



Christophe Repplinger

BRITISH HISTORY FACT SHEETS

Histoire de la Grande-Bretagne
en fiches

From the Glorious Revolution to Andy Burnham



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AVANT-PROPOS

Élu à la tête du Parti travailliste en 2020, Keir Starmer a engagé une réorientation vers le centre gauche, après le virage « socialiste démocratique » opéré durant les années Corbyn, et a permis au parti de revenir au pouvoir en 2024, après quatorze ans dans l'opposition. Depuis sa création, le *Labour* demeure en effet traversé par une tension entre une aile modérée, héritière du réformisme fabien, et une aile plus radicale, influencée par la tradition marxiste. Le gouvernement Starmer a annoncé son intention de supprimer les derniers pairs héréditaires de la Chambre des Lords. Ce projet, moins ambitieux que la transformation, un temps envisagée, de la chambre haute en assemblée élue, s'inscrit dans le prolongement de la réforme menée par Tony Blair en 1999 ainsi que dans une longue série de changements graduels ayant, au fil des décennies, redéfini l'équilibre des pouvoirs. Quelques années auparavant, Theresa May, quant à elle, mettait en avant sa volonté de s'éloigner du néolibéralisme intransigeant hérité de l'ère Thatcher pour renouer avec la tradition plus sociale portée par le *One-Nation Conservatism*, remontant à Disraeli. Les négociations complexes menées dans le cadre du Brexit par elle et par son successeur Boris Johnson sur les contrôles douaniers et la question nord-irlandaise, ainsi que les craintes liées à la remise en cause des Accords du Vendredi Saint, ont souligné combien la sortie du Royaume-Uni de l'Union européenne ravivait des tensions anciennes. Ces exemples démontrent à quel point la connaissance de l'histoire britannique est indispensable pour décoder les problématiques auxquelles le pays est actuellement confronté et saisir les particularités du paysage politique et institutionnel.

C'est ce que tente de proposer ce manuel, rédigé en anglais afin de permettre d'accéder aux concepts originaux. Concis et factuel, il se veut linguistiquement accessible et structuré autour de repères chronologiques et thématiques clairs de manière à faciliter la compréhension et l'acquisition des connaissances. Destiné aux étudiants en anglais et en histoire, mais aussi à toute personne intéressée par le Royaume-Uni, il se veut un guide clair et accessible pour aborder l'histoire britannique.

Ce manuel est composé de 63 fiches, chacune d'une longueur de trois à cinq pages. Chaque fiche commence par une brève chronologie mettant en évidence les événements essentiels de la période, suivie d'un texte explicatif concis et factuel. Les termes clés apparaissent en gras et sont définis dans un glossaire en fin d'ouvrage. Pour faciliter la compréhension, chaque fiche comprend des notes de vocabulaire ainsi qu'un résumé en français sous forme de points clés. De nombreuses fiches présentent également de courtes

biographies synthétiques de figures historiques majeures. Bien que les fiches puissent être lues indépendamment, des renvois permettent d'établir des liens entre des sujets connexes. Elles ont été conçues non seulement pour être accessibles et faciles à lire, mais aussi pour favoriser la mémorisation à long terme des concepts et des événements historiques essentiels.

From the Restoration to the Glorious Revolution (1660-1689)

CHRONOLOGY

- **1649:** Execution of Charles I
- **1649-1653:** The Commonwealth
- **1653-1660:** The Protectorate
- **1660:** Restoration, accession of Charles II
- **1672:** Declaration of Indulgence
- **1678:** Popish Plot
- **1679-1681:** Exclusion Crisis
- **1685:** Accession of James II
- **1687:** Declaration of Indulgence
- **1689:** Bill of Rights

I. The Restoration (1660)

Eleven years after the execution of Charles I in 1649—resulting from his desire to rule without Parliament and his perceived sympathy for Catholicism—the monarchy was restored with the accession of his son, Charles II. Although he officially ascended the throne in 1660, his reign was retroactively dated to begin in 1649, immediately following his father's death. The intervening period (1), encompassing the **Commonwealth** (1649-1653) and the **Protectorate** (1653-1660), became known as the **Interregnum**. After Oliver Cromwell's death in 1658, his son Richard proved unable to keep control of the army and was soon forced out of power. Amid growing instability, the **Rump Parliament** was recalled, but it too was mired in (2) factional conflict. General George Monck emerged as a unifying figure and facilitated the election of the Convention Parliament, which formally invited Charles II to return and assume the throne.

II. The reign of Charles II (1660-1685)

The first Parliament to be elected after the **Restoration** was dominated by royalists and Anglicans. The so-called **Cavalier Parliament** passed a series of Acts, known as the **Clarendon Code**, to re-establish the supremacy of the Church of England and restrict the rights of **Dissenters**. It included the **Corporation Act** (1661), which excluded **Nonconformists** from public office, the **Act of Uniformity** (1662), which made the use of the **Book of Common Prayer** compulsory (3) in religious services, the Conventicle Act (1664), which prohibited Dissenters from holding gatherings, and the Five Mile Act (1665),

which forbade dissenting ministers (4) from coming within five miles of a town from which they had been banished. Additionally, the **Test Acts** of 1673 and 1678 required holders of public office (5) and Members of Parliament (Commoners and Lords) to take an oath of allegiance (6) to the King as the Head of the Church, take communion in the **Anglican Church** and reject the Catholic doctrine of **transubstantiation**. A few months before, Charles II, who was favourable to toleration, had issued a **Declaration of Indulgence (1672)**, whereby he used his **royal prerogative** to suspend the laws against Catholics and Dissenters. Under pressure, he had to withdraw (7) it.

In 1678, an alleged (8) conspiracy, known as the **Popish Plot**, sparked anti-Catholic sentiment to a paroxysm. A former Anglican priest named Titus Oates presented a judge with fabricated evidence of the existence of a plot to assassinate the King, secure the throne for his brother James and impose Catholicism in the country. The plot triggered a wave of anti-Catholic hysteria, intensified by the murder of the magistrate, Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey.

Another consequence was the **Exclusion Crisis**. As Charles II did not have any children and his brother James was known to be a Catholic, since in 1673 he had refused to take the oath required by the Test Act, the **Country Party** led by the Earl of Shaftesbury introduced several bills between 1679 and 1681 to exclude James from the succession. Each time, the King dissolved Parliament. After 1681, he no longer convened (9) it, ruling without it and relying on the royal prerogative.

The Exclusion Crisis led to the emergence of two political forces—**Tories** (formerly known as the **Court Party**), who opposed exclusion and supported hereditary succession, and **Whigs** (formerly the Country Party), who defended a Protestant succession and advocated the rights of Parliament.

III. The reign of James II (1685-1688)

Soon after his accession, James II (reigning as James VII in Scotland, due to the **Union of the Crowns**) faced a rebellion led by the Duke of Monmouth, the illegitimate heir of Charles II. The rebellion was quickly and harshly repressed.

KING JAMES II (B. 1633-1701)

- Second son of Charles I and Henrietta Maria of France
- Went into exile in France during the Interregnum
- 1660: married Anne Hyde, with whom he had two daughters, Mary and Anne; his wife died in 1670
- After the Restoration, held various military positions, including Lord High Admiral
- 1669: converted to Catholicism
- 1673: married Mary of Modena
- 1685: accessed the throne as James II of England and James VII of Scotland
- 1688: birth of his son, James Francis Edward
- 1688: fled the country during the Glorious Revolution, took refuge in France
- 1690: tried to raise an army in Ireland; defeated by William III at the Battle of the Boyne

The initial support James enjoyed soon waned (10) as he relaxed the restrictions imposed on Catholics and Dissenters. In 1687, he issued a **Declaration of Indulgence**, which suspended the Clarendon Code and allowed freedom of worship for non-Anglicans. James also dispensed numerous Catholics from abiding by (11) the Test Acts and appointed them to key positions in the army and the government. This assertion of the royal prerogative, including the **dispensing and suspending powers**, was perceived as an act of tyranny—a means of bypassing (12) Parliament and re-establishing an absolute monarchy.

Fears escalated when James II set up and expanded a **standing army**, which had been seen as an instrument of oppression since Cromwell's **New Model Army** and the ensuing (13) military dictatorship. It was believed that the King might decide to use his army to impose a return to the Catholic faith.

The final straw (14) that precipitated James's downfall (15) was the birth of a son, James Francis Edward Stuart, in 1688. He had already two daughters, Mary and Anne, who were raised in the Protestant faith. After the death of his first wife, James married Mary of Modena, who was a fervent Catholic. Due to **male primogeniture**, his son became the **heir apparent**, which meant that the reign of a Catholic King would not merely be an isolated event but that there would be a Catholic dynasty.

IV. From the abdication to the Bill of Rights (1688-1689)

A group of Protestant aristocrats, concerned with the advent of a Catholic line of succession, wrote to William of Orange, a Dutch Prince and the husband of James's eldest daughter, Mary, inviting him to invade England and protect Protestants from Catholic tyranny. William launched an invasion and landed in England in November 1688. Benefiting from little domestic support, James fled to Ireland (and later to France), prompting Parliament to declare that he had effectively abdicated the throne. William and Mary were subsequently offered the crown, on the condition that they agreed to a **Declaration of Right**, a document adopted by Parliament, limiting the royal prerogative, acknowledging the rights of Parliament and securing a Protestant line of succession. After they accepted it, it was enacted as a statute in December 1689 and became the **Bill of Rights**. William III and Mary II reigned jointly until Mary's death in 1694. William III died in 1702. Since they had no heir, the crown went to Mary's sister, Anne.

The term "**Glorious Revolution**" was coined (16) and promoted by Whig historians, who viewed it as the expression of a long-term fight for liberty. The name also stems from its bloodless dimension, although this applied to the absence of direct armed conflict in England but ignored violent episodes in Scotland and Ireland.

VOCABULARY

(1) The intervening period: *l'intervalle*; (2) to be mired in sth: *être enlisé dans qqch*; (3) compulsory: *obligatoire*; (4) a minister: *un pasteur*; (5) a holder of public office: *un détenteur d'emploi public, un fonctionnaire*; (6) an oath of allegiance: *un serment d'allégeance*; (7) to withdraw sth: *retirer qqch*; (8) alleged: *prétendu*; (9) to convene Parliament: *convoquer le Parlement*; (10) to wane: *décliner, diminuer*; (11) to abide by a law: *respecter, se conformer à une loi*; (12) to bypass sth: *contourner qqch*; (13) ensuing: *qui a suivi*; (14) the final straw: *la goutte d'eau*; (15) the downfall: *la chute*; (16) to coin a phrase: *inventer une expression*.

