

# Power to the People



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Many stories are about kings, queens, princes, and princesses from times long ago. In them, the kings and queens command people to do whatever they want.

Although many countries today have governments that allow people to vote, some still have monarchs, or kings or queens, with absolute power. These monarchs are like the ones you've read about. They make

rules, and their people must obey them.

Other countries, like Great Britain, have monarchs who lead their countries with the help of a parliament of elected leaders. A parliament is like the U.S. congress, in that voters elect people who pass laws for them.

The queen of Great Britain today is Elizabeth II. Although Queen Elizabeth is an important person, she doesn't command people in the same way as an earlier queen, Elizabeth I, did.

When Elizabeth I was the queen, almost 500 years ago, kings and queens had absolute power. If Elizabeth I

wanted to increase taxes or go to war, she did. Her power was absolute—no one could say no to her.

Eventually, people began to question rulers with absolute power. In the 1700s, King George III ruled the English colonies in America. The colonists thought he made unfair laws, so they revolted and formed their own country. That was how the United States of America was formed. The king's power went to the people, who elected their leaders.

Today, most countries with monarchs have parliaments that are elected by the people. In Great Britain, Queen Elizabeth II signs bills of the government and attends important events, but she does not have absolute power. Instead, she rules with the advice of the people and their elected representatives.

In today's stories, instead of commanding their people, monarchs might ask what people think about ideas and laws. Then they might try to act so that all of their citizens get what they need.



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