

# Bill of Rights in Action



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## 'GO BOLDLY!': JOAN OF ARC AND THE HUNDRED YEARS WAR

JOAN OF ARC HEARD VOICES SHE BELIEVED ORIGINATED FROM GOD, COMMANDING HER TO LEAD THE FRENCH ARMY TO VICTORY OVER THE ENGLISH. SHE DID JUST THAT, INSPIRING HER SOLDIERS TO 'GO BOLDLY!' IN THE END, SHE FACED TRIAL FOR HER ACTIONS.

England and France fought the Hundred Years War over who should be king of France. The war began in 1337 when England's King Edward III claimed he was also the rightful king of France. Edward and later English kings based their claim on the fact that they were the heirs of William the Conqueror. In 1066, this noble had left Normandy in France and conquered England where he became king.

Edward invaded France three times during his reign and established English control of Normandy and other lands. But after Edward died, French armies regained most English-held territory.



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As a teenager, Joan of Arc (c. 1412-1431) led the French army against the British during the Hundred Years War.

Later, the insanity of France's King Charles VI led to a civil war among French nobles over who should succeed him. The most prominent noble was the king's son, the Dauphin Charles. (Dauphin was

a title applied to next male in line to inherit the throne of France.)

In 1415, England's King Henry V invaded France. At the Battle of Agincourt, his superior longbow archers slaughtered nearly half of France's noble knights. Henry went on to retake Normandy, but his goal was to conquer all of France and become king of both England and France. To help him do this, he formed an alliance with the French duke of Burgundy, who recognized Henry as king of France.

Henry also signed a treaty with the queen of the mad Charles. She disowned the Dauphin Charles as illegitimate and agreed that her daughter would marry Henry, making his successors heirs to the French throne. ▶

### LEADERSHIP

This edition of Bill of Rights in Action looks at issues related to leadership. The first article traces the life of Joan of Arc, who rallied and led French troops to victory over the English. The second article looks at Sam Houston, who served as the governor of two states and the president of the Republic of Texas. The last article examines the political life of Margaret Thatcher, the first woman prime minister of the U.K.

**World History: 'Go Boldly!': Joan of Arc and the Hundred Years War**

**U.S. History: Sam Houston: A Study in Leadership**

**Government: Margaret Thatcher and Conservative Politics in England**

The first two articles were written by our long-time contributor Carlton Martz. The last article was written by our senior writer, Damon Huss.

### WORLD HISTORY

In 1422, both Henry V and Charles VI died. Henry's successor was his infant son, Henry VI. Meanwhile, the Dauphin Charles claimed he was the rightful king of France. He had not, however, yet been crowned at Reims, the ancient site of France's coronations.

The fighting continued, but the dauphin's men grew discouraged as they lost battle after battle. The dauphin himself lacked confidence and was uncertain what to do.

In 1428, the English besieged the fortified town of Orleans, the key to invading southward into dauphin-held France. Many believed only God could save France now.

### Joan of Arc and the Voices

Joan of Arc was born in 1412 in a village loyal to Charles VI and the Dauphin Charles. Her father, Jacques d'Arc, was a peasant farmer in charge of village defenses. Her mother had been on a religious pilgrimage and taught Joan the basics of the Catholic faith.

Joan never learned to read and write, but later could sign her name. She often prayed to the virgin saints Catherine and Margaret. Above all, she was strong-willed.

Joan knew about the war between the French and English from travelers passing through her village. She was probably aware of old prophecies that France would be saved by a virgin warrior.

At age 13, Joan began to hear voices, telling her things that she believed came from God. She became convinced God wanted her to remain a virgin to serve him. As Joan grew older, the voices became more urgent about a mission God wanted her to fulfill. She believed God commanded her to rescue Orleans from the English siege, take the Dauphin Charles to Reims to be crowned, and then lead his armies to drive the English from French soil.

After convincing the governor of a nearby large town of her holy mission, he secured an invitation for her to meet with the Dauphin Charles. In late February 1429, the 17-year-old peasant girl left on her quest. She

dressed in male clothes with her hair cut short like a man. She later said her voices told her to "Go boldly!"

When Joan arrived at the royal court of the Dauphin Charles, she met privately with him. Calling herself "Joan the Maid," she said, "Most noble Dauphin, I have come and am sent by God to bring aid to you and your kingdom." Charles decided to have Catholic churchmen test her truthfulness and her virginity. The belief was that a witch or other evildoer could not be a virgin.

