

arch, which means she does not 'rule' the country, but has important ceremonial and formal roles. She is also Head of the justice system, Head of the Armed Forces and Head of the Church⁸. In Government, the Queen opens each new session of Parliament, closes Parliament before a general election⁹, and agrees to all new laws¹⁰ made in Parliament. She also names the Prime Minister and meets him (or her) every week.

The Queen and her family never vote¹¹ or stand for election. The Queen must be neutral so that she can represent all people in the country.

Honours

Only the Queen can give titles of honour¹², including knighthoods* and awards for bravery**. Honours are given to all kinds of people - sports personalities, artists, politicians and doctors - but also ordinary people who work hard for their country. Some famous people who have received honours are Sean Connery (Scottish actor), Bob Geldof (Irish singer) and Cliff Richard (British singer).

How much does the Royal Family cost?

The monarchy only costs 69p a year for every person in Britain. But Queen Elizabeth II has made about £1.4

billion for charity. Also, tourists coming to the UK to see the royal palaces bring in countless millions. Some people say that a republican head of state would be less expensive, but the German presidency costs about the same as the Queen, and how many tourists go to Berlin to see the president?

What do British people think?

43% of people in the UK think that the Royal Family is worth the £36.1 million it receives each year from the taxpayer¹³. 66% of people think that Britain is a better place with a Royal family, and only 14% think that the country should become a republic. 42% say that Charles, Prince of Wales should inherit¹⁴ the throne, while 38% feel that it should pass directly to his son William, the Duke of Cambridge, instead.

It seems the British Royal Family will survive another century. Prince George, William and Kate's first child, born in 2013, will most probably become king. But he'll have to wait for his father and his grandfather before he can start trying on the crown!

LANGUAGE NOTE

- * **knighthood** – the highest award given by the Queen – the title is Sir for a man or Dame for a woman
- ** **bravery** (*noun*), **brave** (*adjective*) – not frightened of anything; heroic, strong

DID YOU KNOW?

Queen Elizabeth's full name is 211 words long!
Here is the short version of her title:

Queen Elizabeth the Second, by the Grace of God Queen of this Realm and of Her other Realms and Territories, Head of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith.

MATURITA QUESTIONS

- *The United Kingdom is a constitutional monarchy. What does that mean?*
- *Who is the UK monarch today?*
- *What does the Royal Family do in the UK?*
- *What does the Royal family do abroad?*
- *Do the British like the Royal Family?*
- *Would you like to have a queen, too?*

VOCABULARY



- ¹ **duty** ['dju:tɪ] – povinnost
- ² **event** [ɪ'vent] – událost
- ³ **to strengthen** ['streŋθən] – posílit
- ⁴ **to support** [sə'pɔ:t] – podporovat
- ⁵ **to encourage** [ɪn'kʌrɪdʒ] – povzbuzovat
- ⁶ **carer** ['keərə] – opatrovník
- ⁷ **Armed Forces** (of the United Kingdom) [ɑ:m d fɔ:sɪz] – ozbrojené síly (Spojeného království)
- ⁸ **Church** (of England) [tʃɜ:tʃ] – církev (anglikánská)
- ⁹ **election** [ɪ'lekʃn] – volby
- ¹⁰ **law** [lɔ:] – zákon
- ¹¹ **to vote** [vəʊt] – volit
- ¹² **title of honour** ['taɪtl əv 'bɒnə] – čestný titul
- ¹³ **taxpayer** ['tæks,peɪə] – daňový poplatník
- ¹⁴ **to inherit** [ɪn'herɪt] – zdědit