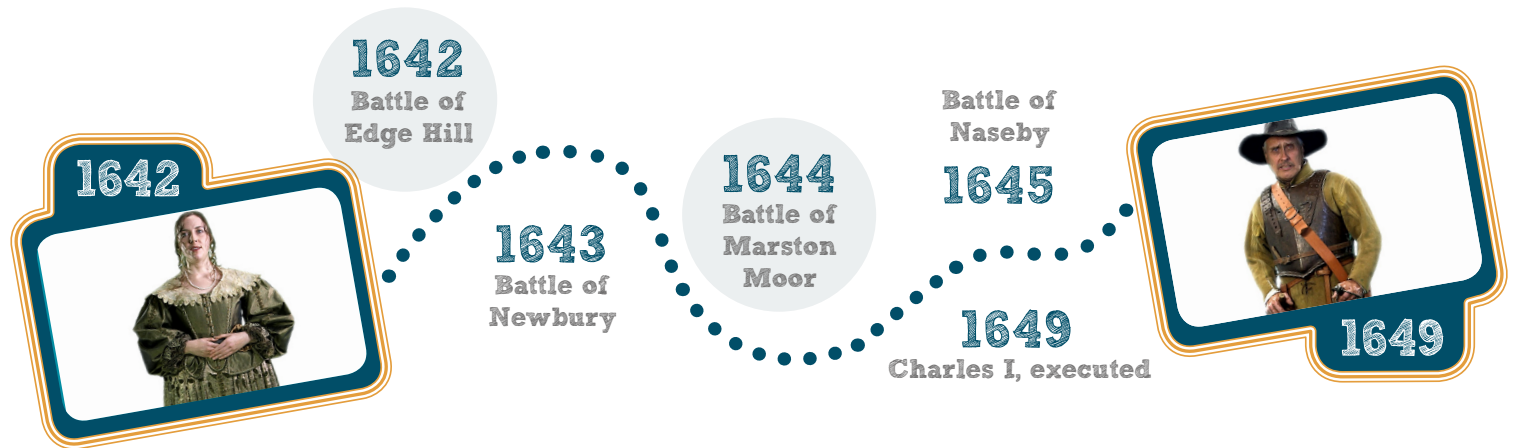


ENGLISH CIVIL WAR

Aimed at Key Stage 3, around year 8



National Curriculum subject links

The development of Church, state and society in Britain, 1509 – 1745

- The causes and events of the civil wars throughout Britain
- The ongoing significance of the British Civil Wars.

Coverage and links

The English Civil War is a topic about which so many useful historical questions continue to be asked. In this short enquiry, students will look at a series of smaller questions about the causes of the wars and about the two sides involved before considering some of the reasons the wars have continued to be important. The topic is such a huge one that there is so much more that could be done – this sequence is just one possible way to approach the topic.

Indeed, it might be desirable to spend several lessons investigating the causes of the war and several more looking at the reasons why Parliament won. However, focussing instead on the significance of the war at the time and since allows students to think about why events such as this Civil War loom so large and yet other civil wars, like the 12th century anarchy, are less well known.

