As the market leading A-level History publisher, you can trust us to provide the resources you need to help your students reach their potential; with Access to History, endorsed textbooks, CPD, Modern History Review, digital resources and more to help you plan, teach and deliver the new A-level specifications.

This sample chapter is taken from AQA A-level History: Stuart Britain and the Crisis of Monarchy 1603–1702

To pre-order or request Inspection Copies of other titles in the series, visit www.hoddereducation.co.uk/ALevelHistory/AQA

AQA A-level History

These titles have been selected for AQA’s official approval process.

Develop and expand your students’ knowledge and understanding of History at A-level through expert narrative, progressive skills development and bespoke essays from current historians on key debates.

Titles in this series:

AQA A-level History: The Tudors: England 1485–1603
9781471837586 June 2015 £24.99

AQA A-level History: Stuart Britain and the Crisis of Monarchy 1603–1702
9781471837722 June 2015 £24.99

AQA A-level History: Britain 1851–1964: Challenge and Transformation
9781471837593 May 2015 £24.99

AQA A-level History: Tsarist and Communist Russia 1855–1964
9781471837807 June 2015 £24.99

AQA A-level History: Germany 1871–1991: The Quest for Political Stability
9781471837760 June 2015 £24.99

AQA A-level History: USA 1865–1975: The Making of a Superpower
9781471837609 May 2015 £24.99

Our AQA A-level History series will also be available as Student eTextbooks – downloadable versions of the printed textbook that teachers can assign to students so they can:

g Download and view on any device or browser

g Add, edit and synchronise notes across 2 devices

g Access their personal copy on the move

To trial the student eTextbooks for free, visit www.hoddereducation.co.uk/dynamiclearning

For more information on our resources available to support the new AQA specification, visit www.hoddereducation.co.uk/ALevelHistory/AQA.
Contents

Introduction

Part 1: Absolutism Challenged: Britain, 1603–49
Introduction to Part 1

Section 1: Monarchs and Parliaments, 1603–1629

Chapter 1: The Political Nation
1 The English monarchy in 1603
2 Economy and society in 1603
3 The impact of The Reformation

Chapter 2: Kings and Parliaments, 1603–29
1 The reign of James I, 1603–25
2 The early reign of Charles I, 1625–29
Working on essay technique and interpretation skills

Part 2: Revolution, 1629–1649

Chapter 3: Charles I: Personal Rule and Political Breakdown, 1629–40
1 The Personal Rule of Charles I, 1629–37
2 The failure of the Personal Rule, 1637–40
Working on essay technique and interpretation skills

Chapter 4: Division and conflict, 1640–46
1 From crisis to war, 1640–42
2 The military struggle, 1643–46
Working on essay technique and interpretation skills

Chapter 5: Radicalism and Regicide, 1646–49
1 The impact of war, 1642–46
2 The search for peace, 1646–48
3 The Army Revolution, 1648–49
Working on essay technique and interpretation skills
Part 2: Monarchy Restored and Restrained: Britain, 1649–1702

Introduction to Part 2

Section 1: From Republic to Restored and Limited Monarchy, 1649–1678

Chapter 6: Republic and Restoration, 1649–60
1 The Republic and its enemies, 1649–51
2 The failure of the Commonwealth, 1651–54
3 The Protectorate and its problems, 1654–58
4 The restoration of monarchy, 1658–60
Working on essay technique and interpretation skills

Chapter 7: The Restoration of the Monarchy – The reign of Charles II, 1660–85
1 The restoration of Stuart monarchy
2 Charles II and the nature of restored monarchy
3 The Popish Plot and the Exclusion Crisis, 1678–82
4 A Second Stuart despotism, 1682–85?
Working on essay technique and interpretation skills

Section 2: The Establishment of Constitutional Monarchy, 1678–1702

Chapter 8: The Reign of James II: Political Breakdown, 1685–89
1 The Collapse of Royal Power – the reign of James II
2 Invasion and Revolution
3 The Glorious Revolution and the settlement of 1689
Working on essay technique and interpretation skills

