



The Roles of The Queen

PowerPoint Teacher Notes

The British Monarchy is a part of government by which a hereditary King or Queen reigns over the United Kingdom, the Crown dependencies (the Bailiwick of Guernsey, the Bailiwick of Jersey and the Isle of Man) and the British Overseas Territories.

Queen Elizabeth II ascended the throne in **6 February 1952**. This followed the death of her father King George VI.

Head of State

A Head of State is the public persona who officially embodies a State in its unity and legitimacy. Depending on the country's form of government and separation of powers, the Head of State may be a ceremonial figurehead (such as The Queen) or concurrently the Head of Government and more (such as the President of the United States).

In a parliamentary system, such as the United Kingdom or India, the Head of State usually has mostly ceremonial powers, with a separate Head of Government, such as a Prime Minister

One of the most important roles of the modern Head of State is being a living national symbol of the State; in hereditary monarchies this extends to the monarch being a symbol of the unbroken continuity of the State.

Heads of State often greet important foreign visitors, particularly visiting heads of state. For example, The Queen assumes a host role during a state visit which may include inspection of military troops, official exchange of gifts, and attendance at a state dinner at Windsor Castle or Buckingham Palace.

Head of Nation

The Queen represents the nation at times of national celebration and national mourning, and to speak for and to the nation at times of crisis. For example, all the European monarchs gave a special broadcast at the start of the Covid pandemic to reassure their people, and to support their governments. And all the European monarchs broadcast a Christmas or New Year message.

The monarchy represents stability and continuity in times of change. The Royal Family exemplifies the national family, and different age groups in the population can relate to different generations in The Royal Family, old or young.

In the UK, The Queen and the Royal Family are expected to attend various events and occasions such as artistic or sports performances or competitions, expositions, national day celebrations, dedication events, remembrance events, prominent funerals, visiting different parts of the country and people from different walks of life, and at times performing symbolic acts such as cutting a ribbon, ground-breaking, ship christening, laying the first stone etc

Through royal visits and award ceremonies the monarchy recognises and draws attention to public service and achievement in all walks of life.

Head of the Commonwealth

The origins of Commonwealth come from Britain's former Empire. Many of the members of the Commonwealth were territories which had historically come under British rule at various times by settlement, conquest or cession. The administration of such colonies evolved in different ways, to reflect the different circumstances of each territory.

After achieving independence, India was the first of a number of countries which decided that, although they wished to become republics, they still wanted to remain within a Commonwealth

The Commonwealth is a voluntary association of 54 independent countries, almost all of which were formerly under British rule.

To reconcile these aims, the 1949 London Declaration recognised King George VI as Head of the Commonwealth. Following his death, the Commonwealth leaders recognised Queen Elizabeth II in that capacity.

Head of The Church of England

The sovereign is the 'Defender of the Faith and Supreme Governor of the Church of England.' These titles date back to the reign of King Henry VIII.

On the advice of the Prime Minister The Queen appoints Archbishops, Bishops and Deans of the Church of England, who then swear an oath of allegiance and pay homage to Her Majesty.

The Crown's role in the Church of England is simply a title; the most senior clergyman, the Archbishop of Canterbury, is the spiritual leader of the Church and of the worldwide Anglican Communion.

The Queen also takes an oath to preserve the Church of Scotland but otherwise plays no part in its governance, and exerts no powers over it. The sovereign plays no formal role in the Church in Wales or Church of Ireland.

The Queen acknowledges and celebrates religious diversity and tolerance in the UK and the Commonwealth. This is reflected in Her Majesty's Christmas and Commonwealth Day messages, which often address the theme of inter-faith harmony and tolerance.

Head of the Armed Forces

As Sovereign, The Queen is Head of the Armed Forces, and is also the wife, mother and grandmother of individuals having served in the Forces. She has a long and close relationship with the Armed Forces, both in the United Kingdom and in the Commonwealth.

The Queen's relationship with the Armed Forces began when, as Princess Elizabeth, she joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS) in 1945, becoming the first female member of the Royal Family to join the Armed Services as a full-time active member. During her time in the ATS, the Princess learnt to drive and to maintain vehicles.

Since then, The Queen has maintained a close relationship with the Armed Forces through regular visits to service establishments and ships. She holds many military appointments and honorary ranks.

As is the tradition for the monarch's birthday, The Queen's birthday is celebrated every year with the great military display of Trooping of the Colour. For many years, The Queen attended Trooping on horseback and dressed in military uniform.

The Queen also spends much time meeting servicemen and women of all ranks, and their families, both at home and on overseas trips.

In addition to awarding various military honours at investitures, The Queen also introduced the Elizabeth Cross. The first medal to which The Queen put her name, this was instituted in 2009 to give special recognition to the families of those who have died on military operations, or as a result of terrorism, since 1948.

In addition to honours, The Queen also leads the nation each year in paying respects to the fallen each year on Remembrance Sunday.

Constitutional

The Queen has to remain strictly neutral with respect to political matters.

By convention, The Queen does not vote or stand for election, however Her Majesty does have important ceremonial and formal roles in relation to the government of the UK.

The formal phrase 'Queen in Parliament' is used to describe the British legislature, which consists of the Sovereign, the House of Lords and the House of Commons. The Queen's duties include opening each new session of Parliament, granting Royal Assent to legislation, and approving Orders and Proclamations through the Privy Council.

The Queen also has a special relationship with the Prime Minister, retaining the right to appoint and also meeting with him or her on a regular basis.

In addition to playing a specific role in the UK Parliament based in London, The Queen has formal roles with relation to the devolved assemblies of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Charities

Members of the Royal Family have links with hundreds of charities, military associations, professional bodies and public service organisations. Some are well known, while others may be smaller bodies working in a very specialist area or on a local basis only.

Having a Royal patron or president provides vital publicity for the work of these organisations, and allows their enormous achievements and contributions to society to be recognised. Through its patronage and support the monarchy nurtures voluntary action and civil society, reaching parts of the population beyond the reach of politicians.

Above all of these roles, we should not forget that the Queen is, of course, also a much loved and treasured mother, grandmother and great grandmother!

