Development of Parliament, 481–1500

Tribal Assemblies to 930

Saxons, Norse (Vikings), and Frankish chiefs would gather their most important men together to discuss plans and resolve disputes.



Kings and Nobles 481–1000

Tribal chiefs conquer larger areas often in former Roman lands. The most powerful chiefs become kings. Less powerful chiefs become nobles.



Royal Court 900–1200

The king gathers his friends and important nobles to advise him and do the basic work of government.



"Speakings" 930–1350

The king gathers his most important subjects to announce policies. The English and French call these gatherings "parliaments," from the French word for "speaking."



House(s) of Nobles

1250-1500

Nobles in parliament give their opinions. Kings find it easier to check the mood of parliament before making decrees official. In many places, parliaments permanently gained the power to approve and initiate legislation through tradition and law. In other places, tradition favors unchecked royal power.



House of Commoners

1250-1500

As towns and smaller landholders become more important economically and militarily, kings invited these groups to the parliament. Commoners gradually gain equal power with the nobles as kings find commoners more loyal than the nobility.

