

VENN DIAGRAM: COMPARE/CONTRAST of the ENGLISH BILL of RIGHTS (1689) and the U. S. BILL of RIGHTS (1791)

THE ENGLISH BILL OF RIGHTS (1689):

These are the most important articles:

1. (Royal) power of suspending or executing laws without the consent of Parliament is illegal.
2. Dispensing and executing laws by regal authority is illegal.
3. A court for religious (= Catholic) causes is illegal and destructive.
4. Levying taxes for the crown without permission of Parliament is illegal.
5. English subjects have the right to petition the king.
6. There will be no standing army in time of peace.
7. Protestant subjects may have arms for their defense.
8. Free elections of members of Parliament.
9. Freedom of speech and debates in Parliament.
10. No excessive bail, no cruel or unusual punishment.
13. Parliament ought to meet frequently; Parliament insists upon these rights as undoubted rights and liberties.

Previously, in 1628, King Charles I had agreed to the PETITION OF RIGHT, yet later violated that petition in spirit. He was sentenced to death in 1649 for the violation of the Petition of Right. These are the most important provisions from 1628 (you may compare and contrast to the provisions of the English Bill of Rights):

- No taxation without Parliament's consent.
- No arbitrary arrest.
- No imprisonment contrary to the Magna Carta.
- Enforcement of habeas corpus rights.
- No imposition of martial law.
- No exemption of public officials from due process.

Keep in mind: England had to go through a very long and bloody English Civil War from 1642 until 1651 before – forty years after the execution of Charles I – the English middle class finally seized power in the GLORIOUS REVOLUTION of 1689.

SIMILARITIES:

- Both documents sought to protect individual liberties and to limit the powers of the government.
- Individual liberties to be protected were, for example:
  1. Freedom of speech.
  2. Freedom to petition the king/ the government.
  3. Citizens' right/Parliament's right to assemble peacefully.
  4. Citizens' right to bear arms.
  5. No standing army/no quartering of soldiers.
  6. No excessive bail.
  7. No cruel or unusual punishment.
- The purpose of both documents, again, was to protect the citizenry from a potential abuse of governmental power.

DIFFERENCES:

- The English Bill of Rights addresses issues related to the king versus parliamentary authority.
- The U. S. Bill of Rights addresses issues of how to protect the liberties of individual citizens from potential abuse by the government.