À RETENIR

- Onze ans après la mort de Charles I^{er}, la monarchie est rétablie avec l'arrivée au pouvoir de son fils Charles II en 1660, après une période troublée dite de l'Interrègne, marquée par un régime républicain, le Commonwealth, qui a ensuite évolué en une dictature militaire nommée Protectorat. La situation dégénère en conflits, jusqu'à ce que la monarchie soit restaurée.
- Après la Restauration, le Parlement dominé par les royalistes et les Anglicans adopte les lois du *Clarendon Code* et les *Test Acts*, réaffirmant la suprématie de l'Église d'Angleterre et restreignant les droits des catholiques et des dissidents. La montée de l'anticatholicisme, exacerbée par le complot fictif de Titus Oates en 1679, entraîne des persécutions et provoque la Crise de l'Exclusion, qui oppose Whigs et Tories sur la question de la succession au trône.
- Peu après son accession, Jacques II réprime violemment la rébellion portée par le duc de Monmouth, mais perd rapidement le soutien populaire en suspendant les lois anti-catholiques, en plaçant des catholiques à des postes clés et en affirmant son pouvoir absolu au détriment du Parlement. L'inquiétude grandit avec la création d'une armée permanente et atteint son comble en 1688 avec la naissance d'un fils catholique, annonçant une dynastie catholique durable, ce qui précipite sa chute.
- Inquiets de l'instauration d'une dynastie catholique, des aristocrates protestants invitent Guillaume d'Orange à envahir l'Angleterre pour défendre le protestantisme, ce qu'il fait en novembre 1688, poussant Jacques II à fuir et permettant au Parlement d'offrir la couronne à Guillaume et Marie, à condition d'accepter le *Bill of Rights*, qui limite le pouvoir royal et garantit une succession protestante.

Britain under the last Stuarts

(1689-1714)

CHRONOLOGY

- **1688-1697:** Nine Years' War
- **1689:** Toleration Act
- **1690:** Battle of the Boyne
- **1694:** Triennial Act; foundation of the Bank of England; death of Mary II, William III reigning alone
- **1695:** Non-renewal of the Licensing Act
- **1697:** creation of the Civil List
- **1701:** Act of Settlement
- **1701-1714:** War of the Spanish Succession
- **1702:** accession of Queen Anne (last Stuart monarch)
- **1714:** accession of George I (first monarch of the House of Hanover)

I. The rise of Parliament and party politics

The reign of William and Mary marked a shift (1) in the balance of powers (2), weakening hereditary monarchy and acknowledging parliamentary supremacy. The monarchs owed their crowns not to their right as legitimate heirs but to an Act voted by Parliament, where the landed aristocracy was predominant. In 1694, the **Triennial Act** stipulated that elections would be held (3) every three years, to comply with (4) the requirement of frequent elections stated in the **Bill of Rights**. Parliament was no longer the dispensable (5) body that the sovereign could dismiss (6) at will (7) and decide not to convene (8) for as long as he or she wanted. On the contrary, Parliament exerted increased control over William and Mary. The **Civil List** was created in 1697 by an Act of Parliament, appropriating (9) £700,000 a year for the King's household. The Crown thus became dependent on Parliament for its revenue, even though the King could count on additional income from the **Crown Estate** (10).

The end of the seventeenth century was also marked by the consolidation of political parties. With more frequent elections, the monarch increasingly relied on ministers who could secure the support of a majority in the House of Commons. Personal individual appointments (11) were no longer common. Staunch (12) supporters of the change in the line of succession, the **Whigs** emerged as the most powerful group, more particularly a small number of ministers, known as the **Whig Junto** (13), who coordinated the policy of the government. Prominent members included John Somers (Baron Somers),

Charles Montagu (Earl of Halifax), Thomas Wharton (Marquess of Wharton), Edward Russell (Earl of Orford) and Charles Talbot (Duke of Shrewsbury).

In 1695, the non-renewal of the **Licensing Act**, which instituted government censorship, effectively ended state control over the press, leading to the proliferation of newspapers and political pamphlets. *The Daily Courant* was created in 1702, *The Tatler* was first published in 1709 and *The Spectator* in 1711. These publications contributed to weakening royal authority and strengthening the role of Parliament.

II. Uprisings in Scotland and Ireland

Initially supportive of James VII (James II's official title in Scotland) after the **Exclusion Crisis**, Scotland passed the 1681 Scottish Succession Act, which confirmed him as the legitimate heir. The country, however, became increasingly distrustful as James promoted Catholicism and thus undermined the dominance of the **Kirk**, the Church of Scotland. After James left the country, the Scottish Parliament declared that he had forfeited (14) his throne. After the accession of William and Mary, one of the first moves of the Scottish Parliament was to abolish the **episcopal** structure of the Kirk and enact the establishment of a **presbyterian** organisation.

Many **Highland clans**, however, remained loyal to James VII. Known as **Jacobites**, they quickly took up arms against government forces loyal to the new monarchs. Their victory at the Battle of Killiecrankie in July 1689 was overshadowed by (15) the death of their charismatic leader, Viscount Dundee. With his loss, the uprising (16) lost momentum and suffered a significant defeat at the Battle of Dunkeld later that year. In 1692, the infamous **Glencoe Massacre** took place, in which members of the MacDonald clan were killed by Scottish government troops to whom they had offered hospitality. The regiment was mainly composed of members of the Campbell clan and commanded by a Campbell, even though the operation had been ordered by the King.

In Ireland, James II kept strong Catholic support and thought he could use it as a base to fight his way back to the English throne. A conflict broke out, known as the **Williamite War**, involving an Irish Catholic army, led by James II and backed by (17) French troops sent by Louis XIV, and a Protestant army, which gathered English, Scottish, Dutch and French Protestant troops. The victory of Williamites at the Battle of the Boyne in July 1690 marked a watershed (18) in the conflict. William's rule was confirmed and paved the way for Protestant dominance in Ireland. The **Treaty of Limerick** signed in 1691 marked the recognition of William's rule and the consolidation of Protestant dominance in Ireland.

III. An anti-French foreign policy

The **Glorious Revolution** marked a turning point in foreign policy. Relations with France shifted from cordial and peaceful to hostile and conflictual. James II being backed by Louis XIV, France was perceived as a Catholic and absolutist

threat. In 1688, England joined the **Grand Alliance** (including Scotland, the Dutch Republic, the Holy Roman Empire, Spain and Savoy) to counter French expansionism. The **Nine Years' War** was settled by the Treaty of Ryswick in 1697, which forced France to recognise William III as King of England and reversed some of Louis XIV's territorial gains. A few years later, the **War of the Spanish Succession** involved another Grand Alliance (England, Scotland, the Dutch Republic, Austria and Prussia) against France and Spain over fears of an overpowerful union of the crowns. Childless, Charles II of Spain had designated Philip of Anjou, Louis XIV's grandson, as heir to the throne, which would have placed the two kingdoms under a single Bourbon monarch. A settlement was reached with the Treaty of Utrecht (1713) and the Treaty of Rastatt (1714).

IV. War finance and the rise of the national debt

Confronted with huge expenses due to the Nine Years' War, the government adopted "**Dutch**" finance, borrowing against future taxes and establishing a national debt. This led to the 1694 founding of the **Bank of England** by William Paterson, a pivotal innovation that managed the debt and raised funds for the government. England did not gain any new territories, forcing William to disband (19) his army. The enormous sums that were borrowed tightened the bonds (20) between Parliament and propertied classes and strengthened the parliamentary regime as the land tax had to be annually voted and debates over customs and excise duties (21) gave Parliament a central role in financial issues.

V. Religious consequences

The **Toleration Act of 1689** granted limited religious freedom to **Nonconformists**, while Catholics remained excluded from any form of protection. Freedom of worship (22) was granted on the condition that an oath of allegiance (23) to the Crown was taken and the doctrine of **transubstantiation** was rejected. The provisions of the Test Acts, however, still applied and Nonconformists could not have access to public office and university. To circumvent (24) the ban, some practiced **occasional conformity**, i.e. taking the Anglican communion a couple of times a year to comply with the law. In 1711, an Occasional Conformity Act addressed the issue, but was repealed in 1719, restoring broader toleration.

VI. The Hanoverian succession

Mary II died in 1694 without an heir. William III continued to reign until 1702. He was succeeded by Mary's sister, Anne, whose only surviving child—out of sixteen pregnancies—died in 1700, marking the end of the Stuart line. To secure a Protestant succession, the **Act of Settlement of 1701** designated Electress Sophia of Hanover, who was a granddaughter of James I, as **heir presumptive**. As she died just two months before Queen Anne, it was her son who ascended to the throne in 1714 as King George I.

VOCABULARY

(1) A shift: *un changement, un tournant*; (2) the balance of powers: *l'équilibre des pouvoirs*; (3) to hold an election: *tenir, organiser des élections*; (4) to comply with sth: *se conformer à qqch*; (5) dispensable: *superflu, dont on peut se passer*; (6) to dismiss sb: *congédier qqch*; (7) at will: *à sa guise*; (8) to convene Parliament: *convoquer le Parlement*; (9) to appropriate funds: *allouer des fonds*; (10) the Crown Estate: *les Biens de la Couronne*; (11) an appointment: *une nomination*; (12) staunch: *fervent*; (13) a junto: *une junte, une clique, une faction*; (14) to forfeit sth: *renoncer à qqch*; (15) to overshadow sth: *éclipser qqch*; (16) an uprising: *un soulèvement*; (17) to back sb/sth: *soutenir qqun/qqch*; (18) a watershed: *un tournant*; (19) to disband an army: *démobiliser une armée*; (20) to tighten the bonds: *resserrer les liens*; (21) customs and excise duties: *les droits de douane et d'accise (taxes sur produits de consommation)*; (22) freedom of worship: *la liberté de culte*; (23) an oath of allegiance: *un serment d'allégeance*; (24) to circumvent sth: *contourner qqch*.

À RETENIR

- Le règne de William et Mary marque un tournant majeur en faveur de la suprématie parlementaire, affaiblissant la monarchie héréditaire : leur pouvoir repose sur une décision du Parlement, qui impose des élections régulières, contrôle les finances royales avec la *Civil List* et limite fortement l'autorité du souverain. Parallèlement, les partis politiques se structurent, notamment les Whigs, tandis que la fin de la censure en 1695 favorise l'essor de la presse.
- Bien que l'Écosse soutienne d'abord Jacques VII, son catholicisme suscite une méfiance croissante, menant à sa destitution par le Parlement écossais et à l'instauration d'une organisation presbytérienne de la *Kirk*. Tandis que les Jacobites des Highlands mènent une révolte rapidement affaiblie après la mort de leur chef le Vicomte Dundee, l'Irlande, fidèle à Jacques II, est le théâtre d'une guerre, conclue par une victoire des partisans de William, consolidant le nouveau régime et la suprématie protestante.
- La Glorieuse Révolution provoque un tournant dans la politique étrangère anglaise, marquant le passage d'une entente avec la France à une hostilité durable, et pousse l'Angleterre à rejoindre deux Grandes Alliances contre l'expansionnisme de Louis XIV.
- Confronté à d'énormes dépenses liées à la Guerre de Neuf Ans, le gouvernement adopte une politique financière fondée sur la dette publique, avec la fondation de la Banque d'Angleterre en 1694, et renforce ainsi le régime parlementaire.
- Le *Toleration Act* de 1689 accorde une liberté religieuse limitée aux non-conformistes tout en excluant les catholiques et en maintenant l'interdiction d'accès aux emplois publics et à l'université.
- La Reine Anne n'ayant pas d'héritier, l'*Act of Settlement* de 1701 désigne l'Électrice Sophie de Hanovre comme héritière présomptive pour assurer une succession protestante, mais c'est son fils qui monte finalement sur le trône en 1714 sous le nom de George I^{er} après la mort d'Anne.

