The Evolution of Democracy in Britain

1066 William the Conqueror > feudalism / monarchy

1215 John (Lackland) > conflict with the barons

> Magna Carta **> no taxation without consent**
> no imprisonment without a fair trial

1265 Henry III > conflict with the barons (led by Simon de Montford)

> Parliament **< 2 burghers from each borough (towns)**
< 2 knights from each shire (rural areas)

1295 Edward I

> Model Parliament **> The representative system is established permanently**

ca. 1350 Edward III

> Two-chamber system **> House of Lords (barons, bishops)**
> House of Commons (knights, burghers)

1445 –1485 Wars of the Roses > dynastic wars > decline of nobility; rise of towns

1485 –1603 Tudor period > height of (absolute) monarchial power

1603 –1688 Stuart period **(> Francis, Duke of Bavaria might be King of England, if …)**

1628 Charles I > Petition of Rights **> no billeting of soldiers**
> no taxes without the consent of Parliament
> no imprisonment without a specific charge

1679 Charles II > Habeas Corpus Act **> no imprisonment without a warrant**
> speedy trial

1689 Glorious Revolution > William III of Orange ascends the throne

Britain becomes a Constitutional Monarchy (> today: Dignified Monarchy!)

> Bill of Rights **> Parliament is to control legislation and taxation**
> No standing army without the consent of Parliament
> No cruel punishments
> Free election of M.P.s
> Freedom of speech
> Parliaments fo be held frequently

[The idea of 'natural rights' is gaining ground in the 18th century]

1832 First Reform Bill **> The franchise is extended to '10-Pound-Householders'**
> Reform of 56 "rotten boroughs"
This means that 1 out of 17 persons in the towns and 1 out of 24 persons in the rural areas can vote. The electorate comprisis about half a million people.

1867 Second Reform Bill **> The franchise is extended to working men in towns.**
The electorate comprisis about two million people.

Third Reform Bill **> The franchise is extended to working men in rural areas.**
The electorate comprisis about five million people.

1918 **> The franchise is extended to woman over 30**

1928 **> The franchise is extended to everyone over 21**

1969 **> The franchise is extended to everyone over 18**