

# NOT BORING MEDIA

## THE 335-YEAR WAR THAT NOBODY FOUGHT

High-Interest Nonfiction Reading Passage

### WHAT'S INCLUDED

- ✓ Reading Passage ✓ Comprehension Questions
- ✓ Answer Key ✓ Teacher Guide

GRADES 4-6 • LEXILE ~750L • DOK LEVELS 1-4

*Reading they'll actually do.*

## NOT BORING MEDIA — TERMS OF USE

### TERMS OF USE

Thank you for your purchase! By purchasing this resource, you agree to the following terms:

- **FOR YOUR CLASSROOM:** You may use this resource with your own students, print copies for your classroom, and save to your personal computer.
- **PLEASE DO NOT:** Share this resource with other teachers (please direct them to purchase their own copy), post this resource online where it can be publicly accessed, or claim this resource as your own.
- **NEED MULTIPLE COPIES?** Additional licenses are available at a discount. Please contact us or check our store for site license options.

### CREDITS & COPYRIGHT

© Not Boring Media. All rights reserved. This resource was created for single-classroom use only.

### WHAT'S INCLUDED

- ✓ High-interest nonfiction reading passage (300-400 words)
- ✓ 6 comprehension questions spanning DOK levels 1-4
- ✓ Complete answer key with explanations
- ✓ Teacher guide with standards, pacing, and extensions

Questions or feedback? Leave a review or message us through TPT!

© Not Boring Media

Reading they'll actually do.

# THE 335-YEAR WAR THAT NOBODY FOUGHT

In 1651, the Netherlands and a tiny group of islands off the coast of England went to war. The conflict lasted 335 years—and not a single shot was ever fired.

The strange story begins during the English Civil War. The Isles of Scilly, located off the southwestern tip of England, were held by Royalist forces loyal to King Charles I. Dutch ships had been helping the Parliamentarian side, and Royalist ships based in Scilly began attacking Dutch vessels in revenge.

The Dutch were furious. In 1651, they sent an admiral to demand compensation for their losses. When the Royalists refused, the admiral declared war—not on England, but specifically on the Isles of Scilly. Shortly after, the Royalists surrendered to Parliamentarian forces, and everyone simply forgot about the Dutch declaration.

For over three centuries, the 'war' technically remained in effect. There was no peace treaty, no formal ending. The Netherlands and the Isles of Scilly were technically still at war, though neither side remembered or cared.

The situation was rediscovered in 1985 by a historian named Roy Duncan. He contacted the Dutch Embassy and pointed out the unusual situation. The Dutch thought it was hilarious. They agreed that something should be done about this ancient conflict.

On April 17, 1986, the Dutch ambassador to the United Kingdom traveled to the Isles of Scilly to sign a peace treaty. After 335 years, the 'war' was finally over. The ambassador joked that it must have been terrifying for the islanders to know that the Dutch could have attacked at any moment.

The 335-year conflict holds the record for the longest war in history—and the most peaceful. It reminds us that bureaucracy can outlast common sense, and that sometimes the most dangerous-sounding situations turn out to be the silliest.

As the Dutch ambassador said while signing the peace treaty: 'It must be a relief to know you can sleep safely at night.'

Word Count: 320 | Lexile: ~750L | Grades 4-6 | Source: The Guardian

## COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**1 How long did the 'war' between the Netherlands and the Isles of Scilly last?**

- A) 35 years
- B) 135 years
- C) 335 years
- D) 500 years

**2 How many shots were fired during this war?**

- A) Thousands
- B) Hundreds
- C) A few
- D) None

**3 Why did the Dutch originally declare war on the Isles of Scilly?**

- A) The islands had valuable treasure
- B) Royalist ships based there were attacking Dutch vessels
- C) The Dutch wanted to conquer England
- D) It was a training exercise

**4 Why did the war last so long without anyone fighting?**

- A) Both sides were too scared to attack
- B) Everyone forgot about the declaration of war, and there was no peace treaty
- C) The war was interrupted by other wars
- D) The islands sank into the ocean

5

**What does the author mean by saying 'bureaucracy can outlast common sense'?**

- A) Governments are always wise
- B) Official paperwork and formalities can persist long after they make any practical sense
- C) Common sense always wins
- D) Bureaucracy should be eliminated

6

**What broader lesson about conflict and resolution does this story illustrate?**

- A) All wars last hundreds of years
- B) Formal endings matter, and unresolved situations—even forgotten ones—can technically persist indefinitely
- C) The Netherlands is always at war
- D) Small islands should never declare independence

## ANSWER KEY

### The 335-Year War That Nobody Fought

**1. C) 335 years**

DOK 1 — Recall. The passage states: 'The conflict lasted 335 years.'

**2. D) None**

DOK 1 — Recall. The passage states: 'not a single shot was ever fired.'

**3. B) Royalist ships based there were attacking Dutch vessels**

DOK 2 — Inference. The passage explains: 'Royalist ships based in Scilly began attacking Dutch vessels' and when they 'refused' compensation, 'the admiral declared war.'

**4. B) Everyone forgot about the declaration of war, and there was no peace treaty**

DOK 2 — Inference. The passage states: 'everyone simply forgot about the Dutch declaration' and 'There was no peace treaty, no formal ending.'

**5. B) Official paperwork and formalities can persist long after they make any practical sense**

DOK 3 — Analysis. The 'war' continued for 335 years only because no one filed the proper paperwork to end it, even though the actual conflict was irrelevant. The formality outlasted any real purpose.

**6. B) Formal endings matter, and unresolved situations—even forgotten ones—can technically persist indefinitely**

DOK 4 — Extended Thinking. The war persisted because no one formally ended it. This suggests that proper closure—whether in conflicts, relationships, or agreements—matters, even when the original dispute seems irrelevant.

## TEACHER GUIDE

The 335-Year War That Nobody Fought

### STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.1 — Refer to details and examples in a text
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.4 — Determine meaning of words and phrases
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.8 — Explain how author uses evidence
- C3 Framework — Historical thinking skills

### PACING OPTIONS

- Quick Read (10-15 min): Passage + questions 1-4
- Standard (20-25 min): Full passage + all questions
- Deep Dive (35-40 min): Add discussion + extension

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- The 'war' continued for 335 years because no one filed paperwork to end it. What other examples can you think of where bureaucracy outlasts common sense?
- The Dutch ambassador joked about the situation when signing the peace treaty. Why is humor sometimes the best way to handle absurd situations?
- Should historians spend time researching obscure facts like this forgotten war? What value does this kind of knowledge have?

### EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

- Research the English Civil War and create a timeline showing how the Isles of Scilly ended up in the middle of the conflict.
- Write a satirical news report announcing the 'end' of the 335-year war as if it were a major international peace agreement.
- Find another example of an old law, treaty, or agreement that technically remains in effect even though it's outdated and no one follows it.

### DIFFERENTIATION

- Struggling: Pre-teach vocabulary, partner reading
- Advanced: Add research, compare to related events
- ELL: Visual supports, pre-teach context

### SOURCE

- The Guardian / Mental Floss