnum) 1649–1660 — Oliver Cromwell, Lord Protector, not king

Charles II 1660–1685 — the Restoration

James II 1685–1688 — deposed in the Glorious Revolution

William III & Mary II 1689–1702 / 1689–94 — the only joint monarchy

Anne 1702–1714 — last monarch of England as its own kingdom (see closing note)

HOUSE OF HANOVER

George I 1714–1727 — reportedly never learned much English

George II 1727–1760

George III 1760–1820 — lost the American colonies; later periods of illness

George IV 1820–1830 — was Prince Regent for the previous decade

William IV 1830–1837

Victoria 1837–1901 — 63 years; the British Empire's peak

HOUSE OF WINDSOR

Edward VII 1901–1910

George V 1910–1936 — renamed the royal house "Windsor" in 1917 over WWI anti-German sentiment

Edward VIII 1936 — abdicated after under a year, never crowned

George VI 1936–1952

Elizabeth II 1952–2022 — 70 years, the longest-reigning British monarch

Charles III 2022–present

TRIVIA & FIRSTS

Longest reign Elizabeth II — 70 years

Shortest reign Jane Grey — 9 days (disputed)

Youngest at accession Henry VI — 9 months old

Most wives Henry VIII — six

Only abdication Edward VIII, 1936

Only execution Charles I, 1649

Best comeback Richard III — found under a car park, reburied with full honors, 2015

THE FINE PRINT: "ENGLAND" DOESN'T STAY ACCURATE THE WHOLE WAY

Anne was the last monarch of England as its own separate kingdom — the 1707 Acts of Union merged England and Scotland into the Kingdom of Great Britain, making her its first monarch too. The 1801 Act of Union with Ireland then created the United Kingdom. Every monarch from George I onward was technically King/Queen of Great Britain, then of the United Kingdom — never again "of England" in the strict legal sense — even though "Kings and Queens of England" remains how most people describe this exact same continuous line.