Chapter 9: The Rule of William and Mary
1 The establishment of constitutional monarchy, 1689–1702
2 The condition of the monarchy by 1602
Working on essay technique and interpretation skills

Further reading
Glossary
Index
This chapter covers the reign of James I and the early years of Charles I’s reign, ending with the breakdown of his relationship with Parliament in 1629. It deals with a number of key areas:

- James I and Charles I (their character, attitudes and Courts)
- The financial weakness of the Crown and attempts at reform
- Religious issues and divisions
- Relations and disputes with Parliaments
- The parliamentary crisis of 1629

When you have worked through the chapter and the related activities, you should have detailed knowledge of all those areas. You should be able to relate this knowledge to the key breadth issues defined as part of your study, in particular the changing powers of King and Parliament, and the relationship between them.

For the period covered in this chapter the main issues can be phrased as a question:

**Why did tensions develop between King and Parliament to the point where they were in open conflict by 1629?**

The focus of the question is on the development of tensions and the range of causal factors that contributed to that development, as set out briefly in the chapter summary below.

**CHAPTER SUMMARY**

In 1603 James VI of Scotland inherited the throne of England in the traditional way, as the nearest relative of the preceding monarch. His accession to the throne was therefore both expected and widely welcomed in England, as it was by no means unusual for one monarch to rule over different and separate states and peoples, as James was now to do. Nevertheless, in 1625 when James died, his relationship with his English subjects was marred by disagreements and tensions in Parliament, and a level of mutual suspicion that would pose problems for his successors.

However, his immediate successor, Charles I, was already playing an active role in government, and it was in his reign that the difficulties of 1625 turned into the conflict of 1629. The material set out in this chapter addresses a range of factors that contributed to this situation – the underlying structural problems facing the monarchy in 1603, the role of key individuals in dealing with them, and the impact of events elsewhere, for example in Europe. By considering the impact of each factor, and the way in which the different parts of the situation combined and interacted, you can begin to explain the causes of tension and the extent to which they suggest that the way England was governed had to change.
1 The reign of James I, 1603–25

This section examines James' religious policies, his relations with Parliament, government and finance and his foreign policy. In all of these areas of government James had to begin with the conditions that he inherited from his predecessors – a mixed inheritance. On the one hand he inherited a stable system of government in which royal power was accepted across the kingdom and exercised through a legal system that drew on the Common Law and tradition, while also enshrining areas of direct power through the exercise of the royal prerogative. Alongside this he inherited a relatively prosperous and well-ordered society, with increasingly educated and able administrators and systems of social control in the Poor Laws and a state Church.

At the same time, however, as head of the Church of England he inherited responsibility for hugely contentious issues that could affect key individuals at every level of society. In addition he faced significant financial problems, made worse by an ongoing war against Catholic Spain and a rebellion in Catholic Ireland, which affected the power of the Crown to carry out decisions and policies at home and abroad. Perhaps most significantly, the essential forum for dealing with these matters was no longer simply the Royal Court and Privy Council, but included an increasingly necessary, but increasingly independent and articulate, section of the wider political elite under the form and name of a Parliament.

Religious policies
How well did James handle religious problems?

Asserting royal authority

The accession of James I was greeted with relief by most of Elizabeth's subjects – a male Protestant king with several children offered the prospect of security and a stable succession. There were many who expected his accession to be to their advantage. Catholics hoped that respect for his dead mother, Mary, Queen of Scots, would encourage the King to ease the persecution that they suffered, while Puritans hoped that his upbringing in the Presbyterian Church of Scotland would lead him to favour their plans for reform. In the event, both were disappointed. James did suspend the collection of fines for recusancy, but when faced with complaints in Parliament, and perhaps regretting the loss of income, he had reimposed them by 1604. This encouraged an extremist minority to look for help from Spain, and led to the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, in which Catholic conspirators attempted to blow up Parliament while the King was present.

