

The coronation of King Charles III

A Read the text

The first British coronation since 1953 will take place on Saturday, 6 May 2023. It will be the coronation of King Charles III, who officially became king when his mother passed away on 8 September 2022. Since the coronation is supposed to be a joyous occasion, a period of mourning follows a monarch's death before the next monarch is crowned. The archbishop of Canterbury performs the ceremony in Westminster Abbey in London. Invited guests include the British nobility and many heads of state from other nations. Let's take a look at the last few coronations.

The near coronation of Edward VIII

The great-grandfather of Charles III, King George V, died on 20 January 1936. His eldest son, the 39-year-old Edward VIII, who succeeded him as king, wasn't married. When he announced that he wanted to marry the American divorcée Wallis Simpson, preparations for his coronation in May 1937 had already begun. After strong opposition from the Church of England and Parliament, he was told he could not become king if he married Mrs Simpson. Saying it was impossible to carry out his duties as king without the support of the woman he loved, he abdicated on 11 December 1936. He married her in 1937 after her second divorce had become final. The two of them lived the rest of their lives mostly in France and the Bahamas.

The coronation of King George VI

The coronation of King George VI and his wife, Elizabeth, who was later known as the Queen Mother, took place on 12 May 1937. George VI became king when his brother, Edward VIII, abdicated. Edward's coronation had been planned for 12 May and therefore the same date was used for King George VI's coronation. The coronation followed the ceremony of George V's coronation in 1911, with a few changes and some new music. The procession back to Buckingham Palace was the longest coronation procession up to that time. Crowds of people lined the streets for nearly 10km. The event was designed to be not only a sacred and formal event, but also a public spectacle, which was planned as a display of the British Empire's power. The procession was an important event in the history of television, as it was the country's first major outdoor broadcast. It was also the first coronation to be broadcast on the radio.



The coronation of Queen Elizabeth II

In 1937, Princess Elizabeth was just 11 when she watched her father, King George VI, being crowned king. Her own coronation was 16 years later on 2 June 1953. Hers was the first full coronation ever to be televised. More than 25 million people in the UK and millions more around the world watched the service on television. The BBC knew the event would be popular but could not foresee that it would mark the coming of age of television, as well as the modernisation of the monarchy. The coronation also brought the nation together as people gathered in the homes of friends and neighbours and in public places like pubs and cinemas as not everyone had a television. The BBC's coronation coverage was broadcast around the world. In the United States 85 million people watched recordings of the highlights, while in Germany all eleven hours of coverage were transmitted.

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On the eve of her coronation, the Queen made a radio broadcast to the Commonwealth in which she pledged her devotion to its people, saying, "Throughout all my life and with all my heart I shall strive to be worthy of your trust." The Queen arrived at her coronation in a golden carriage pulled by eight grey horses, and wearing a white satin gown created by Sir Norman Hartnell, who had also designed her wedding dress six years earlier. The Queen also wore two different crowns: the St. Edward's Crown at the moment of the actual crowning (it weighs nearly five pounds) and the lighter Imperial State Crown when she left Westminster Abbey. Even though it weighs only three pounds, it has 2,868 diamonds, 17 sapphires, 11 emeralds, four rubies and 269 pearls on it.



Other important items which are part of the Crown Jewels collection include the Sovereign's Sceptre, the Sovereign's Orb, the Ampulla and the Coronation Spoon. In her speech, Queen Elizabeth said, "I am sure that this, my coronation, is not the symbol of a power and a splendour that are gone but a declaration of our hopes for the future, and for the years I may, by God's Grace and Mercy, be given to reign and serve you as your Queen." The Queen appeared with her family on the balcony of Buckingham Palace at 9:45 p.m. to turn on the 'lights of London'. Lights shone down the Mall, lighting Admiralty Arch and turning the fountains in Trafalgar Square into liquid silver. In 1937 it was no doubt very spectacular.

Before we look at the coronation of King Charles III and Queen Camilla, think about what elements from past coronations they might include in their own coronation and which elements they will definitely include.

The coronation of King Charles III and Queen Camilla

King Charles III was born Charles Philip Arthur George on 14 November 1948. He will celebrate his coronation with his wife Queen Camilla on 6 May 2023. Traditionally, the wife of the reigning king is given the title of Queen Consort, but the official coronation invitation is for King Charles III and Queen Camilla. Charles has waited a long time to become King. There were discussions over the years whether he would pass the title straight onto his son Prince William, but after years of preparation for this role he accepted this new 'job' at the age of 73. Charles and Camilla have been married since 2005. Charles was previously married to Princess Diana from 1981 to 1996. They had two sons together: Prince William being born in 1982 and Prince Henry (known as Harry) in 1984. In 1996 Charles and Diana were divorced. Charles married Camilla in 2005.

Camilla had previously been married to Andrew Parker Bowles. They divorced in 1995 and have two children, Tom and Laura. There are many plans for the weekend of the coronation besides the official ceremony. These include the Coronation Concert at Windsor Castle on 7 May and the Big Lunch, where neighbours and communities are expected to share food and fun together. At the Big Help Out on 8 May (also a national holiday) citizens are encouraged to volunteer and join the work being done to support their local area.



What had to be prepared in advance?

Queen Mary's Crown, which was made for Queen Mary (1867-1953) for the 1911 coronation of her husband King George V (Charles III's great-grandfather), has been removed from the display at the Tower of London. This was done so that changes could be made to the crown for Queen Camilla. Queen Mary wore the crown not only at the coronation of King George V but also for that of her son King George VI.

