

Monarchs



Phillip II of Spain, an absolute monarch, reigned from 1556 until his death in 1598.



Charles I of England, a constitutional monarch, reigned from 1625 until his execution in 1649.

Absolute and Constitutional Monarchs, Who Were They?

Phillip II of Spain was considered an absolute monarch because he had the ultimate authority over everything, he had the final say in everything. Basically like being a dictator. He was the ruler of Spain from 1556, coming to power after his father resigned from the job, until his death in 1598. Phillip II was known for doing things such as building the El Escorial palace, losing the Spanish Netherland colonies, and for also trying to invade England in which he was defeated in that attempt. In terms of influence, he tried to limit the spread of Protestantism. He also worked to expand the influence of Spain around the world, as well as completing the unification within the Iberian Peninsula.

Charles I of England was considered a constitutional monarch because by law, unlike Philip II, he did not have the ultimate say in everything that happened in the way that Philip II did. He still had lots of power, but he was not a “dictator.” He was the ruler of England from 1625, after the death of his brother James VI, until 1649, in which he was executed for treason. Charles had a quite interesting reign and caused a lot of problems with parliament. He wanted to make new taxes for wars against Spain and France, but parliament took quick action against it. They limited his powers, because he could not implement taxes or anything like that by himself without consent of the parliament. As time went by, tension continued to grow between him and parliament. This left a big influence on England forever, as more power was taken away from the reigning monarch and given to the government.

Philip II and Charles I were similar in the way that they wanted to rule. Philip II had the ultimate authority because that is the way that the Spanish monarchy worked. Charles I tried to rule almost the same way, except the English monarchy was not designed to run that way and a lot of problems were caused because of that. Their reigns were different because during the reign of Philip II, a lot of things actually got done. However during Charles’ reign, not as much was done. Instead, conflict was created. That conflict also lasted for a while. Charles I affected his nation big time because it changed the way the government worked. More power was taken away from the monarch and given to the parliament. For Philip II, the Spanish influence spread around the world even more than ever.