Whig Dominance and the Age of Walpole (1714-1742)

CHRONOLOGY

- **1714:** Accession of George I
- **1715:** Jacobite rebellion
- **1716:** Septennial Act
- **1719:** Peerage Bill
- **1720:** South Sea Bubble
- **1721:** Walpole appointed *de facto* Prime Minister (Whig)
- **1723:** Black Act
- **1727:** Accession of George II
- **1739-1748:** War of Jenkins' Ear
- **1742:** Resignation of Walpole

I. Whig dominance

In 1714, George I ascended the throne as the first monarch of the Hanoverian dynasty. Duke of Brunswick-Lüneburg, he spoke little English, was not familiar with parliamentary monarchy and was probably more interested in his continental interests than in British ones. The failed **Jacobite** rebellion of 1715 contributed to discrediting the **Tories**, as they sided with (1) the **Old Pretender**—James Francis Edward Stuart, James II's son. Pushing their advantage, the Whigs passed the **Septennial Act** of 1716, extending the maximum duration of Parliaments from three to seven years. In 1719, they further sought to entrench (2) their dominance through the **Peerage Bill**, which aimed to restrict the monarch's ability to create new peers and freeze the existing **Whig** majority in the House of Lords. The bill was defeated, largely due to the opposition of Robert Walpole. Although a Whig himself, Walpole feared the measure would concentrate excessive power in the hands of a few aristocratic families and potentially undermine his own rising influence in the lower chamber.

II. The South Sea Bubble

In the first decades of the 18th century, government finances were undermined by (3) a growing debt due to massive investment in the navy in a context of increased international rivalry. Drawing on the example of banker John Law's bonds in France—a system where state debt was converted into shares of the Mississippi Company and supported by paper money issued by the Banque Royale—the government tried to find a way to privatise the debt.

The South Sea Company, a commercial enterprise founded in 1711 and given a monopoly on British trade with Spanish America, offered to exchange the national debt against shares (4) returning a generous dividend. The scheme was enacted by Parliament in 1720, with a vote obtained through widespread bribery (5). The company made little profit, but a speculative craze (6) caused the shares to increase tenfold (7) in barely a few months. When it became clear that the company would be unable to pay the promised return, trust waned (8) and the share price collapsed, ruining thousands of investors and tarnishing (9) the credit of the government. Walpole, who did not hold any government portfolio at the time but only acted as an influential MP, did his best to reassure investors, restructuring the debt and seizing the assets (10) of the directors.

III. The rise of Robert Walpole

Robert Walpole was an experienced politician from the **gentry**, but, well-connected to the aristocracy through his brother-in-law, Viscount Townsend, he succeeded in gaining the King's trust. In 1721, he was appointed First Lord of the Treasury and **Chancellor of the Exchequer**. At the time, ministers were individually appointed and bore responsibility only towards the King. But as the monarch was often absent from government meetings, Walpole effectively gained ascendancy over the other ministers. Due to his growing influence, his opponents mockingly styled (11) him "**Prime Minister**". Walpole also had a strong leadership in the House of Commons, where his influence was reinforced by his use of **patronage**: he distributed offices, pensions, government contracts and honours to his supporters, including **knighthoods**, **baronetcies** and distinctions such as the **Order of the Bath**, founded in 1725. That's why Walpole refused a **peerage** and preferred to lead the government from the Commons, where financial legislation originated. He knew he would not hold the same sway (12) on the upper chamber. It was only in 1742, after stepping down (13), that accepted the title of Earl of Orford. Additionally, after George I's death in 1727, Walpole gained the favour of Queen Caroline, who persuaded the King to keep him in office despite his initial dislike and distrust of Walpole's influence and policies.

ROBERT WALPOLE (1676-1745)

- Born in Norfolk into a family of the local gentry
- Studied at Eton, then at King's College, Cambridge
- 1701: elected MP (Whig) for the first time, continuously re-elected until 1742
- 1708: appointed Secretary at War
- 1714: appointed Privy Councillor
- 1721: appointed First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer
- 1722: beginning of the construction of Houghton Hall, a large country estate
- 1733: his plan to extend the excise was defeated
- 1742: resigned, was given a peerage as Earl of Orford

IV. The evolution of the electoral system

The country was divided into 507 parliamentary constituencies (14): 104 **counties** and 403 **boroughs**. Most constituencies, whether county or borough, returned two MPs. In counties, voting rights were limited to men who owned property worth at least 40 shillings per year. In boroughs, voting qualifications (15) varied, ranging from freeman status to membership in a local corporation or the ownership or tenancy (16) of specific properties. The electorate thus comprised only about 2 to 3% of the overall population. In the middle of the 18th century, three quarters of MPs came from the aristocracy or the gentry. This system caused stark disparities: while Westminster had around 10,000 voters, Old Sarum, a tiny village near Salisbury, had just five on average, earning it the label of a “**rotten borough**”. Some seats, known as “**pocket boroughs**”, were under the control of a single wealthy aristocrat, who could determine the outcome (17) of the election through influence or bribery. Additionally, the Septennial Act decreased the cost of corruption as elections became less frequent.

V. Walpole's downfall

With the South Sea Bubble's fallout (18), Walpole's government was increasingly perceived as corrupted and mockingly referred to as “**robinocracy**”. Resistance emerged through food riots, work stoppages, poaching (19) and smuggling (20). In response, Parliament enacted the brutal **Black Act**—part of the **Bloody Code** (1723-1724)—, which created fifty new capital offenses, particularly aiming to protect property. Meanwhile, satire flourished. Theatres denounced the corruption that plagued (21) the government—John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* (1728) depicted the court as a “thieves' kitchen”. The moneyed interest promoted by the “court party” was contrasted with the simplicity, frugality and morality of “country values”.

Robert Walpole's downfall stemmed from a combination of domestic unrest (22), foreign policy failures and the gradual loss of parliamentary support. In the 1730s, his proposal to extend the **excise** (23) (an indirect tax on beer, spirits, leather, soap, candles and paper) to goods like tea and tobacco sparked (24) fears of a “general excise”, and triggered fierce opposition, especially from growing public opinion expressed “out-of-doors”, i.e. outside elite-controlled institutions. Though financially sensible (25), the plan backfired (26) politically and significantly weakened his Commons majority. The death of Queen Caroline in 1737 deprived him of a key ally at court, while Frederick, Prince of Wales, openly supported the Tory opposition. Walpole was forced into the **War of Jenkins' Ear** (1739-1748), a conflict with Spain over trade tensions. Though Walpole had opposed it, his position was undermined by Britain's military failures. The outbreak of the **War of the Austrian Succession** in 1740 further strained (27) his leadership, as his reluctance to enter the conflict clashed with the interests of George II as Elector of Hanover, urging him to support Austria, and the stance of **Patriot Whigs**, who wanted to protect British trade and naval

supremacy. With a reduced Whig majority in the 1741 elections and a lost by-election (28) in 1742, Walpole's authority was deeply weakened, prompting him to resign. His downfall marked a turning point in British politics—support in the House of Commons became a more determining factor than royal favour.

VOCABULARY

(1) To side with sb: *prendre parti pour qqun*; (2) to entrench sth: *ancrer, consolider qqch*; (3) to be undermined by: *être miné par qqch*; (4) a share: *une action (d'une entreprise)*; (5) bribery: *la corruption*; (6) a craze: *une frénésie, une folie*; (7) to increase tenfold: *être multiplié par dix*; (8) to wane: *décliner, diminuer*; (9) to tarnish sth: *ternir, salir qqch*; (10) an asset: *un actif*; (11) to style sb sth: *donner un titre, une étiquette à qqun*; (12) to hold sway over sb/sth: *avoir de l'ascendant sur qqun/qqch*; (13) to step down: *démissionner*; (14) a constituency: *une circonscription* (15) voting qualifications: *les conditions pour pouvoir voter*; (16) a tenancy: *une location, un bail*; (17) an outcome: *un résultat*; (18) the fallout: *les retombées, les répercussions*; (19) poaching: *le braconnage*; (20) smuggling: *la contrebande*; (21) to plague sth: *ronger, miner qqch*; (22) unrest: *les troubles, l'agitation*; (23) excise tax: *le droit d'accise*; (24) to spark sth: *susciter, déclencher qqch*; (25) sensible: *raisonnable*; (26) to backfire: *se retourner contre vous*; (27) to strain sth: *fragiliser qqch*; (28) a by-election: *une élection partielle*.

À RETENIR

- En 1714, George I^{er} monte sur le trône. Après l'échec de la rébellion jacobite qui discrédite les Tories, les Whigs deviennent le parti dominant. Ils en profitent pour augmenter la durée maximale d'un Parlement, qui passe de 3 à 7 ans, mais ne réussissent pas à limiter le pouvoir du roi de créer de nouveaux titres nobiliaires.
- En 1720, une crise financière liée à l'effondrement de la *South Sea Company*, qui avait repris une partie de la dette de l'État, éclate. Walpole réussit à restaurer la confiance et à éviter une catastrophe.
- Ce succès et les bonnes relations de Walpole avec George I^{er} (puis avec la Reine Caroline, la femme de George II) lui permettent de devenir le ministre le plus influent, ce qui lui vaut l'étiquette moqueuse de « Premier Ministre ». Il distribue des honneurs et des postes pour se créer un vaste réseau d'obligés et mieux contrôler le Parlement. Il est aidé par un système électoral marqué par des *rotten boroughs*, circonscriptions comprenant très peu d'électeurs et donc facilement contrôlables par quelques riches aristocrates.
- La chute de Walpole est provoquée par des échecs militaires dans une guerre contre l'Espagne qui ne voulait pas engager et des tensions politiques liées à la Guerre de Succession d'Autriche, dans laquelle il ne voulait pas engager le pays. Il finit par démissionner en 1742.

The Union with Scotland (1707)

CHRONOLOGY

- **1603**: accession of James VI and I
- **1698**: creation of the Darien colony
- **1703**: Act of Security (Scotland)
- **1705**: Aliens Act (England)
- **1707**: Act of Union (Scotland)

I. The Union of the Crowns (1603)

James VI became King of Scotland in 1567, when his mother, Mary, Queen of Scots, was forced to abdicate in his favour. Being a Catholic, having been raised in France and accused of marrying the murderer of her first husband, she faced a rebellion of her Protestant Lords, leading to her defeat and abdication. As James was only one year old, several regents succeeded one another during his minority.