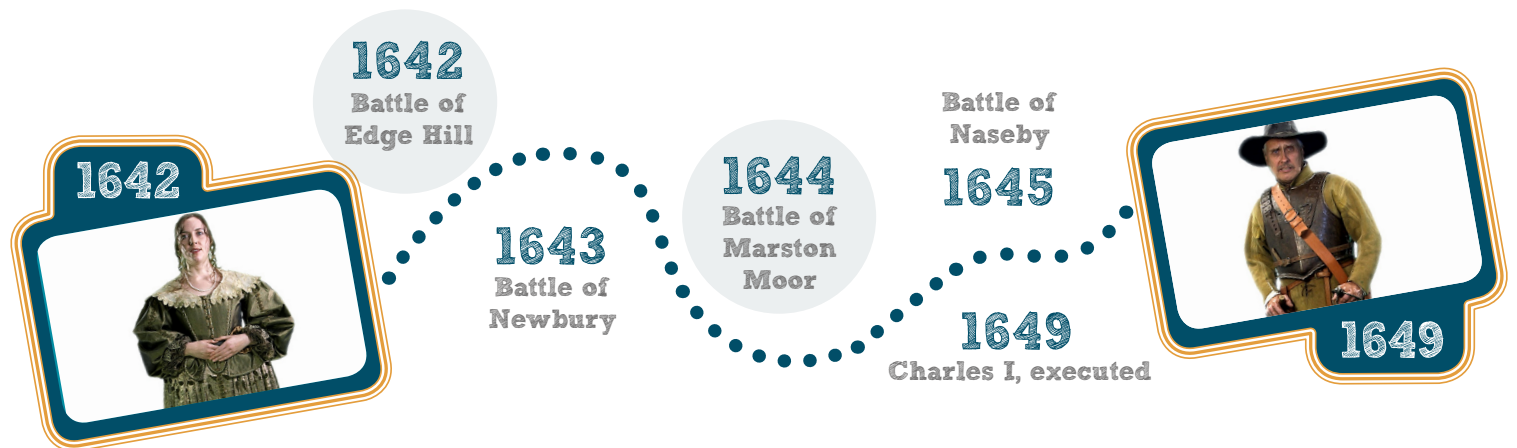
Suggested learning outcomes

By the end of these lessons, pupils will be able to...

- Offer tentative suggestions about the causes of the Civil War.
- Give examples of the key features of the war itself – battles, types of soldiers, leadership of each side.
- Start to explain the ongoing importance of the Civil War for England, both then and now.

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Pre-lesson homework

- In preparation for the sequence, students could watch films on the Norman Conquest, to remind themselves of the reasons why wars happen.
- During the sequence, students might work in groups to research a particular aspect of the Civil War era on which to prepare a short presentation. Groups could look at, for example, particular battles, how people chose sides in the war or the impact of the war on everyday life in England.

Lesson 1 – What caused the Civil War?

Films to use

- **Introduction of the English Civil War**
- **King Charles I**
- **Queen Henrietta Maria**
- **A Parliamentarian**

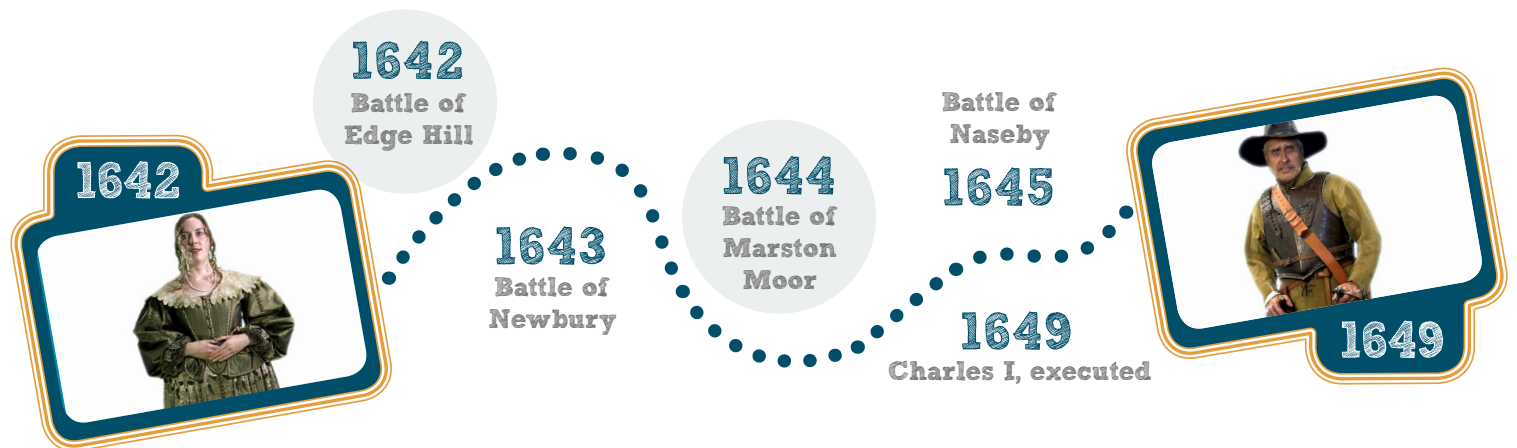
Start by showing **Introduction to the English Civil War to the whole class.** In this film, the soldier talks about the war in general terms; its length, how it divides the country and so on. At the end, ask students some questions about the film: who does the soldier blame? What can we infer about the scale of the war? What, indeed, is a 'civil war'? After this, reveal the lesson question – What caused the Civil War?