The initial hopes of the Puritans, expressed in the Millenary Petition, were also short-lived. James agreed to meet them at a conference held at Hampton Court in 1604, but at the meeting he rejected their ideas and warned them that if they would not conform to the rules laid down in the Prayer Book he would 'harry them out of the Kingdom'. Like Elizabeth, James saw the Church primarily in political terms (as an institution that upheld royal power) and was determined to maintain his control through bishops appointed by, and dependent on, him. He followed up his uncompromising stand by appointing the authoritarian Richard Bancroft as the new Archbishop of Canterbury. Bancroft enforced rules contained in the Anglican prayer book on the use of ceremonies and ceremonial dress, and some ministers lost their livings because of their refusal to conform. A few hardy souls left the country in order to set up their own independent churches, emigrating first to Holland and later to the...
New World to establish Puritan colonies in North America. Most, however, remained within the Anglican Church and tried their best to conform while hoping for better things.

Compromise and coexistence

Within a few years, however, James had softened his stance considerably. Having asserted his authority, he was wise enough to see that political harmony could best be achieved by avoiding unnecessary provocation. Although recusancy fines continued to be levied, the policy was intermittently applied, and discreet Catholics could often worship undisturbed for long periods. Similarly, Puritan ministers who conformed to the Prayer Book occasionally in recognition of the King's authority could often ignore unpalatable rules and ceremonies for much of the time. In 1611, when Bancroft died, he was replaced by the more sympathetic George Abbot, who treated Puritan sensitivities with tact. Puritan ministers were expected to demonstrate their obedience to the King by occasional use of signs and ceremonies that they disliked. In return, they were left largely undisturbed.

In addition, James did recognise the need to improve the numbers and quality of the clergy, and shared the Puritan enthusiasm for good preaching. He had no objection to the widespread practice of lay impropropriation, which enabled gentry with Puritan sympathies to ensure that Puritan preachers were appointed to many parish livings. Supporters also endowed weekday lectures, often to be held in market towns, which enabled Puritan ministers to preach for a living without undertaking the ceremonial duties required of a parish minister. While the arrangements may have lacked neat logic, they did provide a measure of peace in the Anglican Church, and allowed Puritan reformers to coexist with others as one faction within it.

Meanwhile, in Scotland, James took cautious steps to bring Presbyterian practice into line with English arrangements. By 1621 he had persuaded the Scots to accept bishops, albeit with limited powers. An attempt to establish a Prayer Book similar to that used in England aroused great opposition, and James withdrew it until a more favourable opportunity arose. By such cautious and tactful measures he hoped gradually to bring the two Churches together and to create uniformity across the two kingdoms.

Conclusion – an area of achievement

The success of James' approach to the religious problem can be seen from the relatively few complaints voiced in Parliament. These were mainly limited to grumbles that recusancy fines were not levied rigorously enough, or that the King's foreign policy was insufficiently 'Protestant'. Shortly after his accession he brought Elizabeth's long, expensive war with Spain to an end. While some of the 'hotter sort' of Protestants and Puritans might have reservations about this, the peace was wise and financially necessary. In general terms, religion was not a major cause of tension in Parliament, until the outbreak of the Thirty Years War in 1618 (see pages 36–8) created new conflicts across Europe.

Relations with Parliaments

Why did James clash with Parliaments in the first years of his reign?

The Commons Apology

Despite the success of James' religious policies, in the first few years of his reign, the political atmosphere soured, with both King and Parliament showing
signs of irritation. In 1604 there was a disputed election in Buckinghamshire and a clumsy attempt by the Privy Council to reverse the result in favour of the Court candidate, Sir John Fortescue, produced an angry protest from the House of Commons. Although entitled as a Commons Apology, it was in fact an assertion of their rights (see Source A).

Source A From the Commons Apology of 1604.

Although entitled as a Commons Apology, it was in fact an assertion of their rights. All experience shows that the prerogatives of princes may easily, and do daily, grow [but] the privileges of the subject are for the most part, at an everlasting stand. They may be by good providence and care preserved, but once being lost are not recovered but with much disquiet.