When Elizabeth I died in 1603 without children and without a designated heir, James immediately appeared as the most legitimate successor, being a direct descendent of Henry VII, King of England, whose daughter Margaret had married James IV, King of Scotland. In 1603, James VI of Scotland was thus proclaimed King of England, reigning as James I. The event marked the **Union of the Crowns**—a single monarch reigning over two kingdoms that remained separate countries.

II. The lead-up to the Acts of Union

Though united by the same monarch, England and Scotland remained suspicious of each other. Fuelled by religious differences, England being **Anglican** while Scotland was predominantly **Presbyterian**, the divide was widened (1) by the **Glorious Revolution**. See **Fact Sheet n° 1**. Many Scots sided with (2) James II, the deposed (3) Catholic king, leading to the rise of the **Jacobite movement**, which aimed to restore the Stuart dynasty to the throne on the basis of the principle of divine right. See **Fact Sheet n° 5**.

Another event precipitated Scotland's difficulties. In 1695, the Company of Scotland was created to establish colonies, hoping to overcome the consequences of the English **Navigation Acts**, which barred (4) Scottish merchants from trading with English colonies (only English ships could do so). A "New Caledonia" colony was set up on the Isthmus of Darien (in today's

Panama), on territory Spain claimed to be part of its empire. As King William did not want to upset its Spanish ally, he forbade English colonies from supplying or trading with the Scottish settlement (5). Poorly supplied (6) by the homeland, confronted with diseases like malaria, the Scots were eventually attacked by Spanish forces in 1700. They had to throw in the towel (7) and were forced to leave. The so-called **Darien scheme** caused the bankruptcy of many investors and triggered (8) a major economic crisis in Scotland.

In the next few years, tensions kept escalating. In 1703, the **Scottish Parliament** passed the **Act of Security**, which stated that upon Queen Anne's death, Scotland could refuse the **Hanoverian succession** and choose its own Protestant monarch different from England's, unless certain conditions were met (9) to guarantee Scotland's sovereignty and freedom. England retaliated (10) in 1705 with the Aliens Act, which stipulated that, unless Scotland recognised the Hanoverian succession, all Scottish people would be considered as aliens in England and all imports of Scottish products into England would be banned.

III. The negotiation

Faced with bleak (11) economic prospects, the Scottish Parliament backed down (12) and agreed to negotiate the terms of a union. Under the pressure of the Duke of Hamilton, who was later suspected of playing a double game, Parliament narrowly (13) agreed to let Queen Anne appoint the commissioners in charge of the negotiations. While many Scots hoped for a looser (14) form of union in which each nation would preserve its institutions and customs (15), a treaty of cooperation, in which Scotland would recognise the Hanoverian succession while England would allow free trade, the commissioners aimed for an **incorporating union**, in which Scotland would be fully integrated and absorbed into a new entity, the Kingdom of Great Britain, with a single Parliament in London. The Scottish Parliament would be dissolved and Scots given a limited representation in London. Scotland would retain (16) its legal system, secure its established church and gain access to England's overseas markets.

IV. The ratification

Many Scots, however, feared the union would weaken the Presbyterian Church. The opposition to the union included a coalition of Lowland lairds, Highland clan chiefs, Jacobites and fervent Presbyterians. Prominent critics like Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun condemned the treaty as a betrayal (17) of Scottish independence for economic gain. On the other side, pro-union activists, led by James Douglas, Marquess of Queensberry, and backed by London, pushed for ratification, using bribes (18) and promises of economic benefit. They emphasised access to English trade markets to win over sceptical aristocrats. William Carstares, Principal of Edinburgh University and a leading Presbyterian, played a crucial role in weakening religious resistance by persuading the Kirk's General Assembly to accept the union, fearing a return of a Catholic monarchy if it failed.

Protests and riots (19) took place in cities such as Edinburgh and Glasgow. In Parliament, figures like Lord Belhaven and Fletcher delivered passionate speeches against the treaty, warning against cultural and political submission. Yet, the dire (20) economic situation and political manoeuvring led to the gradual passage of each article, including Article 22, which abolished the Scottish Parliament. The **Act of Union** was passed on January 16, 1707, by a vote of 110 to 69 (a similar Act was passed in England in December 1706). Its unpopularity fuelled the rise of the Jacobite movement and the Jacobite rebellion of 1715. But the scheme (21) fostered (22) economic growth and cultural development.

VOCABULARY

(1) To widen a divide: *élargir, creuser le fossé*; (2) to side with sb: *prendre le parti de qqch, être du côté de qqun*; (3) deposed: *déposé, destitué*; (4) to bar sb from doing sth: *empêcher qqun de faire qqch*; (5) a settlement: *une colonie*; (6) to supply sb/sth: *approvisionner qqun/qqch*; (7) to throw in the towel: *jeter l'éponge*; (8) to trigger sth: *déclencher qqch*; (9) to meet conditions: *remplir des conditions*; (10) to retaliate: *exercer des représailles*; (11) bleak: *sombre, lugubre*; (12) to back down: *céder, reculer*; (13) narrowly: *de justesse*; (14) loose: *peu contraignant, souple*; (15) a custom: *une coutume*; (16) to retain sth: *conserver qqch*; (17) a betrayal: *une trahison*; (18) a bribe: *un pot-de-vin*; (19) a riot: *une émeute*; (20) dire: *terrible, désastreux*; (21) a scheme: *un dispositif, un système*; (22) to foster sth: *encourager qqch*.

À RETENIR

- En 1567, Jacques VI devient roi d'Écosse après l'abdication de sa mère Marie Stuart. En 1603, à la mort d'Élisabeth I^{re} sans héritier, il est proclamé roi d'Angleterre sous le nom de Jacques I^{er}, réalisant ainsi l'Union des Couronnes (deux États distincts réunis sous un même monarque).
- L'Angleterre et l'Écosse restent méfiantes l'une envers l'autre, en partie à cause de leurs différences religieuses et du soutien de nombreux Écossais au roi catholique déchu Jacques II, ce qui alimente le mouvement jacobite. L'échec de la colonie écossaise de Darien provoque une grave crise économique. Les tensions politiques s'intensifient ensuite, l'Écosse rejetant la succession hanovrienne, tandis que l'Angleterre restreint le commerce avec sa voisine.
- Face à la crise économique, le Parlement écossais accepte de négocier l'union, malgré une forte opposition menée par des nobles, des jacobites et des presbytériens craignant pour l'avenir de l'Église d'Écosse. Tandis que certains espèrent une union limitée et souple, les négociateurs nommés par la Reine Anne imposent une intégration pleine et entière créant le Royaume de Grande-Bretagne, avec un Parlement unique à Londres. Malgré les protestations, les discours enflammés et les émeutes, l'*Act of Union* est adopté en 1707 grâce à des pressions, des pots-de-vin, des promesses économiques et le soutien de figures influentes, ouvrant la voie à un essor économique et culturel mais attisant le mouvement jacobite.

The Jacobite Movement

(1688-1746)

CHRONOLOGY

- **1688:** Glorious Revolution
- **1689-1692:** Williamite War in Ireland
- **1701:** Act of Settlement
- **1707:** Act of Union
- **1714:** Hanoverian succession
- **1715:** The Fifteen Rebellion
- **1745-1746:** The Forty-Five Rebellion
- **1746:** Battle of Culloden

I. The diversity of the Jacobite movement

The **Jacobite movement** emerged after the **Glorious Revolution**, when James II and VII, who led pro-Catholic policies, was deposed and replaced by his Protestant daughter Mary and her husband William of Orange. Jacobites were loyal to what they considered was the legitimate line of succession based on the hereditary principle and the **divine right of kings**.

Though unified by the focus on a common goal, restoring the legitimate Stuart heir, the Jacobite movement was fractured by deep internal divisions. In England, **Nonjurors** were Anglicans who refused to recognise William and Mary as they had already pledged allegiance (1) to James. A minority of **Tories** concurred (2), driven by concerns that the **Whig-leaning** (3) **Hanoverian** dynasty would be more favourable to **Dissenters** than to the **Church of England**. Catholics were the most fervent supporters of the cause as they hoped a Stuart restoration would bring religious toleration after decades of persecution and legal restrictions. Scotland was a Jacobite stronghold (4). **Episcopalians**, who represented about a quarter of the population and included many Highland clans, rejected the Williamite regime, which had conferred **established** status (5) to the **Presbyterian Church**. They were joined by Anti-Unionists, who resented (6) the loss of independence following the **Act of Union 1707**. In Ireland, three quarters of the population were Catholic and supportive of James II's toleration policy. Though reluctant (7) to get involved in a conflict, they formed the **Irish Brigades** in the French army, consisting of approximately 15,000 troops. Exiled European communities also significantly aided the Jacobite cause.

II. The Jacobite rebellions

a. Rebellions in Ireland and Scotland (1689-1691)

Scottish Episcopalians led by Viscount Dundee first managed a major victory at the Battle of Killiecrankie in 1689, but after the death of their leader Viscount Dundee, they were defeated at the Battle of Dunkeld one year later.

In Ireland, the **Williamite War** saw the defeat of James's Catholic supporters, helped by Protestant troops from several Protestant European nations, at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690. See **Fact Sheet n° 2**.

b. The Fifteen Rebellion (1715)

With the accession of George I in 1714, hostility to the House of Hanover prompted the Jacobites to launch a rebellion in September 1715, aiming to restore James Francis Edward Stuart, James II's son, known as the **Old Pretender**, to the British throne. With over 10,000 men, John Erskine, Earl of Mar, led the uprising (8) and quickly took control of much of the Highlands. He raised James's standard (9) in Braemar, Scotland. However, by the time the Pretender landed (10) on Scottish soil in December, the tide had turned (11). Lacking French military support, unable to rally sufficient backing (12) and facing an efficient response from the British government, the rebellion failed. The Pretender fled back to France, letting his troops face the consequences of defeat.

c. The Forty-Five Rebellion (1745)

In July 1745, Charles Edward Stuart—also known as the **Young Pretender** or **Bonnie Prince Charlie**—landed in Scotland with a small group of supporters. He was the grandson of James II and the son of James Francis Edward Stuart, James II's son, known as the Old Pretender. He managed to raise his father's standard at Glenfinnan and secured the backing of some Highland clans. As only a few thousand British troops were stationed in Scotland, his army easily took over Edinburgh, where he was proclaimed Prince Regent of Scotland, and won decisive victories at Prestonpans and Falkirk. A poorly equipped body of less than 5,000 men, they advanced into England and reached Derby, just 125 miles from London. But failing to get Tory support and receive French aid, they decided to retreat (13) to Scotland, where they were crushed (14) by British government forces led by Prince William, Duke of Cumberland, son of King George II, at the **Battle of Culloden**. Like his father before him, Bonnie Prince Charlie fled back to France.

