

# History of the the hundred years war history essay



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The Hundred Years' war was a series of wars lasting for a little over a hundred years. The war itself was between two royal houses, House of Valois and Plantagenet, who were fighting over the French throne. At the time it had been vacant due to the demise of the Capetian line of French Kings. It all originally started because the House of Valois tried to claim the title of the King of France of course the Plantagenet from England also thought they had some stake in the throne as well. The Plantagenet were kings from the 12th century. Where it gets a little tricky is the fact that they had ancestry in the French region of Anjou and Normandy. This gave rise to a war that lasted 116 years.

Throughout the 116 years that the war took place there were certain moments of peace. But for the most part this war waged on for well over one hundred years. Some would not even call it a war but out of the books I looked at it was more of a series of "conflicts." The conflicts themselves were broken down into four phases.

The first of these phases was the Edwardian War from 1337-1360. This was spawned by the Treaty of Bretigny. This war was mostly marked with English victories. At one point in the war, France had reached a state of almost complete anarchy and civil war within themselves. The result of this phase was a peace treaty that according to author Desmond Seward, 'humiliated' France. The peace however did not even last ten years and gave rise to the Caroline War.

The Caroline War was coined after the Charles V of France. It was the conflict that lasted from 1369-1389. The French wanted to resume the war after

being forced to sign the treaty of Bretigny. The war itself stemmed from the Black Prince refusing to come to France. He felt as though it was an illegal summons. Charles wanted the prince to meet him in Paris and of course when he did not he declared war. Ending the nine years of peace that they had. This time however the French were actually successful. They were able to take back territories that were once lost in the treaty. At this point the French and English were able to come together in " peace."

This peace was able to go on until the year 1415. That is when the Lancastrian War began. It was named after the fact that it was thought up by Henry IV. Who at the time it was the first House of Lancaster to sit at the throne of England. But at this point Henry V of England invaded Normandy. The English were successfully dominating this war until the arrival of Joan of Arc in 1429. Which at this point through a series of failed attempts the English had to retreat once again. But only for a short while, the end of this war saw the most power that England had up to this point. There was an English King crowned in Paris.

The war however started to decline after the arrival of Joan of Arc in 1429. Britain's fortune began to dwindle due to the high costs of the war. There were a series of conflicts that spawned from this. They were the Breton War of Succession, Castilian Civil War, The War of Two Peters and finally the 1383-1385 Crisis.

As mentioned before the Hundred Years' war was not a straight hundred years. It was broken down in to a numerous amount of conflicts. Author Desmond Seward pointed out " The wars themselves took a long time

because at that time it took a while to get to these places. They were sieging cities and provinces. So at times it could take decades of maneuvering.”

The battles were not always just fought on empty fields. This was a war of power which could mean starving out cities and forcing Kings out of their kingdoms. The fact that these were both well rooted countries. Seward noted again “ They had centuries to find their identities so it took time to settle back down in to their respective sides.” Then there is simple facts that yes the wars took time but there was also many years of peace in between them. So that alone is enough to extend the length of the war.

The most important advantage in the Hundred Years’ war was the use of allies. No matter how great their respective militaries were they could not have done it without the use of help. The Allies for the French included but were not limited to Castile, Genoa and Scotland. In all France had by the end of war seven countries that were on their side. They were greatly outnumbered however by the English who held strong with over nine different allies. One thing that could have helped France was that it was their country that they were fighting for. Which in turn could have made the battles more personal and important. But this led to another huge advantage for the English. This war was completely fought on French soil. This resulted in devastating loses for the French. Both Military and civilian lives were lost.

As I said before the fact that the war was fought on French soil was devastating for the French in that aspect. Angus McBride pointed out “ Much of their farmlands were in ruins, the population was in crisis due to war, famine and the eventual Black Death”. During the course of the war with

England, France also had smaller civil wars and there was the definite unrest felt by the general population. However France was able to take back its land from the English. One positive outcome that was felt by the country was the destruction of the feudal nobility. This meant that the country was able to unite France under the royal authority to promote and be allies with the middle class. Leading to France becoming one of if the not the most powerful country in the world.

The English fared equally as good by the end of the war. Though they did not have to deal with as much physical damage. There was financial burdens that were left from the ongoing struggle. One of the biggest changes though was that the war helped shape England's political stances. After the war England enthusiasm for war seemed to decrease. With the financial strain from the war they stopped partaking in conflicts that did not fully benefit them as a country. England was a much stronger country after the war than before. Sadly as mentioned above they both felt a massive loss due to the outbreak of the black death.

The Hundred Years' war was a war fought for power. It was not for any sort of social movement or the betterment of the people. It was simply a dynastic based conflict. It was fought by weak leaders and marked by tragedy of the people. But in the end the war was deemed necessary for French to expel the English from their country and to regain the throne that was rightfully theirs to begin with.