The Divine Right of Kings

The House of Commons was already sensitive on the matter of its rights and privileges, after its difficulties with Elizabeth (see page 18). MPs may also have been concerned about the King's extravagant claims to divine power and status. James had always regarded himself as something of a political philosopher. In 1598 he had published a learned work entitled The True Law of Free Monarchies, in which he had claimed that:

‘Kings are justly called gods for that they exercise a manner or resemblance of divine power on earth’

and that:

‘they make and unmake their subjects, they have power of raising and casting down, of life and death.’

He also claimed that while 'a just monarch would delight in conforming to his laws' a king was, in fact, above the law, because he made it. To James this was simply a logical argument, but it is likely that such rhetoric gave many MPs cause for concern.

Whatever the reason, the House reacted sharply in asserting the right of the Commons to determine their own membership. James reminded MPs that their privileges had been granted by monarchs, and, by implication, suggested that they might be removed in the same way. In practice, however, he applied his theories with a measure of tact. Faced with the Apology, he defused the crisis by suspending the parliamentary session, and quietly allowing the Buckinghamshire issue to be dropped.

Union with Scotland

When Parliament reassembled in 1605–06, a mood of Protestant unity, created by the Gunpowder Plot, led to reconciliation and a parliamentary grant to settle the King’s debts. However, problems were already emerging in relation to the King’s Scottish background and the role of his Scottish friends, and now came to a head over his desire for an Anglo-Scottish constitutional union. Wales and Ireland were effectively conquered territories, and could be treated as subordinate to England, but Scotland was an independent kingdom. Either James must continue to rule it separately, or a new relationship with England must be established.

James desired a ‘perfect’ union, which would amalgamate the best Scottish and English institutions, seeing the possibility for reform and improvement of the governing system in both kingdoms. However, many Englishmen were deeply anti-Scottish – a legacy of past hostilities that had been aggravated by the new
King’s numerous gifts of titles and pensions to his Scottish friends and courtiers. MPs refused to countenance the idea that English institutions could be improved by importing any Scottish ideas. One of them, Sir Edwin Sandys, suggested that the ‘perfect’ union could be achieved by abolishing Scottish law and replacing it with the law of England. ‘If one man owns two pastures’, declared one MP, ‘with one hedge to divide them; the one pasture bare, the other fertile and good; a wise owner will not pull down the hedge, but make gates to let them in and out, otherwise the cattle will rush in and not want to return.’ To refer to the Scots as cattle was deeply insulting to the King, but James’ generosity to his Scottish companions was deeply resented, and wider problems regarding the King’s finances were already mounting. It was this issue of finance that was to cause the most serious damage to the relationship between King and Parliament.

Government and finance, 1603–24

Why did James I face financial problems?

By 1607 James had been forced to abandon any ideas of a constitutional union between England and Scotland, in part because it was already becoming clear that a far more serious cause of conflict would arise from the financial problems facing the Crown, and the failure of James to recognise this and act consistently in dealing with it. His generosity to his Scottish courtiers may have been particularly resented, but was, in fact, only part of a far wider extravagance that led to quarrels over taxation and revenue throughout his reign. Contemporaries, and some historians, were deeply critical of his financial management, and with some justification. However, Elizabeth had also faced financial problems, and further consideration of Crown finances, both before and after 1603, suggests that in both cases the difficulties arose from more fundamental weaknesses.

Revenue and resources

The financial problems faced by the Crown arose from two factors. The first was that years of rising prices had left royal income increasingly inadequate for the expenses of government. The second was that James’ handling of money and some aspects of his lifestyle amounted to financial irresponsibility, and made a difficult problem far worse. Table 1 on page 32 shows the nature and sources of royal revenue. According to the political conventions of the time, the King was expected to ‘live of his own’ in peacetime, that is, to finance government and maintain his household out of ordinary revenue and the customs duties that he was granted at the beginning of his reign. By 1603, that had become impossible, for a number of reasons:

- Before 1600, a combination of price inflation and Elizabeth’s sales of Crown land to finance the war with Spain had made ordinary revenue inadequate. James inherited a debt of approximately £100,000.
- As a family man, James’ expenses were bound to be greater than those of Elizabeth – he had to maintain a wife and children, including a separate establishment for the heir to the throne, the Prince of Wales.
- In addition, Elizabeth had failed to update tax assessments in line with inflation. Combined with an inefficient system of collection, this meant that even when Parliament did grant extra taxes, the King received much less than was intended.

