



Comparing Llywelyn ap Gruffydd and Edward I



Before you try the task, watch the video about Llywelyn ap Gruffydd and the story of the 'Prince of Wales' title first.'

Read this information about these two important figures in Welsh and English history and then tackle the tasks!

Llywelyn the Last and Longshanks

Llywelyn ap Gruffydd, the last Welsh born Prince of Wales, and Edward I of England, known as Longshanks (due to his height and long legs), and the Hammer of the Scots, were two leaders whose lives and reigns were deeply linked by conflict.

Both men were ambitious, strong-willed, and determined to shape the political landscape

of Britain in the 13th century. Despite their shared qualities as leaders, they had opposite goals. One wanted Welsh independence and the other wanted Wales under English rule. This set them on a collision course that ended in bloodshed and a Wales that was changed forever.

Leadership and Ambition

Llywelyn ap Gruffydd's leadership was marked by his



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An artist's impression of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd
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commitment to Welsh unity and independence. As Prince of Wales, he wanted to lead the often argumentative Welsh lords, creating a united front against the looming English Crown.

His vision of an independent Wales led him to assert his authority not only through military campaigns but also through diplomatic efforts. An example would be the Treaty (or agreement) of Montgomery (1267) where he was officially recognised as 'Prince of Wales'. Llywelyn's determination and refusal to give in to English

demands made him a symbol and a hero of Welsh resistance. This meant at times that he fell out with potential allies among other Welsh leaders.

Edward I, by contrast, was a king who wanted a centralised and large English monarchy. His ambition was to bring the British Isles under English control, a goal he pursued relentlessly in Wales, Scotland, and Ireland. Edward was a skilled military strategist and an astute politician, using force and law to assert his authority. His conquest of Wales, marked by building his massive castles and giving his son the title of Prince of Wales,



A painting of Edward I c. 1280
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showed that he could combine military might with symbolic gestures to cement English power.

Character and Ruling Style

Both leaders were practical and wouldn't give in, though their methods and personalities differed. Llywelyn was regarded as a principled leader, deeply committed to his people and his vision of Welsh independence.

He was often described as brave and resourceful, though his stubbornness and uncompromising nature sometimes isolated him. His personal life, including his marriage to Eleanor de Montfort, reflects his tendency to mix personal relationships with political strategy. This also brought him into further conflict with Edward I.

Edward I was a complex figure, blending personal devotion with a ruthless approach to ruling. He was a loving husband to his first wife, Eleanor of Castile, and a devout Christian. However, these traits were overshadowed by his relentless and often ruthless pursuit of power.

Edward didn't hesitate about using harsh measures, such as the expulsion of Jews from England in 1290 and his brutal campaigns in Wales and Scotland, to achieve his goals.

The legacy of two leaders

The legacies of Llywelyn and Edward are very different. Llywelyn is remembered as a hero and martyr for Welsh independence, his death in 1282 symbolising the end of a free Wales.



Detail from Llywelyn's Monument Cilmeri

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Edward, on the other hand, left a mixed legacy. He strengthened the English monarchy, reformed its legal system, and made it more powerful by taking land from its neighbours. His campaigns, however, caused immense suffering and resistance in the territories he wanted to control.

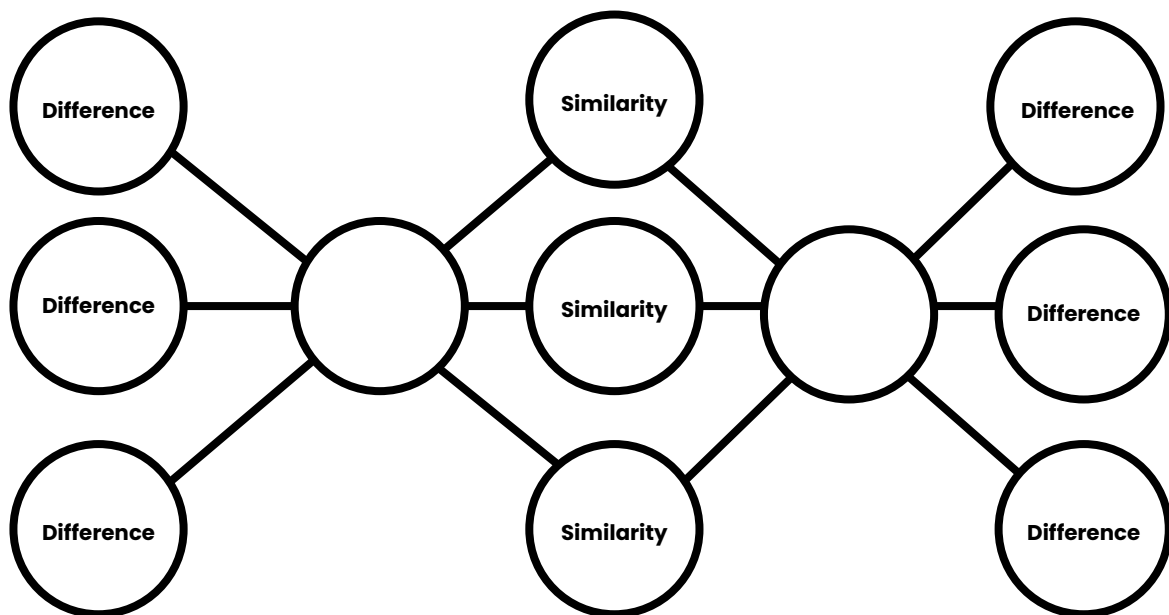
In the end, Llywelyn and Edward represent two opposing forces in medieval British history. One, fighting to preserve a nation's independence, the other determined to impose unity through conquest. Their clash remains a defining moment in the history of Britain to this day.



Task 1

Comparing Edward and Llywelyn

Using a bubble map, write down the **differences** and **similarities** between both Edward and Llywelyn as characters.



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Task 2

Team Edward or Team Llywelyn?

In groups, film a vlog with one member of the group portraying the character of Llywelyn and the other member playing the character of Edward, on the morning of the battle of Cilmeri. You can use a free Adobe video package available through Hwb.

You could talk about:

- Why this battle is happening
- Your opinion of your enemy
- Why you are the best person to rule over Wales
- What you hope to achieve at the end of the battle

You could share these vlogs with other groups and gather votes to find out who is 'Team Edward' and who is 'Team Llywelyn'.



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