

**READING 6** **HISTORICAL DOCUMENT**

## English Bill of Rights

In 1689 the English people drove King James II from the throne. In an attempt to secure the supremacy of the English Parliament in government affairs, members of Parliament drafted and adopted the following Bill of Rights. Many of the rights and freedoms contained in this document were later incorporated into the Constitution of the United States and the American Bill of Rights.

**W**hereas, the late King James II . . . did endeavor to subvert [overthrow] and extirpate [wipe out] the Protestant religion and the laws and liberties of this kingdom . . . and whereas the said late King James II having abdicated [given up] the government . . . the said Lords . . . being now assembled in a full and free representative of this nation . . . declare:

1. *That* the pretended power of suspending of laws or the execution of laws by regal authority without consent of Parliament is illegal. . . .

3. *That* the commission [authority] for erecting the late [recent] court of commissioners for ecclesiastical causes and all other commissions and courts of like nature are illegal and pernicious [corrupt]. . . .

4. *That* levying money for or to the use of the crown . . . without grant of Parliament . . . is illegal;

5. *That* it is the right of the subjects to petition the king. . . .

6. *That* . . . raising or keeping a standing army within the kingdom in time of peace, unless it be with consent of Parliament, is against law. . . .

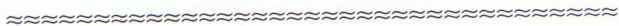
8. *That* election of members of Parliament ought to be free;

9. *That* the . . . proceedings in Parliament ought not to be impeached or questioned in any court or place out of Parliament;

10. *That* excessive bail ought not to be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

11. *That* jurors ought to be duly impaneled [put on jury duty]. . . .

13. *And that*, for redress [remedy] of all grievances and for the amending, strengthening, and preserving of the laws, Parliaments ought to be held frequently.



### THINKING CRITICALLY

1. According to the Bill of Rights, what offense did King James commit that motivated the people to write this declaration?
2. How does the Bill of Rights ensure that the people will have a voice in their government?
3. What aspects of this document identify the fact that the English government is not a pure democracy?

④ Name 3 Rights you had as an Englishman.