KEY DATES: KING AND PARLIAMENT

1603 James becomes King; Buckinghamshire election leads to quarrel in Parliament and Commons Apology presented in 1604.
1605–07 Debates over constitutional links with Scotland lead to tension and failure of James’ plan for Anglo-Scottish union.
Faced with these difficulties, James’ chief financial adviser, Robert Cecil (created Earl of Salisbury in 1605) tried a variety of strategies. A legal ruling given in 1606, when a merchant named Bates challenged the King’s right to impose new customs duties, was used to issue a new Book of Rates in 1608. This imposed new duties on some goods and increased the rate of payment on others. These ‘impositions’ were deeply resented, and complaints were raised in Parliament in 1610 and again in 1614. The issue was not only financial, but had significant implications for royal powers and the legal rights of both Parliaments and individual taxpayers, as Source B illustrates.

Source B
From The Judgement of Chief Baron Fleming in Bates’ Case, 1606.
The judgement was given when a merchant named Bates refused to pay new customs duties imposed by the King.

The King’s power is double [two-fold], [and consists of the] ordinary and [the] absolute … That of the ordinary is for … particular subjects, for the execution of civil justice, and this is exercised by equity and justice in ordinary courts, and is known as common law, and these laws cannot be changed without Parliament. The absolute power of the king is … that which is applied to the general benefit of the people, and this power is most properly named policy and government. This absolute power varies according to the wisdom of the king for the common good; and these being general … all things done within these rules are lawful.

There was further indignation among MPs when the sale of monopolies was renewed (most had been abandoned by Elizabeth amidst great public rejoicing).
While the complaints were significant in themselves, they also contributed to the failure of Cecil’s more fundamental reform, the Great Contract. This was a plan whereby the King would give up some of the more irritating feudal dues that he could still levy from his subjects and tenants, in return for a regular parliamentary income of £200,000 a year. Had it been successful, the plan would have placed royal finances on a sound basis. As it was, both sides had reservations which caused them to withdraw. While the King was aware that he would lose a useful means of controlling his more powerful subjects, the House of Commons were wary of providing an income that might give the King financial independence. As the lawyer, James Whitelocke (who was an MP 1610–22), pointed out, ‘Considering the greatest use they make of assembling Parliaments, which is the supply of money’, there was reason to believe that Parliament would be giving up their most valuable weapon in obtaining redress for any grievances.

**Barriers to reform**

While most of these difficulties were unavoidable, and caused as much by the reluctance of MPs to face reality as by government errors, they were compounded by the behaviour of James himself. He significantly overestimated the wealth of his new kingdom, and was consistently overgenerous towards his friends and favourites, to the extent of being financially irresponsible. Complaints that he exclusively favoured his Scottish cronies were not entirely fair, but he was particularly generous to some of his Scottish friends. In 1606, when Parliament granted three subsidies to settle his debts, James promptly gave £44,000 to three Scottish friends. In 1611 he gave away £90,688, with £67,498 of it going to eleven Scotsmen. This, however, was only part of a wider problem relating to the King’s lifestyle and the behaviour of many of his courtiers. James’ love of hunting, his preference for the company of handsome young men, and his excessive eating and drinking set a tone which degenerated into corruption and scandal. Even efficient ministers like Cecil (Earl of Salisbury) lined their own pockets from the proceeds of government, and the behaviour of Thomas Howard, Earl of Suffolk, who eventually became Lord Treasurer after Cecil’s death in 1612, amounted to embezzlement.

Problems increased in 1614 with the fiasco of the Addled Parliament – a term used by James himself when he dissolved the 1614 parliament after the Commons failed to vote taxes and became embroiled in a bitter dispute with the Lords. In an attempt by the powerful Court faction led by Thomas Howard to discredit possible rivals, rumours had been spread of government interference in elections, raising serious concerns among MPs about their rights and privileges. This was followed by complaints about extravagance at Court and the increased use of impositions to pay for it. The rival factions focused mainly on blaming each other and the result was their total failure to manage the Commons, leading eventually to conflict between the two Houses and procedural paralysis. James ended the session and dissolved Parliament in disgust, but the fault lay mainly with his own management of his courtiers and councillors.