The churchmen asked Joan for a sign from God that she was acting at his command. Joan replied, "Take me to Orleans and I will show you signs proving why I was sent." After questioning her further, the churchmen reported to Charles that "No evil has been found in her," and she was a virgin. Charles then planned to use Joan not as a military leader but as a motivating symbol, matching her with the ancient prophecies that a virgin warrior would rescue France.

*At age 13, Joan began to hear voices, telling her things that she believed came from God.*

Joan was trained in military skills, which she quickly mastered. Charles outfitted her with a white horse and suit of armor. She acquired a special sword she said had been buried behind the altar of a church. Joan also had a large banner made that she said the voices had described to her. It had an image of Jesus in Heaven and a field of golden fleurs-de-lis (the emblem of French kings).

### Joan the Warrior

In April 1429, Joan, mounted on horseback, wearing armor, and carrying her banner, led Charles' army of high-ranking nobles to rescue Orleans. The English had encircled Orleans with a series of forts. But a gap

allowed Joan and the army to pass into the city. The people wildly greeted Joan the Maid.

The next day, Joan sent an ultimatum, which she had dictated, to the duke of Bedford, who led the English forces in France. She demanded that the English

do right by the King of Heaven and surrender to the Maid sent by God . . . [and] depart in God's name for your own country. . . . [If] you refuse this, I am a captain of war, and wherever I find your men in France, I will force them to leave. . . . If they refuse to obey, I will have them all killed. I am sent by God, the King of Heaven, to chase you one and all from France.

She added that the Dauphin Charles was the true heir to the throne of France. "God wills it," she declared.

A few days later, she came upon a strategy meeting among the commanders of Charles' army. She had not been invited, but she barged in anyway and demanded to be included in the planning. The commanders, as in the past, were cautious and reluctant to attack. Joan disagreed and called for immediate bold assaults on the English siege forts.

Over the next few days, Joan personally led the French soldiers in directly attacking the scattered forts, usually by scaling their walls with ladders. Often she took off her helmet so the soldiers could see her, encouraging them with her cry of "Go boldly!"

On the last day of fighting at the key fort, Joan without a helmet was wounded by an arrow in the neck. She left the battle to have it tended to, but then returned to push for the final victory. The English, sure they had killed her, were shocked and began murmuring that she must be a witch. As for Charles' men of war, Joan was their leader now.

The English withdrew from Orleans, which was a spectacular French victory, exploding the long-held belief that the English were invincible. Joan then turned to her next Godly

command: to take Charles to Reims to be crowned. She believed this would make him the unquestioned king of France who would rally all French people to him.

To get to Reims, Joan's army mounted swift attacks on a string of English strongholds. Joan led the attacks she ordered. She was the first to climb a scaling ladder. She never personally killed anyone and sometimes shed tears when an enemy fell in battle. Joan also became expert at military strategy and tactics, especially the use of artillery. More than anything else, she restored the will to fight among her soldiers.

Wherever she went, the people cheered her as an angel from God. Many struggled in crowds to touch her or even her horse. While the French loved her, the English feared her.

The crowning of the dauphin as King Charles VII took place at Reims Cathedral on July 17, 1429. Joan, holding her banner, stood beside him.

Joan wanted to capture Paris, held by the duke of Burgundy. But Charles decided to negotiate with him instead. The negotiation proved to be a cover by the duke to strengthen his Paris defenses.

Charles then allowed Joan to gather a small force to attack Paris. For the first time, she failed. Her own legend of invincibility collapsed. Charles disbanded the entire royal army. He still believed he could negotiate a treaty with the duke, which, if successful, he thought would demoralize the English and cause them to give up their long quest for the French throne. Joan believed this could only be done by soundly defeating the English and their Burgundy ally.

Charles let Joan continue to fight with pick-up troops and mercenaries because of her great popularity with the French people. But on May 23, 1430, the duke of Burgundy's men captured her. They sold Joan to their ally, the English. Still wearing male clothing, she was taken to the English-occupied city of Rouen. King Charles did nothing to rescue her.



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The duke of Burgundy's men captured Joan of Arc and sold her to the British.

### Joan's Trial for Heresy

The English agreed to have Joan tried and executed for heresy (beliefs or acts contrary to Catholic Church teachings). If Joan were convicted of heresy, her voices that said God willed Charles to be the king of France would be found false, thus undermining his claim to the throne. The English could then crown their young King Henry VI monarch of France and finally settle who should inherit the French throne, which was the whole point of the Hundred Years War.

The English had no other lawful way to get rid of Joan since her only other offense was simply humiliating them in battle. If the heresy trial failed to convict Joan, however, the English were clearly ready to take her to England and dispose of her there.

