

Historical Enquiry 2: Was Henry VIII a Renaissance prince?



Characteristics of a Renaissance prince	Evidence from Student sheet 11	Additional evidence from textbooks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be prepared to cheat and lie 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be prepared to kill and give out harsh punishments 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be prepared to appoint wise men to be his advisers 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be prepared to keep advisers in his debt by giving them many honours and responsibilities 		

Henry VIII and the break with Rome

In the 1520s and early 1530s, Henry VIII was in direct conflict with the Pope, who was the head of the Catholic Church. England, like other European countries, was a Catholic nation, obedient to the Pope in Rome. However, some people were very critical of the way the Church was run and felt that the Church abused its power for its own ends. These people, like the German Monk, Martin Luther, were called Protestants and they were setting up breakaway churches. Henry was a Catholic, who even wrote a book defending the Church, which gained him the title 'Defender of the Faith', but he needed a divorce and the Pope would not grant him this right. In addition, Henry was short of money and the Church was very wealthy, owning a great deal of land throughout the kingdom. In 1534, Henry's Parliament passed the Act of Supremacy, which made him, and not the Pope, the supreme Head of the Church of England, who had full power to change the Church.



Why did Henry break with Rome?

Cut out the following statements and rank them in a diamond formation with the most significant statement first. (Your teacher will explain how diamond-ranking works if you are unsure.)

Henry wanted a divorce from Catherine of Aragon so that he could marry his lover, Ann Boleyn. Pope Clement VIII would not agree to this.

Henry wanted a son, as he believed that no woman would be able to rule the land. Catherine was unable to have any more children. Divorce was vital.

Henry was sympathetic to the ideas of the Protestant, Martin Luther and rejected Catholicism.

Henry was short of money and he realised that left him in a weak position. The Church and its monasteries were very rich. If Henry could get hold of this wealth, he could continue to support his extravagant court life and pay off his debts.

The Church was corrupt and many priests and monks led immoral lives.

Henry saw money from England going in taxes to Rome. He resented this and saw no reason for the Pope to have such an influence on his kingdom.

The Papacy was supporting one of his great rivals the Emperor Charles V. Charles was related to Catherine of Aragon and would not allow the Pope to grant the divorce.

Henry's advisers wanted to break with Rome and Henry gave way to them.

The people of England wanted to abandon the Catholic Church in favour of Protestantism. Henry thought that a break with Rome would make him more popular.

The Glorious Revolution (1688)

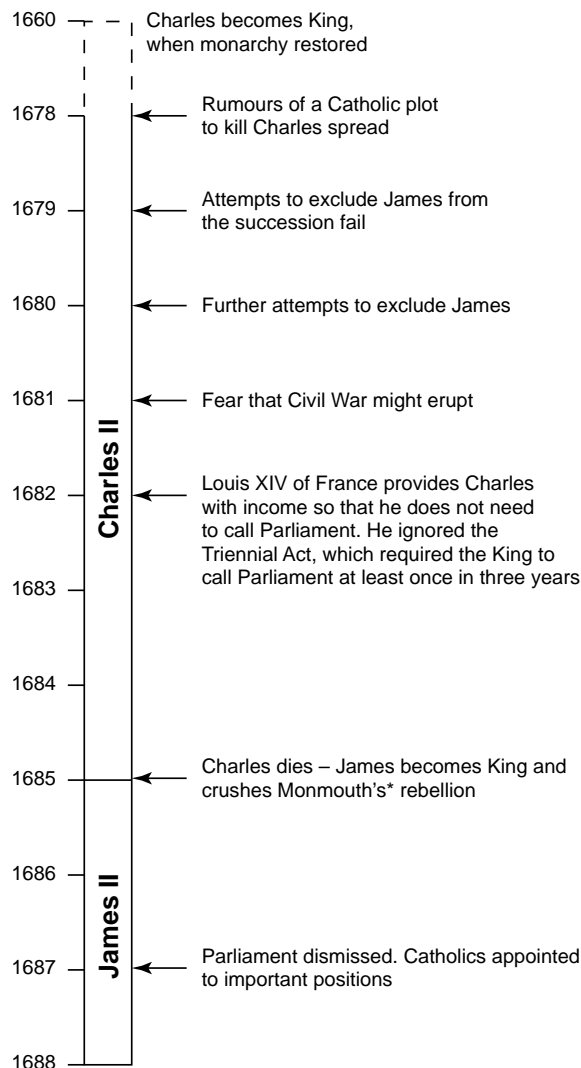
After the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, the kingdom enjoyed a period of peace and calm. Charles II had been a popular king and skilful statesman, who successfully increased the power of the monarchy. He had been careful not to upset people about religion and concealed, from Parliament and the country as a whole, the fact that he was strongly drawn to Roman Catholicism. He knew that wherever Catholicism was strong, the monarchy was strong. However, he did not become a convert until he was on his deathbed.