Now ask students to brainstorm together, thinking about what causes any war. They might think about wars and battles they have studied in History lessons before – The Norman Invasion, the Peasants' Revolt, the Spanish Armada, for example – and other wars they might have a general knowledge about – WWII perhaps, or more recent wars in the Middle East. As you get back a wealth of ideas, steer your students into categorising them under headings like,

- **Money/resources**
- **Power/authority**
- **Beliefs/religion**

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Lesson 1 – What caused the Civil War? ...continued

At this point, show the next film, **A Parliamentarian**. This film outlines some of the causes of the war and you could show it without much more comment, leading on to an activity that builds on the ideas in the film, such as the card sort shown below. These cards can be organised in several ways and the more time students spend with them, the better their even tentative answers at the end. They could certainly begin to organise them under the headings above, but also sort them chronologically and under headings of their own suggestion. They should certainly start to see links between causes, something that can be encouraged through wider discussion in class.

The other two films here, **King Charles I** and **Queen Henrietta Maria** can be used as necessary to add colour to student's work during the card-sort activity.

At the end of this lesson, draw student's work together in a discussion session. What factors would appear to be most important in causing the war? Is it too easy to blame the King? How are the factors connected?

Lesson 2 – Why was the New Model Army unbeatable?

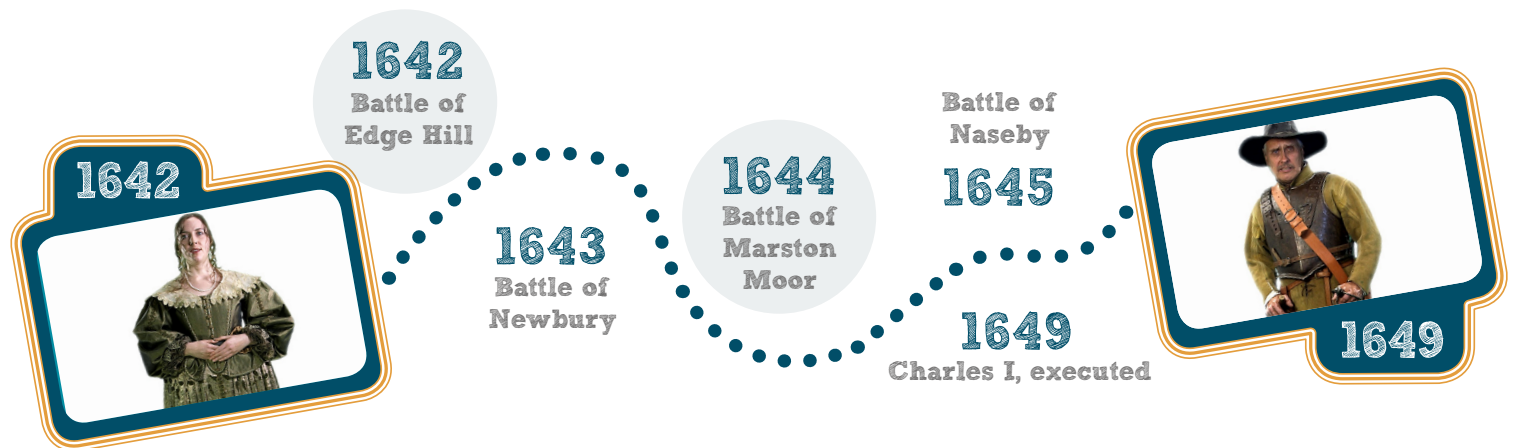
Films to use

- **Cromwell**
- **Battle of Edge Hill**
- **Prince Rupert**
- **Parliamentarian**
- **Cavalry trooper**
- **A Pikeman**
- **A Musketeer**
- **Artillery Master**

This lesson looks at the war itself, with a focus on the forces of parliament. The formation of the New Model Army was, arguably, the key turning point in the first civil war; the war was in the balance up to early 1645 but after that, Parliament was dominant and victory in the first war was won the following year.