Joan was tried in a French Catholic Inquisition court, which decided if a person was a heretic and, if so, attempted to bring him or her back to the church. The duke of Bedford, governing English-held France in the name of 9-year-old Henry VI, appointed Bishop Pierre Cauchon to be chief judge at Joan's trial. Although French, Cauchon had served English kings for most of his career.

Cauchon assembled a large group to participate in questioning Joan at her trial. They included another judge from the office of the French Inquisition plus numerous religious experts, church lawyers, and other churchmen who acted as advisers to the two judges. Nearly all were French who sided with the English.

Two notaries took notes during the trial sessions and wrote up a summary at the end of each day. This trial transcript exists today.

Cauchon presented no formal charges against Joan, a violation of normal Inquisition trial procedure. She agreed to take an oath to tell the truth, but only on condition that she would not speak about what the voices revealed to her because this was God's will. Cauchon and the others decided to proceed anyway.

Joan's trial started in late February 1431 and went on for three months. It mainly consisted of Cauchon and others questioning Joan. She told Cauchon, "You say you are my judge. Consider well what you do, for in truth I am sent by God, and you put yourself in great peril."

Joan, without anyone helping her, amazed her accusers by outwitting their every attempt to trap her with her own words. She argued, stalled, changed the subject, and used sarcasm. When asked what sign from God she gave Charles at their first meeting, she replied, "Go and ask him." She resisted talking about the voices, but said they were spoken by the virgin saints Catherine and Margaret and sometimes by angels.

After accomplishing little in trying to get Joan to incriminate herself, Cauchon and the expert advisers finally drew up a list of 70 charges against her. They accused her of being a witch, enchantress, and false prophet. They charged her with making war, "cruelly thirsting for human





Joan of Arc was sentenced by an Inquisition court to be burned at the stake.

blood,” and wearing the clothes of men, all acts of blasphemy (irreverence) against God. Her voices were either imagined or came from “a spirit of evil.”

To Cauchon and Joan’s other accusers, her greatest heresy was her failure to submit entirely to the authority of the Catholic Church. Joan said she did submit to the church, but would not agree to say anything that would violate the commands she had received from God. She requested to be taken to the pope for his judgment, but was told he was too far away.

The questioners focused on Joan’s repeated refusal to give up her male clothing as clear physical evidence of her heresy. Also troubling to the questioners was Joan’s heresy of personally communicating with God through the voices rather than doing so through the church. Joan refused to confess to the charges of heresy, even after being threatened with torture and burning at the stake.

Cauchon declared the trial over and read her sentence of death by fire before a pro-English crowd. He prepared to turn Joan over to the Rouen civil authorities to review the judgment of the

Inquisition trial and carry out her execution (religious law prohibited the Church itself from doing this).

Suddenly, Joan cried out that she recanted (denounced) her revelations from the voices and submitted entirely to the church. A shocked Cauchon read to her a document, listing the charges of heresy against her. She accepted and signed it, thus saving herself from the fire. Cauchon sentenced her to imprisonment for life. The English were enraged that she would not be burned.

One of the conditions of accepting Joan back into the church was for her to abandon her male clothes and take on the dress of a woman. She did this, but a short time later put the male clothes on again. She said she took everything back she had just promised the church because the voices told her God was displeased she had betrayed him to save herself from the fire. Cauchon told Joan, “We declare you a relapsed heretic” for making her confession with a “false heart.”

On May 30, 1431, Joan was taken by English soldiers to the marketplace of Rouen. The English were impatient and pressured Bishop Cauchon to hand her over directly to the executioner without first having the civil officials review her conviction and punishment.

Joan was bound to a stake on a platform for all to see and then set afire. As she perished, she cried “Jesus!” many times. Her ashes were thrown into the nearby Seine River. She was 19.

### Primary Sources: How Do We Know So Much about Joan of Arc?

1. **The still-existing transcript of Joan of Arc’s three-month trial.** While not word-for word, the transcript contains more detail of what Joan was asked and what she said than exists in the record of any other medieval Inquisition trial. Due to this primary source, we know about her childhood, Catholic faith, mission, aptitude for warfare, motivation, and ability to argue with highly educated church officials.
2. **The record of witness statements taken during Joan’s re-trial.** In 1455, a Catholic Church commission interviewed 115 witnesses under oath about Joan’s amazing life and heresy trial. The witnesses included Inquisition trial participants, but not Bishop Cauchon, who had died. Other witnesses were soldiers who fought beside her, her relatives and friends, common people from her village, nobles, and churchmen.
3. **Letters dictated by Joan.** Joan dictated about a dozen letters, three of them signed. The most famous is the “Letter to the English” that she sent to the Duke of Bedford and others before fighting them at Orleans. This letter reveals that she was bold not only in her desire for action, but also in her rhetoric even though she could not read or write.

