

The 100 Years War

The Hundred Years War was fought between [England](#) and [France](#) and lasted from 1337 to 1453. The war was a series of battles with long periods of peace in between.

How did it start?

Small disputes and battles had been going on between the French and the English for years. However, in 1337, King Edward III of England claimed that he was the rightful king of France. This began the long battle between the two countries. Other disputes kept the fighting going for over one hundred years. These included the control of the valuable wool trade, disputes over certain areas of land, and the support for Scotland by the French.



Edward III

King Edward III believed that he was the rightful heir to the French crown through his mother Isabella. He first laid claim to the throne when he was fifteen years old and King Charles IV of France died without a male heir. Instead of Edward, the French chose Philip to be their king.

When King Philip VI of France took control of Aquitaine from the English in 1337, King Edward III decided to fight back. He decided to invade France and reassert his right to the French throne.

Chevauchées

Edward did not attempt to conquer and control the land of the French. Instead he led raids into the land called chevauchées. He would strike deep into the land of the French burning crops, plundering cities, and causing havoc.

The Black Prince

In the 1350s, the army of King Edward III was led by his son, the valiant Edward the "Black Prince". The Black Prince became a famous hero to the English and was known for his chivalry. The Black Prince led the English to major victories over the French. At the battle of Poitiers, the Black Prince captured King John II, the current King of France.

Peace

King Edward agreed to release King John II for a ransom of three million crowns and some additional land. When King Edward died, the son of the Black Prince, Richard II became King. He was only 10 years old. There was a period of relative peace between England and France.

Battle of Agincourt

When King Henry V became king of England in 1413, he once again laid claim to the throne of France. He invaded France and won a decisive battle at Agincourt where with only around 6,000 soldiers he defeated a much larger French force of around 25,000. Eventually, the French gave in and King Charles VI named Henry as the heir to the throne.

Joan of Arc

Many of the people in southern France did not accept English rule. In 1428 the English began to invade southern France. They began a siege of the city of Orleans. However, a young peasant girl by the name of [Joan of Arc](#) took leadership of the French army. She claimed to have seen a vision from God. She led the French to a victory at Orleans in 1429. She led the French to several more victories before she was captured by the English and burned at the stake.

End of the War

The French were inspired by Joan of Arc's leadership and sacrifice. They continued to fight back. They pushed the English army out of France taking Bordeaux in 1453 signaling the end of the Hundred Years War.

Interesting Facts about the Hundred Years War

- The English longbow played a large part in their victories. It could fire faster and farther than the French crossbow.
- The war had a lot to do with transforming France from a number of feudal lands to a national state.
- The war stopped for a long period during the Black Death of the Bubonic plague.
- Historians often split the war into three main periods: the Edwardian War (1337-1360), the Caroline War (1369-1389), and the Lancastrian War (1415-1453).
- It didn't last exactly 100 years, but 116 years. That means a lot of people lived their entire lives while the war was going on.

The 100 Year War Questions

1. Who fought each other during the Hundred Years War?
2. How long did the Hundred Years War last?
3. What were chevauchees?
4. What was the cause of the Hundred Years War?
5. Who was the Black Prince?
6. Is it true or false that the Hundred Years War was a constant battle with fierce fighting and no periods of peace? Explain.
7. Who was Joan of Arc?
8. How did Joan of Arc die?
9. What English weapon played a major part in their early victories?
10. Who won the Battle of Agincourt?