When he died in 1685, he had no legitimate children to succeed him, so his younger brother James, Duke of York, became King. However, the reign of James II, a Catholic, was to be one of the shortest in British history and he was removed from the throne in what has been called the Glorious Revolution.

The sources of evidence on this sheet are to help you discover why James was replaced by his daughter Mary and her husband, William of Orange, in a peaceful revolution.

Source A: "The new King (James II) had much to be said in his favour. He was honest and he wanted to see his country great again, a major power in Europe..."

Source B A Timeline of events



Tensions rise between Parliament and monarchy



Charles II



James II

* Illegitimate son of Charles II

Source C: During the reign of Charles II, Parliament split into two groups (the Whigs and the Tories*) over James' decision to become a Roman Catholic. The Whigs were opposed to a Catholic becoming the next King and they tried to place a bar on the accession of James. The Tories were supporters of the idea of the Divine Right of Kings and were happy to support James as long as he promised to protect the Church of England. The Tories and Charles won the day.

*Whigs believed that the monarchy should not have too much power. They tended to support Protestant non-conformists (eg Quakers) and were anti-Catholic. Tories thought it was wrong for people to criticise the King. Strong supporters of the Church of England, they were very hostile to Protestant non-conformists.

Source D: When James became King most people accepted him and saw him as the rightful heir to the throne. Even when Charles II's illegitimate son, the Duke of Monmouth, who was a Protestant, landed in England with a small army, the country remained supportive. Parliament provided the King with money for an army and James, who had already proved himself as a successful soldier, was able to put down the rebellion at the battle of Sedgemoor in Somerset. The Duke of Monmouth was captured and executed, while his supporters were either put to death or transported to the New World. The treatment of the rebels was seen by many as too harsh and concerns were expressed by James' decision to build up a large standing army to protect him from further rebellions.

Source E: Most people in Britain were prepared to accept James in the knowledge that his daughter from his first marriage was heir to the throne. Mary was a Protestant, who was married to William of Orange, leader of the Dutch people in Holland. William was an enemy of Louis XIV, the French King and most powerful Catholic monarch in Europe. However, in June 1688 James' wife claimed to give birth to a son. Some courtiers called him the 'warming pan prince' because they said that he must have been smuggled into the Queen's bed in a warming pan. Many people became worried that there would now be a long line of future Catholic monarchs. They feared a return to Catholicism and closer links with France.

Source F: After crushing the forces of the Duke of Monmouth, James began to act more like his father, Charles I. He began using old medieval powers and suspended many laws made by Parliament. He announced that Catholics and groups like the Quakers could worship freely and hold jobs in the army and in government. James, like his father, ruled without Parliament. Many people were worried that the King, who believed in the idea of the 'Divine Right of Kings', was becoming all powerful and that soon he would do away with the Church of England and the country would be forced back to Roman Catholicism.

Source G An extract of a message sent by MPs to William of Orange: 'The people are so unhappy with what the King has done about religion and freedom that 19 out of 20 of them want a change... Some of the most important lords would join you as soon as you landed in England'. (William landed at Torbay and began to march to London. James' army began to desert, so James fled to France. The English and Scottish Parliaments invited William and Mary to become joint rulers in return to them agreeing to the Declaration of Rights, which gave Parliament more power.)