III. French support

After fleeing England in December 1688, James took refuge in France, where his cousin Louis XIV (James II's mother, Henrietta Maria of France, was the sister of Louis XIII and the daughter of Henry IV) offered him hospitality at the Château de Saint-Germain-en-Laye. There, James tried to establish an exiled

government, recreating his court, appointing ministers, issuing declarations and sending instructions to his loyal agents and followers in England, Scotland and Ireland (Irish exiles being known as “the **Wild Geese**”).

Louis XIV was all too eager (15) to weaken (16) his neighbour and rival, while also being committed to (17) restoring a Catholic monarch. He provided both substantial financial support for James’s household and court and significant military aid, including troops and weapons, for the Williamite War. He later recognised the Old Pretender as the legitimate King of Britain, but with the outbreak (18) of the **War of the Spanish Succession**, France had other priorities. Growing doubts emerged about the Jacobite cause’s ability to win over the English population, and France’s military backing gradually declined. The death of Louis XIV in 1715 further limited the support.

IV. Aftermath

The Jacobite movement failed to overthrow the House of Hanover and put the Stuarts back onto the throne, mainly due to the strength and stability of the Whig government and the growing prosperity associated with the new dynasty. Internal divisions and poor leadership within the Jacobite ranks also contributed to the downfall (19) of the movement. Its legacy varied regionally. In England and Wales, it came to be seen as regressive. In Scotland, repression was brutal after the Battle of Culloden. Episcopalianism was crushed, Presbyterianism consolidated and nationalism silenced for a long time, until it was revived one century later by writers such as Walter Scott. Only in Ireland did Jacobitism retain a lasting positive legacy (20), closely tied to (21) the defence of Catholicism.

VOCABULARY

(1) To pledge allegiance: *prêter serment à qqun*; (2) to concur: *approuver, être d'accord*; (3) Whig-leaning: *qui penche en faveur des Whigs*; (4) a stronghold: *un bastion*; (5) to confer established status: *conférer le statut d'Église officielle*; (6) to resent sth: *éprouver du ressentiment par rapport à qqch, mal supporter qqch*; (7) reluctant: *réticent*; (8) an uprising: *un soulèvement*; (9) a standard: *un étendard*; (10) to land: *débarquer*; (11) the tide had turned: *le vent avait tourné*; (12) backing: *le soutien*; (13) to retreat: *battre en retraite, faire marche arrière*; (14) to crush sth: *écraser qqch*; (15) eager to do sth: *désireux de faire qqch*; (16) to weaken sb: *affaiblir qqun*; (17) to commit to doing sth: *s'engager à faire qqch*; (18) the outbreak of a war: *l'éclatement d'une guerre*; (19) a downfall: *une chute, un échec*; (20) a legacy: *un héritage*; (21) tied to: *lié à*.

À RETENIR

- Les premières rébellions jacobites en Écosse et en Irlande remportent quelques succès, mais elles se terminent par les défaites jacobites de Dunkeld et de la Boyne. En 1715, les Jacobites tentent de rétablir le fils de Jacques II sur le trône, mais la rébellion échoue. En 1745, Charles Édouard Stuart conquiert une partie de l'Écosse et avance jusqu'à Derby, mais il doit battre en retraite avant d'être définitivement vaincu à la bataille de Culloden.
- Après sa fuite en France en 1688, Jacques II installe une cour en exil à Saint-Germain-en-Laye, où il organise un gouvernement, maintient des contacts avec ses partisans et prépare la restauration des Stuart. Louis XIV lui apporte un important soutien financier, politique et militaire pour affaiblir l'Angleterre et rétablir un roi catholique, mais cette aide diminue progressivement après le début de la guerre de Succession d'Espagne puis la mort du roi en 1715.
- Le mouvement jacobite échoue à restaurer les Stuart en raison de la solidité du régime hanovrien et de ses propres divisions, et son héritage varie selon les régions, bénéficiant d'une image positive surtout en Irlande, où il est associé à la défense du catholicisme.

British Politics from the Resignation of Walpole to the American War of Independence

(1742-1783)

CHRONOLOGY

- **1742:** resignation of Robert Walpole
- **1743-1754:** Ministry of Henry Pelham (Whig)
- **1756-1763:** Seven Years' War
- **1760:** accession of George III
- **1762-1763:** Ministry of Lord Bute (Tory)
- **1770-1782:** Ministry of Lord North (Tory)
- **1778:** Catholic Relief Act
- **1775-1783:** American War of Independence

I. Divisions and weak leadership in the Whig system (1742-1766)

After Robert Walpole's resignation (1) (see **Fact Sheet n° 3**), the **Whig party** remained dominant but was fractured into rival factions driven by personal ambition rather than ideological differences. The short-lived ministry of the Earl of Wilmington (1742-43) was followed by a more stable period under Henry Pelham (1743-54), who reined in (2) the national debt and managed finance after the **War of the Austrian Succession** but struggled with internal divisions. After his death, his brother, the Duke of Newcastle, took over (3) (1754-1756) but lacked strong leadership, especially in foreign policy, where he was confronted with rising tensions with France over the American colonies. The political system was still controlled by the aristocracy through **patronage** and nepotism, causing growing discontent among the population. **Patriot Whigs**, including such figures as William Pitt the Elder, George Grenville or Viscount Cobham, denounced the corruption that plagued (4) the regime, railed against (5) the prevalence of factional interests over the nation's good and called for parliamentary reform to curb (5) patronage. They also promoted the expansion of the British Empire and indirectly criticised George II for prioritising **Hanoverian** interests over British ones. Pitt's reputation for integrity as Paymaster of the Forces, his eloquence in Parliament in defence of the national interest earned him public support.

WILLIAM PITT THE ELDER (1708-1778)

- Born in London into a wealthy family; his father was a Tory MP
- Educated at Eton and Trinity College, Oxford
- Started a career in the army
- 1735: elected MP for Old Sarum (Whig), a rotten borough controlled by his family
- Member of the Patriot Whigs in Parliament
- 1746-1755: Paymaster of the Forces
- 1757-1761: Secretary of War, architect of the victory in the Seven Years' War
- Nicknamed "the Great Commoner", as he refused to accept a peerage
- 1766-1768: Prime Minister; eventually accepted a peerage, created Earl of Chatham; hindered by health issues, notably gout

II. The Seven Years' War (1756-1763)

As Secretary of State from 1757 to 1761, William Pitt the Elder was the architect of the British victory in the **Seven Years' War** (1756-1763), a global conflict for influence and dominance, which pitted (6) Britain and Prussia against France and Austria, which were later joined by Spain. It was fought across Europe, North America and India. Though Britain suffered defeats in the early stages, particularly in the New World, where the war was known as the **French and Indian War**, Pitt managed to boost morale (7) and designed a "**Grand Strategy**", focusing on imperial dominance and colonial expansion based on naval supremacy (instead of a continental strategy aiming to defend the Hanoverian territories of the King). He appropriated (8) increased funding and appointed competent commanders like Major-General Wolfe in Quebec or Governor Robert Clive in India. 1759 marked the climax of the British strategy, with the capture of Quebec and victories over the French fleet. Pitt resigned in 1761 due to opposition to his desire to declare war on Spain, which he wanted to strike before it could strike first. The **Treaty of Paris** concluded the war to Britain's advantage, as it received Quebec from the French and Florida from Spain, while its dominance in India was recognised.

III. The return of the Tories (1762)

Upon his accession in 1760, George III sought (9) to reassert royal authority and reduce the influence of the Whig oligarchy by promoting ministers loyal to his own person rather than to parties. This led to the rise of the "**King's Friends**", a bipartisan faction of MPs supporting the King's policies. In 1762, he appointed the Earl of Bute, generally considered the first Tory to serve as Prime Minister since the accession of the **House of Hanover**. He was quite unpopular due to the introduction of an **excise** tax on cider and his Scottish origin. Bute's perceived secret influence on the King—he had been the Prince of Wales's tutor—or even a secret government he was accused of leading deepened divisions political divisions.

IV. The emergence of radical ideas (1760s-1770s)

In 1763, John Wilkes, a radical MP, was arrested for publishing an attack on the King and the Prime Minister in his weekly newspaper *The North Briton*. His lawyers argued that, as he benefited from **parliamentary privilege**, i.e. freedom to express opinion as an MP, he could not be prosecuted for seditious libel (10). Additionally, they deemed that the general warrant (11) (which did not mention any specific name but allowed the authorities to arrest anyone related to the newspaper) under which he was indicted (12) was illegal. The charges were dropped (13) but he was later expelled from Parliament. His constituents (14) nevertheless re-elected him. He thus appeared as the symbol of resistance to government abuse, his supporters uniting around the slogan “Wilkes and liberty!” The **Wilkesite movement** called for freedom of the press, parliamentary reform (the abolition of **rotten boroughs**) and the defence of civil liberties such as **habeas corpus**.

In the following decade, the **Association movement**, created by Christopher Wyvill, a Yorkshire landowner, campaigned through petitions for the return to triennial parliaments, the abolition of rotten boroughs, the extension of the franchise and the secret ballot (15), eventually achieving none of them. More radical, Major John Cartwright promoted universal suffrage, annual parliaments, the secret ballot and equal constituencies.

V. Lord North's government (1770-1782)

Another Tory, Lord North, served as Prime Minister from 1770 and 1782. Previously holding the positions of Lord of the Treasury and **Chancellor of the Exchequer**, he was part of the King's Friends. In 1778, Parliament passed a limited **Catholic Relief Act**—also known as the **Papists Act**—, which granted property rights and the right to join the army on the condition that an oath of allegiance (16) was taken. Its purpose was to widen the pool (17) of army recruits, widen recruitment and ease (18) tensions in Ireland. The Act, however, sparked anti-Catholic sentiment and led to a protest march led by Lord Gordon, leader of a Protestant association, which degenerated into violent riots (19) in London, known as the **Gordon Riots**. Financially, North was intent on (20) reducing the government's debt. He introduced or raised taxes on the colonies, reduced public expenditure (21), organised lotteries to generate revenue and restructured the **East India Company** to improve its profitability.

VI. The American War of Independence (1775-1783)

During his premiership, Lord North had to handle (22) the escalating tensions (23) with the colonies and most of the American War of Independence (see **Fact Sheet n° 8**). After the costly Seven Years' War, Britain imposed taxes on its American colonies. Tensions escalated with the **Boston Massacre** in 1770, where British soldiers killed five colonists and the **Boston Tea Party** in 1773, where a disguised group of colonists threw a cargo of British tea into the Boston harbour. In response, Britain enacted the **Coercive Acts** in 1774, prompting the

colonies to form the **First Continental Congress** to demand reforms. The war broke out (25) at Lexington and Concord in April 1775. Lord North resigned in 1782 over growing criticism of his handling of the war. Britain's defeat in 1783 led to the **Treaty of Paris**, which recognised US independence and defined its borders from the Great Lakes to the Mississippi River.

