

Biography Activity



Conflict and Absolutism in Europe

James II (1633–1701)

James II of England was the younger son of Charles I. As his father’s monarchy collapsed, James escaped to the Netherlands. He returned to England to aid his brother, Charles II, upon the restoration of the monarchy. James’s conversion to Catholicism raised paranoia among the public, as he was heir to his childless brother. When Charles passed away in 1685, James became king. He and his wife had a son in 1688, escalating fears that England would face a long line of Catholic leaders. James had allowed his daughter Mary to be raised in the Protestant faith, and she had married William of Orange, a prince of the Netherlands. Parliament invited William and Mary to overthrow James. When William’s army arrived in London in 1688, James fled without a fight.



More About the Image: This is an oil portrait of James II in “Garter Robes,” which symbolize a level of knighthood known as The Most Noble Order of the Garter. This level of knighthood, founded by King Edward III in 1348, is the highest possible British civil and military honor. The reigning king or queen and the Prince of Wales are always members of the order.

1. **Summarizing** How did James II ascend to the throne?

2. **Interpreting Significance** What factors led Parliament to encourage the defeat of James II?

Washington in Command

Circular to the New England States, January 5, 1781

Commanding the Continental Army was no easy task. Washington had to deal with undisciplined troops, lack of supplies, desertion, harsh weather, defeat, money issues, and a sometimes-unresponsive Congress. In this excerpt, Washington has been at war for almost six years. He has been reminding Congress about his troops' poor conditions since the war began and decides now to approach the individual states without the "authority of Congress" for adequate supplies and reimbursement.

Original

It is not within the sphere of my duty to make requisitions, without the Authority of Congress, from individual States: but at such a crisis, and circumstanced as we are, my own heart will acquit me, when once for all I give it decidedly as my opinion, that it is in vain to think an Army can be kept together much longer, under such a variety of sufferings as ours has experienced: and that unless some immediate and spirited measures are adopted to furnish at least three Months pay to the Troops in Money that will be of some value to them; And at the same time ways and means are devised to cloath and feed them better (more regularly I mean) than they have been, the worst that can befall us may be expected.

Adaptation

I am not supposed to make recommendations to the states without the authority of congress. But at such a crisis and with the circumstances we are in, my own heart will acquit me. I feel strongly that it is wrong to think that the Army can be kept together much longer after all we have experienced. Unless some immediate and powerful measures are adapted to provide at least three months pay to the troops that will have some value to them. And at the same time if some ways and means are not devised to clothe and feed them better—more regularly—than they have been, then the worse will definitely happen to us.

Scaffolding Questions

- 1 Why do you think Washington felt an obligation to his troops?
- 2 How would this sense of responsibility affect Washington's success?



Biography Activity



Early Empires in the Ancient Near East

Zoroaster (c. 628 B.C.–551 B.C.)

Zoroaster grew up in a family of knights in rural Media. Though not much is known about the specifics of his early life, he was probably a priest of some kind when, according to legend, he received a vision from Ahuramazda, the "Wise Lord." Zoroaster preached a form of monotheism, or belief in a single god, in which Ahuramazda represented life and all things good and Ahriman represented evil ("not life" or "the Lie"). According to Zoroaster, all people had to choose between good and evil. Those who performed good deeds were rewarded by Ahuramazda both on Earth and in the afterlife. Those who chose evil faced eternal life in the regions of horror and darkness. Zoroaster's teachings faced opposition from civil authorities and the religious powers who preached polytheism, or belief in multiple gods. Zoroastrianism took hold in Persia, and Zoroaster became a legendary figure throughout the region. Zoroaster has been viewed historically as a religious figure, a magician, an astrologer, a prophet, and even a mathematician.



More About the Image: This portrait of Zoroaster dates from around A.D. 558.

- 1. Drawing Inferences** How might a belief in a single god have benefitted the rulers of Persia?

- 2. Making Generalizations** Why do you think civil authorities and polytheistic religious leaders opposed Zoroaster's religious ideas?

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The First Chinese Empires

Confucius (551 B.C.–479 B.C.)

Confucius was born in the small feudal state of Lu to a poor family. Early on, he distinguished himself as a devoted student. By the time he was 30, he was recognized as a classical scholar and a master of the six arts—ritual, music, archery, charioting, calligraphy, and arithmetic. He was the first teacher in China to promote education as a benefit to all human beings, not simply the aristocracy. Confucius believed that education built character. It involved constant self-improvement, a quest for self-knowledge, and devotion to public service. Confucius tried but failed to reform government policy concerning education. However, he became widely admired for his ideals and his efforts. At his death, Confucius had 3,000 followers.

More About the Image: This portrait of Confucius is an ink rubbing from a Chinese stele in Xiàn, dating from 1734.



1. **Drawing Conclusions** Why might Confucius's ideas have met resistance in the government?

2. **Finding the Main Idea** Why were Confucius's ideas regarding education considered radical?

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A New Era Begins

Michelle Bachelet (1951–)

Michelle Bachelet was born into a political family. Her father was a member of President Salvador Allende's government and was imprisoned and tortured by the regime of Augusto Pinochet. He died in jail. In 1975 she was kidnapped and tortured, and then went into exile. She later returned to Chile, completed her studies in medicine, and became a pediatrician. She became involved in government service after becoming active with the Socialist Party. From 2006–2010, Michelle Bachelet was the president of Chile. She was the first female to be elected president of the country. Bachelet focused on improving the social and health conditions of Chileans. After leaving office, she became the head of UN Women.



More About the Image: This image of Bachelet shows her waving to the crowd at the inauguration of her successor, Sebastian Pinera, in 2011. Her sash contains the colors of the Chilean flag.

- 1. Drawing Conclusions** Why do you think Bachelet is such a popular politician in Chile?

- 2. Making Connections** How do you think Bachelet's young adulthood affected her political involvement?