The use of a primary source raises questions of its reliability. Is it authentic? Is it biased? Can it be verified by other sources? Most historians who have studied the primary sources by and about Joan of Arc say that they come closest to the truth about her as is possible after nearly 600 years. What do you think are the advantages of using primary source material?

## End of the Hundred Years War

A few months after Joan of Arc was burned at the stake, 10-year-old King Henry VI of England was crowned Henri II of France at Paris. That meant France had two kings claiming the throne, since Charles VII refused to submit to the English.

The previously timid Charles grew in confidence and modernized his armies. He recaptured most of the English-held lands. In 1453, the French won the last major battle of the Hundred Years War. But the conflict lingered on into the next century until England lost its last foothold in France in 1558. The Hundred Years War, which lasted more than 100 years, proved to be the longest in world history.

\* \* \* \* \*

In 1450, King Charles VII ordered an investigation, later joined by the Catholic Church, into Joan's heresy conviction. A church commission conducted a re-trial, which examined the Inquisition trial transcript and statements by many eyewitnesses. In 1456, the church cleared her of heresy. In 1920, it made her a saint.

Today, we know a lot about Joan the Maid. But mystery still remains surrounding her and those voices.

## DISCUSSION & WRITING

1. Why do you think Joan of Arc, an illiterate peasant girl, became such an amazing military leader?
2. Some have called Joan of Arc's trial a political one rather than a religious one. Do you agree or disagree? Why?
3. How do you explain Joan of Arc's voices?

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## Excerpts from the Letter of Henry VI

Written at Rouen, June 8, 1431

With wondrous presumption, this woman whom the common people called the Maid rose up against natural decency, clothed in men's attire and armed as a soldier, and dared to mingle in the slaughter of men in fierce combat, and to take part in battles. She even presumed to boast that she was sent by God to wage war, and that Michael, Gabriel, and a great host of other angels, along with the holy virgins Catherine and Margaret, visibly appeared to her.

\* \* \*

At last, seeing his people thrust too readily toward new and dangerous beliefs before it was proved whether the spirit was from God, divine mercy took compassion on them and delivered the woman into our hands and power.

Although she had inflicted great damage upon our nation and brought many troubles to our kingdom . . . our intention was not at all to avenge the injury . . . We were asked by the bishop in whose diocese she had been captured to surrender her for judgment to the jurisdiction of the church.

. . . Therefore, as befits a Christian king honoring [church] authority with a son's affection, we immediately delivered this woman to the judgment of Holy Mother Church. And [the bishop] conducted a most worthy trial in the matter, with great solemnity and suitable dignity . . .

\* \* \*

Now, in order for this wretched sinner to be cleansed of [her] wicked crimes . . . she was warned repeatedly for many days with kind entreaties to cast off all error, to enter the straight path of truth, and to beware the grave danger to her body and soul. But the spirit of pride had so filled her heart that sound doctrines and wholesome counsels could in no way soften her iron heart . . . Worst of all, she acknowledged no earthly judge and would submit to no one but God alone . . . so scorning the judgment of our supreme [pope], the general council, and the universal church . . . But before the reading [of her sentence] was concluded . . . she submitted to the rule of the church and with full voice recanted. . . her errors and ruinous crimes . . .

\* \* \*

But the fire of her pride, which had seemed quenched, was revived by demonic winds and kindled into destructive flames, and the miserable woman returned to her errors and lying follies that she had earlier vomited forth. Finally . . . she was handed over to the judgment of [civil] authority, which determined that her body should be consumed by fire. Seeing her end near, the wretched woman openly acknowledged and plainly confessed that the spirits that she often claimed had appeared to her visibly were evil, lying spirits; that they had falsely promised to free her from prison, and she admitted that she had been tricked and deceived. . .



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## ACTIVITY

### Fair Account or Propaganda?

The "Letter of Henry VI to the Emperor, Kings, Dukes, and Other Christian Princes" was written several days after Joan of Arc was executed at Rouen. The letter was composed by the counselors of the English king, who was then 9 years old. The letter presented to Europe's leaders an account of Joan's life, trial, and execution.

1. Students in small groups should read the excerpts from this letter and investigate this question: **Was the letter of King Henry VI a fair account of Joan of Arc's life, trial, and execution, or was it English propaganda?**
2. Each group should compare the letter's account with that of the consensus of historians discussed in the article.
3. Each group should cite textual evidence from the letter and article to back up its conclusion.
4. The class should then hold a discussion of the activity question.