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St Edward's Crown, which will be used for the coronation of Charles III, has now returned to public display at the Tower of London following changes being made to it.

The Chrism oil, which will be used to anoint Charles III, has been blessed in Jerusalem. The oil was made with olives from two places on the Mount of Olives, from the Monastery of Mary Magdalene and the Monastery of the Ascension in Jerusalem. The Monastery of Mary Magdalene is the burial place of Charles III's grandmother, Princess Alice of Greece (1885-1969). The olives were pressed just outside Bethlehem and the oil has been perfumed with essential oils such as rose, jasmine, cinnamon as well as orange blossom.

Twelve pieces of music have been newly commissioned for the coronation service. They showcase musical talent from across the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth. A range of musical styles and performers blend tradition, history and ceremony with new musical voices of today, reflecting the King's life-long love and support for music and the arts. The King has personally commissioned the new music and selected the musical programme for the coronation service.

At the beginning of April eight boys between the ages of 9 and 13 were named as the **King's and Queen's pages**, whose duties include helping the King and Queen with their robes. The King has chosen his grandson, Prince George (who is second in line to the throne) and three others who are children of close family friends. Queen Camilla's pages are her three grandsons and her great-nephew.

Enjoy the coronation of King Charles III, as it will be a historic day you can talk about for generations.

B Comprehension

Answer the questions in complete sentences with information from the text.

1. When and where is the coronation of King Charles III?
2. When was Queen Elizabeth II's coronation?
3. Whom did Edward VIII marry?
4. Who was Edward VIII's brother?
5. What made Queen Elizabeth II's coronation special for the BBC? (Name three things.)
6. How old will King Charles III be at his coronation?
7. What are the names of the crowns that King Charles and Queen Camilla will wear at the coronation?
8. Where does the new music for the coronation service come from?

C Language

1. Complete these sentences about the text. Use relative pronouns: **who, which** or **that**.

- a) Edward VIII was the king _____ decided not to be crowned king.
- b) Coronations always take place in Westminster Abbey, _____ is in London.
- c) The coronation of George VI, _____ was the first coronation to be broadcast on the radio, was in 1937.
- d) Princess Elizabeth, _____ was just 11 when her father was made king, became Queen Elizabeth II.

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- e) Queen Elizabeth II rode to her coronation in a carriage _____ was covered in gold.
f) The next king after Charles III will probably be Prince William, _____ is Charles's eldest son.
g) Much of the music _____ will be played at the coronation has been written just for the occasion.
h) There will be eight pages at Charles III coronation _____ help King Charles and Queen Camilla.

2. Find words in the text that are related.

Words you know	Words in the text
a) the time after someone dies	
b) follow	
c) decide not to be king or queen	
d) show	
e) dress	
f) to highlight	
g) prepared for use at a religious ceremony	
h) to become king after Prince William	

3. Explain these words as they are used in the text. Use a dictionary if you don't know what they mean.

a) coronation

b) monarch

c) divorcée

d) outside broadcast

e) sceptre

f) orb

g) splendour

h) crown

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D Writing

Choose one of these topics to write about.

1. Imagine you watched the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953 with friends. Write a diary entry for the day. Describe what you did, what you ate, how you felt and what your friends did. Write about 150 words.
2. Think about the coronation of King Charles III and Queen Camilla. Some Britons who do not have much money believe this celebration is too expensive. What do you think? If you were an advisor to the king, what would you have suggested for the day of the coronation? Don't forget there are some traditions which are important for a coronation. Write about 150 words.

E Something fun

Match the two parts to make some interesting facts about the coronation of Elizabeth II.

1. The Gold State Coach used by the Queen and Prince Philip
2. The coronation bouquet was made of white
3. After her coronation, Queen Elizabeth
4. The coronation service began at 11:15 a.m.
5. In May 1941 a bomb hit the place where the special oil
6. Prince Charles (now Charles III) attended
7. One of the foreign journalists
8. Coronation Chicken is cold chicken

a) wore her coronation gown six times.
b) was stored so more had to be made.
c) was Jacqueline Bouvier (later the First Lady of the United States of America, Jackie Kennedy).
d) in a curry cream sauce with rice and green peas.
e) his mother's coronation.
f) was pulled by eight grey horses.
g) and lasted almost three hours.
h) flowers from England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Isle of Man.

B Comprehension

1. It is at Westminster Abbey in London on Saturday 6 May 2023.
2. It was on 2 June 1953.
3. He married Wallis Simpson.
4. King George VI/Queen Elizabeth II's father was King Edward VIII's brother.
5. It marked the coming of age of television, the modernisation of the monarchy and it brought the nation together.
6. He will be 74 years old.
7. They are called Queen Mary's Crown and St Edward's Crown.
8. They come from the UK and the Commonwealth.

C Language

1.

- a) who/that
- b) which
- c) which
- d) who
- e) which/that
- f) who
- g) which/that
- h) who/that

2.

Words you know

- a) the time after someone dies
- b) follow
- c) decide not to be king or queen
- d) show
- e) dress
- f) to highlight
- g) prepared for use at a religious ceremony
- h) will be king after Prince William

Words in text

- period of mourning
succeed
abdicate
display
gown
to showcase
blessed
second in line to the throne

3. Students write their own definitions.

D Writing

Individual answers expected.

E Something fun

1f, 2h, 3a, 4g, 5b, 6e, 7c, 8d