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Lesson 2 – What happened at the Battle of Hastings?

Start by showing **Battle of Edge Hill**. A parliamentary soldier describes the battle and shows how at this point, the first battle of the war, the two sides were evenly matched. Then show **Prince Rupert** in which a civilian describes the Prince's leadership skills and demeanour. At the end, students should discuss why Parliament needed a strong army. What did the King already have? Push them to think about that the fact that men like Prince Rupert and other senior army leaders had been leading armies for the King often for many years. They had experience on their side.

Finally here, show **Parliamentarian**, which shows a woman speaking about Prince Rupert's attack on Birmingham and the brutality of it.

Next show **Cromwell**. This film features a soldier of the New Model Army talking about Cromwell's character, his leadership style and the formation of the New Model Army. At the end, ask students to note down anything in the film which hints at reasons why soldiers in this army might be better soldiers than those on the Royalist side.

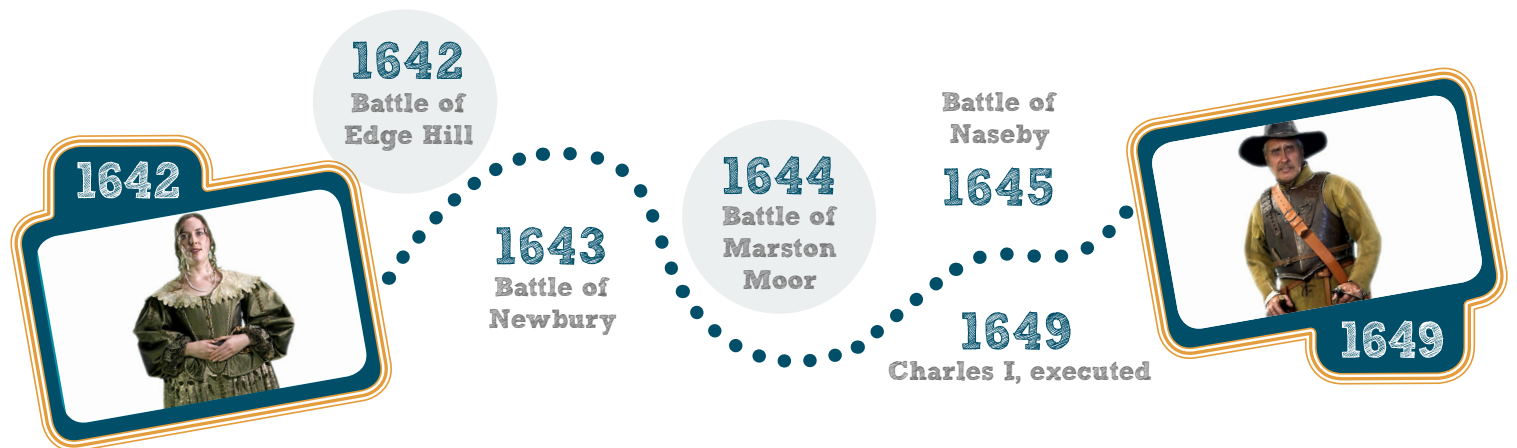
Then show the series of films about members of the New Model Army. Each talks about his particular skills and role in battle and so students should record any details that might help build an answer about what made the NMA unbeatable. The **Cavalry Trooper** talks about his weapons and uniform and certainly this would be useful detail, but also encourage students to notice other points, like the fact that many soldiers saw this as God's work. **The Pikeman** helps us to see how the King's cavalry were beaten. Finally, **the Musketeer** talks about his weapon and kit and again, students should note down anything useful in developing their answer.