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## Standards

### Joan of Arc

**National High School World History Standard 23:** Understands patterns of crisis and recovery in Afro-Eurasia between 1300 and 1450. (9) Understands the significance of Joan of Arc (e.g., her role in the Hundred Years War, her subsequent trial and execution, the Church's review of her trial 25 years later, and her revered image as a patron saint of France).

California History-Social Science Standard 7.6: Students analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures of the civilizations of Medieval Europe. (3) Understand the development of feudalism, its role in the medieval European economy, the way in which it was influenced by physical geography (the role of the manor and the growth of towns), and how feudal relationships provided the foundation of political order. (8) Understand the importance of the Catholic church as a political, intellectual, and aesthetic institution (e.g. founding of universities, political and spiritual roles of the clergy. . . .).

Common Core Standard RH.6-8.1 and RH.9-10.1: Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

Common Core Standard RI.7.8: Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient to support the claims.

Common Core Standard RI.9-10.8: Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and fallacious reasoning.

### Sam Houston

**National High School U.S. History Standard 9:** Understands the United States territorial expansion between 1801 and 1861, and how it affected relations with external powers and Native Americans. (3) Understands shifts in federal and state policy toward Native Americans in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (e.g., arguments for and against removal policy, changing policies from assimilation to removal and isolation after 1825). (6) Understands Mexican and American perspectives of events leading up to the Mexican-American War (e.g., the Alamo, the treatment of Mexicans and Cherokees loyal to the Texas Revolution in the Lone Star Republic prior to 1846).

**National High School U.S. History Standard 11:** Understands the extension, restriction, and reorganization of political democracy after 1800. (2) Understands the positions of northern antislavery advocates and southern proslavery spokesmen on a variety of issues (e.g., race, chattel slavery, the nature of the Union, states' rights).

**National High School U.S. History Standard 13:** Understands the causes of the Civil War. (2) Understands events that fueled the political and sectional conflict over slavery and ultimately polarized the North and the South (e.g., the Missouri Compromise, the Wilmot Proviso, the Kansas-Nebraska Act)

California History-Social Science Standard 8.7: Students analyze the divergent paths of the American people in the South from 1800 to the mid-1800s and the challenges they faced. (2) Trace the development of slavery; its effects on black Americans and on the region's political, social, religious, economic, and cultural development; and identify the strategies that were tried to both overturn and preserve it. . . .

California History-Social Science Standard 8.8: Students analyze the divergent paths of American people in the West from 1800 to the mid-1800s and the challenges they faced. (6) Describe the Texas War for Independence and the Mexican-American

War, including territorial settlements, the aftermath of the wars, and the effects the wars had on the lives of Americans. . . .

California History-Social Science Standard 8.9: Students analyze the early and steady attempts to abolish slavery and to realize the ideals of the Declaration of Independence. (4) Discuss the importance of the slavery issue as raised by the annexation of Texas and California's admission to the union as a free state under the Compromise of 1850. (5) Analyze the significance of the States' Rights Doctrine. . . , the Compromise of 1850, the Kansas-Nebraska Act (1854). . . .

California History-Social Science Standard 8.10: Students analyze the multiple causes, key events, and complex consequences of the Civil War. (3) Identify the Constitutional issues posed by the doctrine of nullification and secession. . . .

Common Core Standard WHST.6-8.1 and 11-12.1: Write arguments focused on discipline specific content. . . .

Common Core Standard RH.6-8.2 and 11-12.2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source. . . .

Common Core Standard SL.11-12.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

### Margaret Thatcher

**National High School Civics Standard 5:** Understands the major characteristics of systems of shared powers and of parliamentary systems. (2) Understands the major characteristics of parliamentary systems . . . (3) Understands the relative advantages and disadvantages of the various ways power is distributed, shared, and limited in systems of shared powers and parliamentary systems . . .

California History-Social Science Standard 12.9: Students analyze the origins, characteristics, and development of different political systems across time, with emphasis on the quest for political democracy, its advances, and its obstacles. (2) Compare the various ways in which power is distributed, shared, and limited in systems of shared powers and in parliamentary systems, including the influence and role of parliamentary leaders (e.g., William Gladstone, Margaret Thatcher).

Common Core Standard RH.1112.3: Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.

Common Core Standard RH.1112.6: Evaluate authors' differing points of view on the same historical event or issue by assessing the authors' claims, reasoning, and evidence.

Common Core Standard SL.1112.4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.

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