



BLOOMSBURY INTERNATIONAL

The Queen



The Queen



How much power does the Queen have?

The Queen is probably the most famous symbol of Great Britain but many students often want to know what she actually does, and how much power she has as the United Kingdom's head of state.

Britain has been a constitutional monarchy since 1688, meaning that its laws are passed by the authority of its parliament not the king or queen. The Queen formally announces her government's plans for the year when she delivers the Queen's Speech during the State Opening of Parliament every autumn. But the Queen is not able to decide which laws her government will pass: that is the responsibility of the elected government, headed by the Prime Minister. Although the Prime Minister is formally appointed by the Queen, the Queen does not personally choose the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister is the elected leader of the largest political party in the House of Commons which usually has the majority of seats in parliament. But the Queen does hold a regular private meeting with the Prime Minister for 20 minutes each week so she is officially informed in person about what her government is doing.



How much is the Queen paid?

Between 1760 and 2012 the monarch and their spouse were paid by a government grant called the Civil List which covered the money they spent doing their royal duties (for example, representing the country abroad on State Visits, attending banquets and holding charity functions). Since 2012, the Queen gets paid 15% of revenues received from the Crown Estate: the land she owns within the country of the United Kingdom. The Queen's net worth was valued as being equivalent to £340 million in 2015.



Who does the Queen represent?

The Queen is not only the head of state for Great Britain & Northern Ireland; she is Head of the Commonwealth (an association of nations which were formerly colonies of the British Empire), Head of the Church of England and head of state for the Dominions: countries like Australia, New Zealand and Canada.