The last film can be used as a contrast, if time allows. **The Artillery Master** explains how his skills are somewhat different to those of the average soldier and here students might infer that whilst he is busy measuring out his gunpowder and changing angles of fire, the Men of the New Model Army are bearing down on him.

At the end of the lesson, students should read an account of the Battle of Naseby in order to put their new knowledge about the New Model Army into some context – **Battle of Naseby** is detailed, if a little wordy – and then write an answer to the question: Why was the New Model Army unbeatable?

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Lesson 3 – Why was the Civil War important?

Films to use

- **King Charles I – the execution**
- **Oliver Cromwell**

In this final lesson in the sequence, students will consider the immediate impact of the Civil War – the execution of the King and the ending, for a time, of the Monarchy in England – and the longer term implications of it.

Start the lesson by showing an image of the execution of King Charles, such as the one found in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery: **the execution of charles**. If you can, allow students to have a copy to annotate. Ask them to look for interesting details and then they can ‘put themselves in the picture’ by choosing someone in the crowd and suggesting what they can see and hear from where they are. What are people in the crowd saying? What’s the atmosphere like? You’re aiming to establish the fact that this event was a big deal!

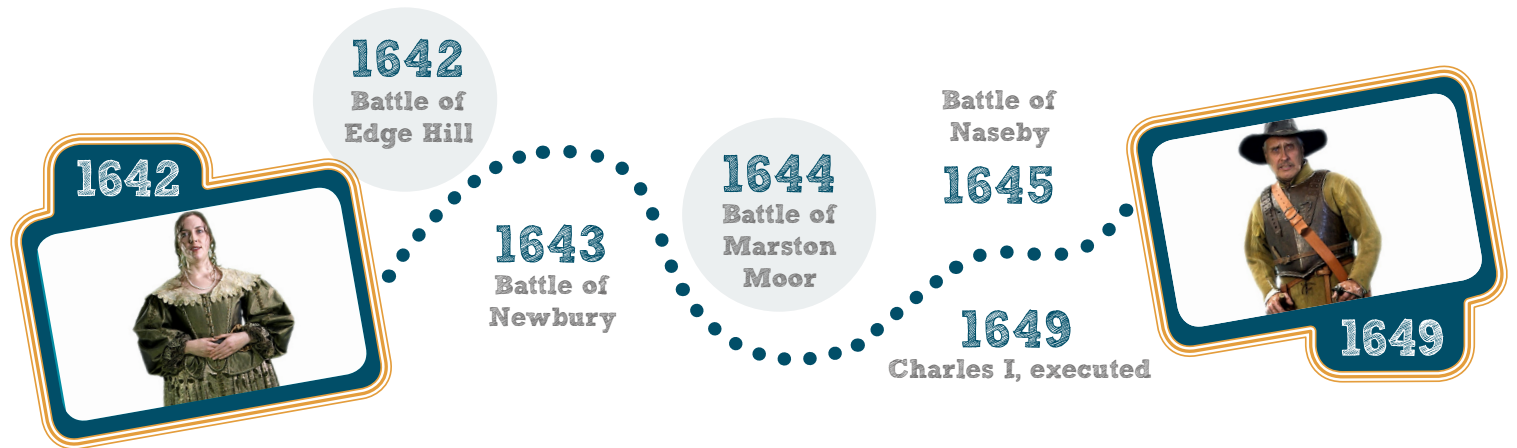
Then show **King Charles I – the execution**. The film features a Parliamentarian soldier describing the execution. Ask students why people in the crowd were praying for a man who had divided the country in two and led to a bitter war that killed, perhaps, ten per cent of the population. Students might suggest here that though all this was true, it was still a huge step to actually get rid of the King like this – England had always had a monarch!

After this, students will need to investigate the interregnum. Show again **Oliver Cromwell**. Discuss the implications of Cromwell’s leadership of the army now that he is in charge of the whole country. What kind of leader would he be? There are primary sources available at the National Archives – **nationalarchives, civilwar** – that could be used to put together an account of the interregnum and the nature of the rule of the Lord Protector. Of course, secondary sources – textbooks, for example – would be useful here as well.

