Objectives

- Learn how monarchs gained power over nobles and the Church.
- Describe how William the Conqueror and Henry II strengthened English royal power.
- Analyze the traditions of government that developed under King John and later English monarchs.
- Explain how strong monarchs unified France.
Terms and People

- **William the Conqueror** – the Duke of Normandy, who raised an army and conquered the English throne in 1066

- **common law** – a legal system based on custom and court rulings

- **jury** – a group of people sworn to speak the truth; it decided which cases should be tried and was the ancestor of today’s trial jury

- **King John** – king of England who lost struggles with the king of France, the pope, and English nobles
Terms and People (continued)

- **Magna Carta** – a charter asserting the rights of nobles, and that the monarch must obey the law
- **due process of law** – requirement that the government act fairly and in accordance with rules
- **habeas corpus** – the principle that no person can be held in prison without first being charged with a specific crime
- **Parliament** – a council of lords and clergy that later evolved into England’s legislature
- **Louis IX** – became king of France in 1226 and led French knights in two Crusades
How did monarchs in England and France expand royal authority and lay the foundations for united nation-states?

Medieval monarchs struggled to exert their authority over nobles and the Church.

As they did so, these kings laid the foundation for European nation-states.
Three different factions had power during the early Middle Ages:

They clashed repeatedly, trying to increase their power.
Between 1000 and 1300, monarchs used several methods to increase their power.

• They set up systems of royal justice.
• They developed tax systems.
• They built standing armies.
• They strengthened ties with the middle class.
When King Edward of England died in 1066 without an heir, his brother-in-law Harold and William, Duke of Normandy, both claimed the throne.

**William the Conqueror** raised an army and defeated Harold.

The result was a blending of Norman French and Anglo-Saxon culture.
Henry II inherited the throne in 1154 and sent out royal justices to enforce common law.

England also developed a jury system during this period.
A dispute arose between Henry and the Church.

Henry claimed the right to try clergy in royal courts.

Thomas Becket, the archbishop of Canterbury, opposed him.

“What cowards I have brought up in my court. Who will rid me of this meddlesome priest?”

—Henry II

Becket was killed by Henry’s knights.
Later English kings continued to clash with nobles and the Church.

**King John**, the son of Henry II, battled with Pope Innocent III, who placed all of England under the interdict.

Barons, angry about taxes, forced King John to sign the **Magna Carta**.
Provisions in the Magna Carta formed the basis for both due process of law and the right of habeus corpus.

The Great Council of lords and clergy evolved into Parliament in the 1200s.
All of these changes meant that the power of English kings was slowly being limited.

For example, King Edward I asked Parliament to approve money for war in 1295.

“What touches all should be approved by all.”

—King Edward I
The monarchs in France did not rule over a unified kingdom.

Nobles elected Hugh Capet to the throne in 987. The Capetian dynasty lasted 300 years.
French power grew under Philip Augustus.

He became king in 1179 and, rather than appointing nobles, paid middle-class people to fill government positions.

He gained control of Normandy and began to take over southern France before he died in 1223.
Louis IX became king of France in 1226.

- Very religious, he persecuted non-Christians and led two Crusades.
- He greatly improved royal government, expanding the courts and outlawing private wars.
To gain support from the French, he set up the Estates General, a body of representatives from all three classes of society, in 1302.

This body never fully balanced royal power, however.

“God has set popes over kings and kingdoms.”

— Pope Boniface VIII
Section Review

QuickTake Quiz

Know It, Show It Quiz