VOCABULARY

(1) A resignation: *une démission*; (2) to rein in sth: *maîtriser, contenir qqch*; (3) to take over: *prendre la suite*; (4) to rail against sth: *s'insurger contre qqch*; (5) to curb sth: *limiter, réduire qqch*; (6) to pit sb against sb: *opposer qqun à qqun*; (7) morale: *le moral*; (8) to appropriate funding: *allouer des fonds*; (9) to seek, sought, sought sth: *chercher qqch*; (10) seditious libel: *écrits sédicioeux*; (11) a general warrant: *un mandat d'arrêt non nominatif*; (12) to indict sb: *inculper qqun*; (13) to drop charges: *abandonner les poursuites*; (14) a constituent: *un électeur*; (15) the secret ballot: *le vote à bulletin secret*; (16) to take an oath of allegiance: *prêter serment d'allégeance*; (17) a pool: *un vivier, une réserve*; (18) to ease sth: *apaiser qqch*; (19) a riot: *une émeute*; (20) to be intent on doing sth: *être déterminé à faire qqch*; (21) expenditure: *les dépenses*; (22) to handle sth: *gérer qqch*; (23) escalating tensions: *des tensions croissantes*; (25) to break out: *éclater*.

À RETENIR

- Après la démission de Robert Walpole, le parti Whig, bien que toujours dominant, se fracture en factions rivales motivées par l'ambition personnelle, tandis que des figures comme William Pitt l'Ancien dénoncent la corruption, appellent à une réforme parlementaire et prônent l'intérêt national et l'expansion de l'empire face à une aristocratie dirigeante de plus en plus contestée.
- En tant que Secrétaire d'État de 1757 à 1761, William Pitt l'Ancien est l'artisan de la victoire britannique dans la Guerre de Sept Ans, conflit mondial où il conçoit une stratégie fondée sur la suprématie navale et l'expansion coloniale. Partisan de déclarer la guerre à l'Espagne, Pitt démissionne en 1761 après s'être heurté à une forte opposition.
- À son avènement en 1760, George III cherche à restaurer l'autorité royale en nommant les ministres sur des critères de loyauté personnelle plutôt que par attachement partisan. Pour la première fois depuis l'accession des Hanovre, un Premier Ministre Tory, Lord Bute, est nommé. Mais son impopularité aggrave les divisions politiques.
- Lord North, Premier ministre de 1770 à 1782 et proche du roi, cherche à réduire la dette publique, en imposant notamment de nouvelles taxes aux colonies, et soutient une loi accordant certains droits aux catholiques. Il doit gérer les tensions croissantes avec les colonies américaines, puis la guerre qui éclate en 1775. De plus en plus contesté, il démissionne en 1782, peu de temps avant la défaite britannique.

American Colonies from the end of the Seven Years' War to the War of Independence

(1763-1783)

CHRONOLOGY

- **1756-1763:** Seven Years' War (French and Indian War)
- **1764:** Sugar Act
- **1765:** Stamp Act
- **1766:** Declaratory Act
- **1767:** Townsend Acts
- **1770:** Boston Massacre
- **1773:** Boston Tea Party
- **1774:** First Continental Congress
- **1775:** Battles of Lexington and Concord; Second Continental Congress
- **1776:** Declaration of Independence
- **1783:** Treaty of Paris

I. The aftermath of the Seven Years' War (1763-1766)

The costly **Seven Years' War** (known as the **French and Indian War** in North America), concluded by the **Treaty of Paris** in 1763, left Britain with a massive national debt. This financial strain (1) led to new taxation measures, which sparked unrest (2) among the colonists.

The **Sugar Act** of 1764 targeted several goods that were imported into the colonies from outside the British Empire, imposing new customs duties (3) on sugar, wine and coffee. The **Stamp Act** of 1765 was a direct tax imposed on the colonies, requiring that official documents be printed on purpose-made (4) stamped (5) paper that was produced in London and had to be purchased from British authorities.

In reaction, protests and "non-importation agreements" were organised. To ease (6) tensions, the government decided to repeal the Stamp Act while the enactment (7) of the **Declaratory Act** of 1766 asserted the authority of Parliament to tax the colonies and to legislate for them. But tensions persisted. In 1767, the **Townshend Acts** imposed duties on goods such as paper, glass, paint or lead (8), and suspended the New York Assembly.

GEORGE GRENVILLE (1712-1770)

- Born in Buckinghamshire, educated at Oxford
- 1741: elected MP for Buckingham (Whig)
- Held various positions such as Treasurer of the Navy, Northern Secretary or First Lord of the Admiralty
- 1763-1765: Chancellor of the Exchequer and Prime Minister (under George III)
- 1764: passed the Stamp Act, defended the theory of virtual representation

II. The representation issue

From the British perspective, it was entirely reasonable for the American colonies, which had benefited from British protection (especially the removal (9) of the French threat from Canada), to contribute to the cost of their own defence.

But the colonists argued that the British government had no right to impose taxes on them since they were not represented in Parliament. “**No taxation without representation**” became their rallying cry and relied on a principle that could be traced back (10) to **Magna Carta** and that had been reasserted (11) by the **Bill of Rights** 1689.

The government, in the person of Prime Minister George Grenville, replied with the notion of **virtual representation**, contending (12) that although an MP is elected in one specific constituency, he does not merely (13) represent his constituents (14) but the whole population of Great Britain, which includes the inhabitants of the colonies. In other words, settlers were virtually represented by the MPs elected in the homeland (15).

III. The escalation (1770-1774)

In a growing climate of tension, the **Boston Massacre** on March 5, 1770, marked a turning point. British soldiers, allegedly (16) provoked by colonists, opened fire and killed five of them, who were seen as martyrs. This incident fuelled anti-British sentiment. In 1773, the **Tea Act**, designed to help the ailing (17) **East India Company** by reducing the taxes it paid on the tea it sold in the colonies, angered colonists, who saw it as an unfair rebate (18). In protest, the **Sons of Liberty** staged the **Boston Tea Party**, dumping (19) tea into the harbour. Britain responded with the **Coercive Acts** (known as the Intolerable Acts in North America), closing Boston's port, placing Massachusetts under the direct control of a military governor, allowing the transfer of trials to London and the quartering (20) of soldiers in empty private homes. In response, local leaders adopted the Suffolk Resolves, refused to buy British goods and urged the formation of militias. On September 5, 1774, the **First Continental Congress** met to oppose the Acts, assert colonial rights and petition the King. At that stage, the colonists still sought reconciliation.

IV. The beginning of the war and the Declaration of Independence

Patriots set up a parallel government in Massachusetts, which mobilised militias. The British government proclaimed the colony to be in a state of rebellion, and a military intervention was launched to seize and destroy the military supplies (21) of the rebels. The first clashes took place in Lexington and Concord, two cities outside Boston, on April 19, 1775, marking the beginning of the **American War of Independence** (more commonly known as the American Revolutionary War in the US).

The **Second Continental Congress** convened (22) in Philadelphia in May 1775. Initially seeking negotiation, the Congress appointed George Washington as commander-in-chief and sent the **Olive Branch Petition** to King George III, which was rejected. As reconciliation failed, a committee was appointed to draft (23) the **Declaration of Independence**, which was adopted on July 4, 1776. The Congress also drafted the Articles of Confederation and secured an alliance with France in 1778.

V. The unfolding of the war

The Battles of Lexington and Concord were followed by the siege of Boston, leading to the evacuation of British troops. Despite early defeats in New York, George Washington's victory at Trenton boosted American morale (24). A turning point occurred at Saratoga, where American forces defeated the British, facilitating support from France and Spain. This prompted Britain to shift focus (25) to the Southern colonies, where it faced fierce (26) resistance. The American momentum (27) culminated with the siege of Yorktown in 1781, forcing the British to surrender. The **Treaty of Paris** in 1783 officially recognised US independence and defined its borders.

Initially supportive of repressive measures to squash (28) the rebellion, believing it would be a matter of weeks or months, British public opinion grew increasingly hostile as the war dragged on (29) and cost lives. George III was resolute in pursuing the war until victory, which he believed was possible, and rejected conciliation. Few politicians dared to oppose the King—John Wilkes, a radical MP, campaigned for parliamentary reform domestically and for American self-government, while Charles James Fox was a staunch (30) supporter of the American cause. Edmund Burke, a Whig, defended the notion of consent to taxation, contending (31) American colonists enjoyed the rights of Englishmen. Others like William Pitt the Elder or Lord Rockingham advocated conciliation.

VOCABULARY

(1) The strain: *la tension, la pression*; (2) to spark unrest: *déclencher des troubles*; (3) customs duties: *des droits de douane*; (4) purpose-made: *spécialement conçu*; (5) stamped: *estampillé*; (6) to ease sth: *apaiser, atténuer qqch*; (7) the enactment: *l'adoption (d'une loi)*; (8) lead: *le plomb*; (9) the removal: *la suppression, l'élimination*; (10) it could be traced back to: *on pourrait le faire remonter à*; (11) to reassert sth: *réaffirmer qqch*; (12) to contend: *soutenir, affirmer*; (13) merely: *simplement, seulement*; (14) a constituent: *un électeur*; (15) the homeland: *la métropole*; (16) allegedly: *prétendument*; (17) ailing: *en difficultés*; (18) a rebate: *une ristourne, un rabais*; (19) to dump sth: *jeter, déverser qqch*; (20) the quartering of soldiers: *le cantonnement de soldats*; (21) supplies: *le matériel*; (22) to convene an assembly: *réunir, convoquer une assemblée*; (23) to draft sth: *rédiger qqch*; (24) morale: *le moral*; (25) to shift focus: *changer d'orientation stratégique*; (26) fierce: *féroce, acharné*; (27) the momentum: *la dynamique, l'élan*; (28) to squash sth: *écraser qqch*; (29) to drag on: *traîner en longueur, s'éterniser*; (30) staunch: *fervent, ardent*; (31) to contend: *soutenir, affirmer*.