To end the sequence of lessons, show the class a picture of the statue of Oliver Cromwell outside the Houses of Parliament. Their final task is to write a plaque for it that explains why the statue is there. What does it represent? Why was Cromwell so important?

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Differentiation, assessment and reflection

Extension

There are opportunities in each lesson to extend pupils thinking.

- Students could extend their knowledge by investigating a particular battle or event of the Civil War, particularly that with a local flavour.
- If primary sources are being used, more able students could be given them in their original form. All sources available on the National Archives education website are available in this form and as transcripts [link here](#).

Scaffolding

- In lesson 1, the card sort could be adapted, either by reducing the words or by using fewer cards.

Formative assessment opportunities

- In each lesson it will be important to keep going back to the enquiry question about the importance of the Civil War. This can be done briefly at the end of each activity or towards the end of lessons.

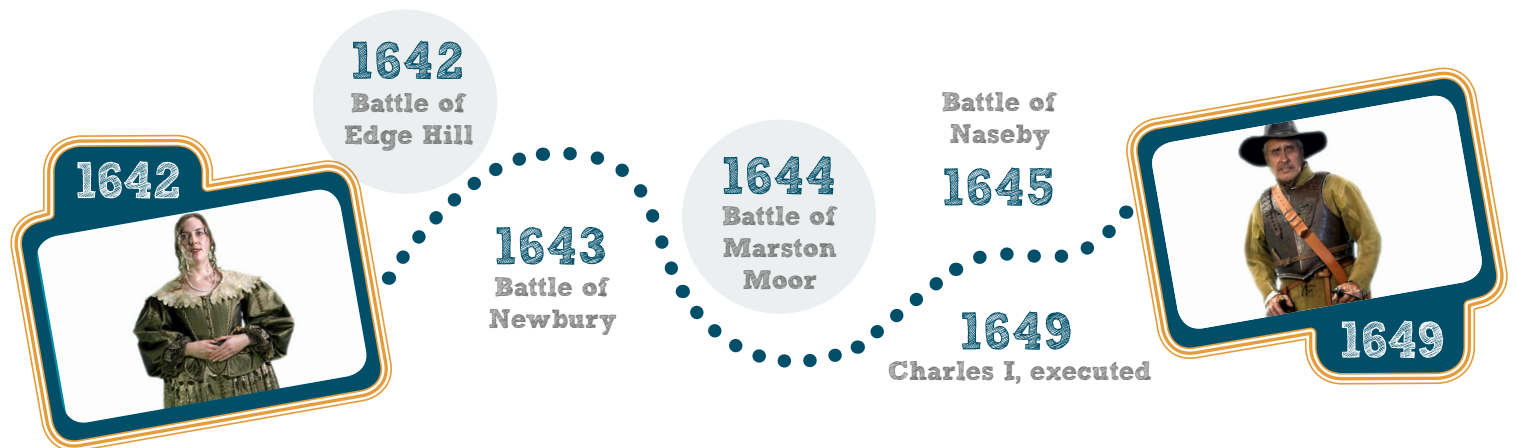
There is a good deal of factual detail that students will be learning throughout the sequence, about people, events and concepts. Regular short answer quizzes will be useful to ensure that this detail is secure.

Reflection

As a final piece of homework or classwork, students could produce a timeline or annotated map of the Civil War, showing the key battles and marking on who won each one.

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Cards 1: Causes of the Civil War cards for lesson 1

In a bid to raise extra money, in 1635 the King extended Ship Money to the whole kingdom. Originally a tax paid by coastal areas for the protection they received from the Navy, the wider imposition of Ship Money was very unpopular.

After a turbulent start to his reign, Charles shut the doors to parliament in 1629 and for the next 11 years ruled alone. This has been called the 11 years tyranny.

In 1637, Charles told his Scottish subjects that they were to use a new prayer book. To them, elements of the new church services it contained looked like the Catholic services they had rejected during the Reformation.