À RETENIR

- Face au coût élevé de la Guerre de Sept Ans, le gouvernement britannique adopte une série de lois, telles que le *Sugar Act* et le *Stamp Act*, créant de nouvelles taxes sur les colonies. Ces textes déclenchent une forte hostilité parmi les colons.
- S'appuyant sur des principes remontant à la *Magna Carta* et à la Déclaration des Droits de 1689, les colons affirment que le gouvernement britannique n'a pas le droit de les taxer sans qu'ils soient représentés au Parlement, d'où slogan « Pas de taxation sans représentation », à quoi le gouvernement répond par la notion de représentation virtuelle.
- Dans ce contexte conflictuel, les tensions montent d'un cran avec le massacre de Boston le 5 mars 1770, où des soldats britanniques tuent cinq colons après une altercation, provoquant une montée du sentiment anti-britannique. La situation se détériore encore avec le *Tea Act* de 1773, auquel les colons répondent en jetant par-dessus bord une cargaison de thé d'un navire de la East India Company lors de la *Boston Tea Party*. Les représailles britanniques, sous la forme des *Coercive Acts* de 1774, entraînent la formation, en septembre, du Premier Congrès Continental, qui réclame des réformes sans demander encore l'indépendance.
- En réponse aux actes de résistance des colons dans le Massachusetts, le gouverneur militaire britannique organise une intervention militaire pour saisir les munitions des rebelles. Cette opération est le déclencheur de la guerre avec les batailles de Lexington et Concord en avril 1775.
- Les colons convoquent le Deuxième Congrès Continental à Philadelphie pour coordonner la réponse militaire. Parmi les décisions prises : la nomination de George Washington comme commandant en chef, la rédaction d'une Déclaration d'indépendance (adoptée en 1776) et des Articles de la Confédération.
- Après une victoire de Washington à Trenton en décembre 1776, les Britanniques prennent Philadelphie. Mais la victoire américaine à Saratoga conduit à un soutien international crucial, notamment de la France et de l'Espagne, tandis que les Britanniques se concentrent sur le sud. Finalement, la défaite de Yorktown convainc les Britanniques de mettre fin à la guerre avec le Traité de Paris en 1783.

British Politics from Rockingham to Perceval (1782-1812)

CHRONOLOGY

- **1782:** Marquess of Rockingham appointed Prime Minister (Whig), followed by Lord Shelburne (Whig)
- **1783:** Treaty of Paris; North-Fox coalition; William Pitt the Younger appointed Prime Minister
- **1787:** creation of a Consolidated Fund and a Sinking Fund
- **1795:** Two Acts
- **1799:** Combination Act
- **1800:** Act of Union with Ireland; resignation of Pitt
- **1805:** Admiral Nelson's victory at Trafalgar
- **1807:** abolition of the slave trade
- **1812:** assassination of Prime Minister Perceval

I. Political instability from Rockingham to the Fox-North coalition (1782-1783)

In 1782, following Lord North's resignation, George III reluctantly (1) appointed the Marquess of Rockingham, marking a turning point in British politics, as the choice was driven by parliamentary support rather than personal loyalty to the king. Rockingham opposed the king's adamant (2) stance over American independence and pursued reforms in Ireland (see **Fact Sheet n° 9**). His tenure (3) lasted barely (4) four months, cut short (5) by his death, but symbolised the growing influence of parliament and party politics over royal favour. George III, however, reasserted his authority by appointing Lord Shelburne, an opponent of Rockingham. Shelburne advocated peace with the American colonies and the recognition of their independence, which led to the negotiation of the **Treaty of Paris**, a deeply unpopular move that led to his downfall and the rise of the "**Fox-North coalition**". Officially, the government was led by the Duke of Portland, who managed to impose key figures, including Charles James Fox, a **Whig** leader and fierce (6) critic of George III, and Lord North, a **King's Man** but an opponent of Shelburne's conciliatory approach with the American colonies. But George III refused to give the new ministry his confidence. Tensions culminated with Fox's **India Bill**, which aimed to deprive the **East India Company** of its political power and place India under the authority of a board of 7 commissioners appointed by Parliament. George III warned peers (7) that supporting the bill meant opposing the Crown. The Lords rejected the bill and the King dismissed (8) Portland's ministry.

II. William Pitt the Younger (1783-1801)

George III appointed William Pitt the Younger, who became Britain's youngest Prime Minister at 24. Initially leading a minority government, the majority still being controlled by the North-Fox Coalition, Pitt decided to call for a new election in 1784, resulting in the **Tories** (also called **Pittites**) winning a strong majority, which bolstered (9) his authority. Enjoying growing popularity, his government also benefited from the King's support.

Pitt undertook (10) a series of reforms. Financially, he established the **Consolidated Fund** in 1787, which simplified government finances by creating a single account gathering the revenue from the various taxes and duties collected by the State, and introduced a new **Sinking Fund**, an account in which £1 million would be set aside (11) on a yearly basis and whose compound interest (12) would serve to repay the long-term debt. He also focused on combating fraud. His attempt at parliamentary reform, however, failed. A 1785 bill sought (13) to eliminate "**rotten boroughs**" but was defeated due to fears over property rights and political disruption.

But reforms were halted (14) by the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789 and France's declaration of war on Britain in 1793. The fear of chaos and violence led Pitt to take a more conservative approach. Radical ideas were perceived by the elite as extremely dangerous. A policy of tough (15) governmental repression was enforced. In 1792, a royal proclamation urged judges to identify and prosecute authors of seditious writings. In 1794, following attempts by **radicals** to organise a national convention in Edinburgh, **habeas corpus** was suspended, allowing detention without trial for suspected revolutionaries. In 1795, following riots caused by poor harvests, the **Two Acts** were passed—the Seditious Meetings Act, prohibiting unauthorised gatherings of over 50 people, and the Treasonable Practices Act, classifying criticism of the king or government as an act of treason. In 1797, the Incitement to Mutiny Act was passed to prevent sedition within the armed forces. The **Combination Act 1799** banned workers' unions (16). The fear of radicalism also led to a split (17) among the Whigs—in 1794, the so-called **Portland Whigs**, a faction led by William Cavendish-Bentinck, 3rd Duke of Portland, broke up with Charles James Fox to support Pitt's government.

In foreign affairs, Pitt strengthened Britain's position through the **Triple Alliance** with Prussia and the Dutch Republic, and restored trade ties (18) with the United States, although the **Navigation Acts** remained in force. The **Constitutional Act 1791** divided Quebec into two entities—Upper Canada, enjoying British institutions, and Lower Canada, retaining its French legal system, while both were allowed to elect representatives in their own assemblies, endowed with limited powers. After successfully orchestrating the union of Ireland and Great Britain through the 1800 **Act of Union**, Pitt's subsequent (19) push for **Catholic Emancipation** was staunchly (20) opposed by George III, forcing the Prime Minister to resign (21).

WILLIAM PITT THE YOUNGER (1759-1806)

- Born in Kent, second son of William Pitt the Elder
- Admitted at Cambridge University at the age of 14
- 1781: elected MP for the pocket borough of Appleby during a by-election
- 1783: appointed Prime Minister at the age of 24, the youngest to hold the office in British history
- 1801: resigned over a disagreement with King George III concerning Catholic Emancipation
- 1804: returned to office as Prime Minister
- 1806: died at the age of 46

III. The return of political instability (1801-1812)

Henry Addington succeeded Pitt and briefly ended the war with France through the **Peace of Amiens** in 1802, but hostilities resumed (22) in 1803. His weak leadership led to Pitt's return, who formed a new alliance against Napoleon's thirst for (23) conquest. Lord Nelson's decisive naval victory at **Battle of Trafalgar** in 1805 reasserted British naval superiority. Pitt died in 1806, succeeded by the "**Ministry of All the Talents**", a government of national unity led by Lord Grenville, including figures from various factions (Foxites, Addingtonians as well as some Pittites, with a few significant exceptions who viewed the coalition as a betrayal (24) of Pitt's legacy). Its most notable achievement was the abolition of the slave trade in 1807 under the impulse of William Wilberforce (see **Fact Sheet n° 12**). The ministry was dissolved in 1807 over the still contentious (25) issue of Catholic Emancipation.

In 1807, a new Tory government was formed, led by the Duke of Portland. It faced deep internal divisions, especially between George Canning and Lord Castlereagh, who clashed over military strategy. The Duke of Wellington achieved notable success in the **Peninsular War**—a conflict fought in the Iberian Peninsula between Napoleonic France and the allied forces of Spain, Portugal and Britain—conducting victorious campaigns in Spain. By 1809, Portland resigned due to health issues and was succeeded by Spencer Perceval. His government struggled with an economic downturn (26) caused by the war and the effects of the **Continental System**, the blockade set up by Napoleon, which dealt a severe blow to (27) British trade. Domestically, Spencer Perceval's government contended with (28) increasing social unrest, marked by public outcry (29) over soaring (30) food prices and a push for political reform (notably with calls for an extension of the franchise (31) and the abolition of rotten boroughs). In 1812, Perceval became the only British Prime Minister to be assassinated, shot in the House of Commons by John Bellingham, a discontented merchant.

VOCABULARY

(1) Reluctantly: *à contrecœur, avec réticence*; (2) adamant: *inflexible*; (3) a tenure: *un mandat*; (4) barely: *à peine*; (5) to be cut short by sth: *être interrompu par qqch*; (6) fierce: *féroce*; (7) a peer: *un pair, un membre de la Chambre des Lords*; (8) to dismiss sb/sth: *congédiier qqun/qqch*; (9) to bolster sth: *renforcer qqch*; (10) to undertake sth: *entreprendre qqch*; (11) to set money aside: *mettre de l'argent de côté*; (12) compound interest: *des intérêts composés*; (13) to seek, sought sought to do sth: *chercher à faire qqch*; (14) to halt sth: *arrêter, mettre fin à qqch*; (15) tough: *dur, sévère*; (16) a workers' union: *un syndicat*; (17) a split: *une scission*; (18) trade ties: *les relations commerciales*; (19) subsequent: *ultérieur, suivant*; (20) staunchly: *résolument, farouchement*; (21) to resign: *démissionner*; (22) to resume sth: *reprendre, continuer qqch*; (23) the thirst for sth: *la soif de qqch*; (24) a betrayal: *une trahison*; (25) contentious: *controversé, conflictuel*; (26) a downturn: *un ralentissement économique, une récession*; (27) to deal a severe blow: *porter un coup sévère*; (28) to contend with sth: *faire face à, composer avec qqch*; (29) public outcry: *un tollé général*; (30) soaring: *en forte hausse*; (31) the franchise: *le droit de vote*.

À RETENIR

- En 1782, le roi George III nomme à contrecœur le marquis de Rockingham Premier ministre sous la pression du Parlement, marquant un tournant politique où l'influence parlementaire l'emporte sur la faveur royale. Rockingham meurt quatre mois plus tard, ouvrant une période d'instabilité où les tensions entre le roi et le Parlement s'exacerbent et les gouvernements se succèdent rapidement, jusqu'au rejet du projet de loi sur l'Inde porté par Fox et la chute du duc de Portland.
- En 1783, George III nomme William Pitt le Jeune, qui devient Premier ministre à 24 ans. D'abord minoritaire, il remporte largement les élections de 1784, puis mène une politique d'assainissement et de rationalisation des finances publiques mais échoue à éliminer les « bourgs pourris ». La peur du chaos engendrée par la Révolution française pousse Pitt à mener une politique répressive (suspension de l'*habeas corpus*, interdiction des réunions de plus de cinquante personnes, interdiction des syndicats). Il met en place la Triple Alliance avec la Prusse et les Pays-Bas, restructure le Québec, réalise l'union avec l'Irlande et démissionne en 1801, en désaccord avec le roi au sujet de l'émancipation des catholiques.
- L'instabilité politique fait son retour. Henry Addington succède à Pitt et signe la paix d'Amiens en 1802, mais la guerre reprend en 1803, menant au retour de Pitt, qui décède cependant en 1806. Il est suivi par un gouvernement d'union qui abolit la traite des esclaves en 1807 avant de chuter sur la question de l'émancipation des catholiques. En 1807, le duc de Portland forme un gouvernement Tory miné par des divisions internes, alors que la guerre et le blocus de Napoléon fragilisent l'économie, et qu'en 1812, son successeur Spencer Perceval est assassiné en pleine Chambre des communes.

The Union with Ireland (1801)

CHRONOLOGY

- **1494:** Poyning's Law
- **1719:** Declaratory Act
- **1769:** Octennial Act
- **1782:** amendment of Poyning's Law and repeal of the Declaratory Act
- **1792-1793:** Catholic Relief Acts
- **1796:** Bantry Bay expedition
- **1798:** Rebellion of 1798
- **1799:** Combination Act
- **1800:** Act of Union

I. From legislative subjection to legislative independence (1760s-1770s)

Although Ireland was a kingdom in its own right (1), with its own Parliament, it actually enjoyed little autonomy. Since Henry VIII, the King of England (and later of Great Britain) was also King of Ireland. His representative was the Lord Lieutenant. Even before that, **Poyning's Law**, dating back to 1494, stipulated that any meeting of the Irish Parliament and all the legislation passed by it had to receive the prior approval of the English monarch and his **Privy Council**. The grip (2) of England over the neighbouring island was further asserted in 1719 by the **Declaratory Act**, which allowed Westminster to legislate directly for the island of Ireland.

In the 1760, a reform movement led by Irish Protestants strived for (3) limited improvements, such as regular elections and the passing of an **Habeas Corpus Act**. Of its claims, only the first one was granted, by the **Octennial Act** 1769, which limited the duration of Irish Parliaments to eight years.

In the following decade, the ideas of self-government spread by the American Revolution were supported by the **Irish Volunteers**, a militia created to defend the country against a potential foreign, notably French, invasion. The **Patriot Party** led by Henry Grattan, MP for Dublin, campaigned for legislative independence, leading to the 1782 repeal of the Declaratory Act and the amendment of Poyning's Law. The Irish Parliament thus regained control of its own legislation. It was shored up (4) by the 1783 **Renunciation Act**, which clarified the matter further, stating that only the Irish Parliament could legislate for Ireland.

II. From reform to repression (1780s-1790s)

Grattan also advocated the repeal of the **Navigation Acts**, which significantly impaired (5) Irish trade, and called for **Catholic Emancipation**. At the time, Catholics represented the majority of the population but had no political rights and their civil rights were considerably restricted under the Penal Laws (1690-1829): they could not purchase land, hold public office (6), practice law or medicine, attend university or have their own schools, and they had to pay **tithes** (7) to the **Anglican Church**). In 1782, they were granted the right to own land and establish schools.

In 1791, a reformist organisation was created in Belfast, aiming to bring together Irish people across religious denominations (Catholics, Anglicans and **Dissenters**), disestablish (8) the **Church of Ireland**, enact Catholic Emancipation and achieve parliamentary reform (extending the franchise (9) and abolishing **rotten boroughs**). Founded by a group of Protestants, including **Presbyterians** from Belfast, the **United Irishmen** rapidly gained traction (10), leading William Pitt the Younger to urge (11) Dublin to grant (12) some reforms—with the Catholic Relief Acts of 1792 and 1793, Catholics gained the right to vote (with property qualifications (13)), practice law, marry Protestants, earn university degrees and bear arms (14). But they remained excluded from Parliament and most public offices.

With their moderate demands (15) partially satisfied, the United Irishmen became increasingly radical, seeking full political independence and the establishment of a republic. One of their leaders, Theobald Wolfe Tone, managed to secure the support of French authorities and their promise of launching an invasion to overthrow (16) British authorities. In December 1796, in the **Bantry Bay expedition**, French forces attempted to land in Ireland but were unable to disembark owing to a storm, which marked the failure of the expedition. It was followed by brutally repressed local uprisings (17) and the arrest, and subsequent (18) suicide, of Wolfe Tone. The **Rebellion of 1798** brought reforms to a halt (19) and a new era of tighter (20) control. Radical groups were dissolved and the **Combination Act of 1799**, modelled on the British one, outlawed workers' unions (21) and political meetings.

III. The Act of Union (1800)

Concerns over a French invasion, especially after the rise of Napoleon Bonaparte to the Consulate, did not abate (22), urging the Pitt government to take back the reins (23) and initiate a process of union. Seen as a way to reduce the likelihood (24) of rebellion and clamp down on (25) the destabilising influence of the Irish Parliament, the scheme (26) also aimed to preserve Protestant interests and boost trade by removing the existing tariffs (27).

As with the Union with Scotland, two Acts would have to be passed—one in Westminster, one in Dublin. The bill was narrowly rejected by the Irish Parliament in 1799. Nevertheless, with a lavish (28) use of bribery, peerages (29), honours, public offices and pensions, and with the promise of Catholic Emancipation, the British government succeeded in achieving a majority in a

second vote in 1800. The Act of Union received **royal assent** and came into effect on January 1, 1801. The Irish Parliament was abolished and Ireland was fully integrated into the **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland**. The promised Catholic Emancipation, however, was not granted, George III being adamantly (30) opposed to it.

VOCABULARY

(1) In its own right: *à part entière*; (2) a grip over sth: *une emprise, mainmise sur qqch*; (3) to strive for sth: *viser qqch, s'efforcer d'obtenir qqch*; (4) to shore up sth: *soutenir, renforcer qqch*; (5) to impair sth: *affaiblir qqch, porter atteinte à qqch*; (6) to hold public office: *occuper un emploi public*; (7) tithes: *la dîme (impôt religieux)*; (8) to disestablish a church: *supprimer le statut d'Église d'État*; (9) the franchise: *le droit de vote*; (10) to gain traction: *gagner du terrain*; (11) to urge sb to sth: *encourager qqun à faire qqch*; (12) to grant sth: *accorder qqch*; (13) property qualifications: *conditions de propriété pour être électeur*; (14) to bear arms: *porter des armes*; (15) a demand: *une exigence*; (16) to overthrow sth: *renverser qqch*; (17) an uprising: *un soulèvement*; (18) subsequent: *suivant, ultérieur*; (19) to bring sth to a halt: *mettre fin à qqch*; (20) tight: *strict, étroit*; (21) a workers' union: *un syndicat*; (22) to abate: *diminuer, s'atténuer*; (23) to take back the reins: *reprenre les rênes, reprendre les choses en main*; (24) the likelihood: *la probabilité, le risque*; (25) to clamp down on sth: *mettre un frein à qqch*; (26) a scheme: *un dispositif, un système*; (27) tariffs: *les droits de douane*; (28) lavish: *généreux, prodigue*; (29) a peerage: *une pairie, un titre de noblesse*; (30) adamantly: *catégoriquement, farouchement*.

À RETENIR

- Bien que l'Irlande soit un royaume doté de son propre Parlement, elle ne jouit en réalité que de très peu d'autonomie, car depuis Henri VIII, le roi d'Angleterre est aussi roi d'Irlande, et des lois comme la *Poyning's Law* ou le *Declaratory Act* de 1719 soumettent la législation irlandaise au contrôle de Londres, jusqu'à ce que le mouvement réformateur mené par Henry Grattan obtienne en 1782-1783 l'indépendance législative du Parlement irlandais.
- Grattan milite pour l'abrogation des *Navigation Acts* qui freinent le commerce irlandais, ainsi que pour l'émancipation des catholiques, majoritaires mais privés de droits politiques et fortement discriminés par les Lois Pénales (1690-1829). Ceux-ci obtiennent partiellement satisfaction, se voyant accorder de nouveaux droits, mais toujours pas la possibilité de siéger au Parlement ni d'occuper des emplois publics. Fondée à Belfast en 1791, la société des United Irishmen, d'abord modérée et œuvrant pour l'unité interreligieuse et des réformes parlementaires, se radicalise ensuite et lance en 1798 une rébellion avec le soutien de la France, écrasée par les Britanniques, marquant la fin des espoirs de réforme.
- Face aux craintes d'une invasion française après l'ascension de Napoléon, le gouvernement Pitt relance le projet d'union visant à prévenir toute nouvelle rébellion, protéger les intérêts protestants et favoriser les relations commerciales, et malgré un premier rejet, il obtient en 1800 l'adoption de l'Acte d'Union qui abolit le Parlement irlandais et intègre l'Irlande au Royaume-Uni.

The Rise of the British Empire (1607-1807)

CHRONOLOGY

- **1607**: foundation of Virginia
- **1757**: Battle of Plassey
- **1773**: Regulating Act
- **1783**: Treaty of Paris
- **1784**: Pitt's India Act
- **1788**: arrival of the First Fleet in eastern Australia
- **1795**: Mungo Park's Niger River expedition
- **1807**: abolition of the slave trade

I. The British Empire at the beginning of the 18th century

In 1688, the British Empire consisted of colonies in North America and the Caribbean as well as some trading posts (1) and territories in West Africa and India. In North America, the earliest permanent settlement (2) was Virginia in 1607, where tobacco quickly became the dominant crop (3). Plymouth Colony was established in 1620, followed by other New England colonies like Massachusetts Bay (1629), Connecticut (1636) and Rhode Island (1636), which focused more on subsistence farming and timber (4). Maryland was founded in 1632 and also developed tobacco production. Carolina, established in 1663 (it later split into North and South Carolina), cultivated rice and indigo as major exports, in addition to tobacco. New York and New Jersey were acquired from the Dutch (5) in 1664 and developed farming and fur (6) trading. Pennsylvania, founded in 1681, produced grains (7) such as wheat (8), rye (9), barley (10), oat (11) and maize (12).

In the Caribbean, British colonisation began with Saint Kitts in 1623, followed by Barbados in 1625, Nevis in 1628 and Antigua and Montserrat in 1632. These islands quickly became centres of sugar production. Jamaica, seized from Spain in 1655, became one of the most profitable sugar-producing colonies in the British Empire. Bermuda, where the English accidentally settled in 1612, developed shipbuilding and maritime trade.

In West Africa, British presence was mainly through trading posts, with early establishments in Gambia in the mid-17th century, focused on the trade of gold, ivory and slaves. In India, the **East India Company** began to establish trading posts such as Surat in 1608 and settlements such as Madras in 1640, while Bombay was acquired in 1661. The company focused on trading textiles, spices and other valuable goods.