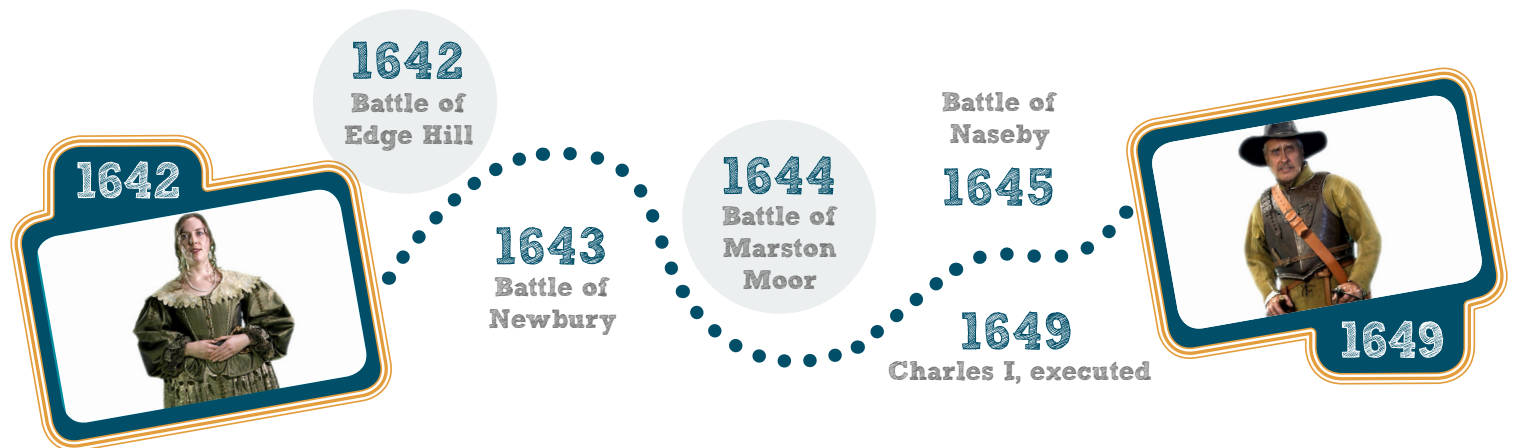
There were riots in Scotland against the prayer book and Charles sent an army to enforce its use. However, the Scots beat this army and then demanded payment from the King to support their occupation of the north of England.

Charles married a French princess, Henrietta Maria. She was Catholic and they had to receive special dispensation from the Pope because Charles was Protestant. The marriage made some people suspicious of Charles; was he really, they wondered, a Catholic?

By 1640, Charles was desperately short of money, so he called a new Parliament to grant him new taxes to pay for the Scottish wars. He expected Parliament to bend to his will but instead they demanded a hearing on all their complaints about his rule. He dismissed them quickly, thus giving it the name, 'The Short Parliament'.

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Cards 2: Causes of the Civil War cards for lesson 1

James I came to the English throne in 1603 whilst remaining King of Scotland. He believed deeply in the Divine Right of Kings, the idea that monarchs are put there by God and thus their word is supreme. Parliament is there merely to do what the King wants. His son Charles was brought up to believe in his own Divine Right.

Though James I and then Charles I saw Parliament as unimportant, it had one crucial function; to raise money through taxation. This gave Parliament power it could use against the monarch if necessary.

Charles I was an arrogant man. He believed deeply in his Divine Right and regarded parliament as a tool. He also blamed them entirely for his father's disputes with them. Charles alienated many of his subjects through his religious policies.

John Hampden was an MP who refused to pay Ship Money. Hampden was prosecuted and though he was found guilty, his case became important for opponents of the King and the way he ruled during the 1630s.

In November 1641, Parliament debated the Grand Remonstrance, a document that listed what they saw as the King's faults and mistakes. It demanded that he get rid of advisors that Parliament said were giving him bad advice.

In January 1642, the King went to Parliament with 300 soldiers to arrest five MPs who he said were guilty of treason. Amongst them was John Pym, the proposer of the Grand Remonstrance. The five had been tipped off though and escaped by the River Thames. Within days Charles left London for Oxford to raise an army. War was unavoidable.