**Finance and Administration: the fundamental problems**

James’ homosexual relationships and the Overbury scandal (see box on page 34) showed a Court guilty of sexual licence and murder – and the wider political nation found it doubly insulting when the King asked them to pay for it. In part the problems reflect the personality and character of the King, but it was also the result of fundamental weaknesses within the system of government itself.
The basic problem lay in the system of patronage by which the King was expected to reward those who served him. Most offices in government were unpaid and it was normal for ministers and advisers to be rewarded by the grant of pensions or, for example, the right to collect fines and payments related to particular government courts and departments. Hence there was little distinction between a valid payment for work carried out, and a simple gift to a friend or favourite. The system also encouraged courtiers to take gifts and bribes for providing access to the King or pleading an individual’s case – and there was a fine distinction between such customary practices and outright corruption. While Cecil grew rich by staying just on the right side of it, Lord Chancellor Bacon threw away an equally promising career by straying over it. In 1621 he was impeached by the Commons for taking bribes, and although pardoned by the King, he was dismissed from office, fined £40,000, and banned from sitting in Parliament.

The court of King James: corruption and scandal

The more self-respecting of the Lords preferred the retirement of their mansions … to Court masques [plays] in which ladies were too drunk to perform their parts, divorce cases and adulteries, and the whisper, scarcely hushed, of scandals yet more vile.

G.M. Trevelyan, England under the Stuarts, 1904

There were numerous complaints about the general tone of James’ Court, and the drunkenness and gluttony practised by the King and many courtiers. The King was addicted to hunting and this gave him the occasion to enjoy young male company, of which he was equally fond. His open affection towards certain favourites raised questions as to whether he was actively homosexual. Despite a marriage and large family, he clearly had homosexual tendencies, although it is less clear that he indulged them physically. The more established nobility particularly resented the power and wealth given to the favourites, who were placed above them in influence and status.

The first of these favourites was Robert Carr, a young Scot whom James created Earl of Somerset. In 1613 Carr fell in love with Thomas Howard’s daughter, Frances, then Countess of Essex, and a divorce was hastily arranged on the grounds that the Earl of Essex was impotent. This was probably untrue, but the Howards were anxious to secure a marriage with the King’s favourite. The marriage led to a huge scandal in 1616, when Carr and his wife were found guilty of involvement in the murder of his secretary, Sir Thomas Overbury, and imprisoned in the Tower. They were later pardoned by James, but were banished from Court.

Carr was replaced in James’ affections by the young George Villiers (later to become the Duke of Buckingham), who had been introduced to the Court by a rival faction in 1613. By 1618 he had taken control of royal patronage. The Howards therefore introduced a handsome rival, William Monson, to the King’s circle, provoking Buckingham to destroy them. With plentiful evidence collected by his protégé, Lionel Cranfield, he brought charges of corruption against the Earls of Nottingham and Suffolk, securing their dismissal from office and Suffolk’s trial in 1619. Buckingham was, and remained, supreme.

Cranfield’s attempts at reform

The nature of these problems can be demonstrated by considering the attempts to reform the King’s finances undertaken by Lionel Cranfield. In 1618 he became Master of the Court of Wards, and later Lord Treasurer and Chancellor of the Exchequer. He established a series of interlocking commissions to examine royal finances, and by 1620 he had reduced the King’s household expenses by over 50 per cent. By 1621 it seemed that King, courtiers and MPs were at last co-operating to deal with the government’s problems.

However, this was an illusion. Cranfield did make some difference, but he had risen to power through the influence of Buckingham, the King’s personal favourite and a product of the very factional rivalry and corruption that lay at the heart of the problems. At least part of Buckingham’s enthusiasm for reform lay in the fact that he could use it to bring about the downfall of his rivals, the
By 1620 he had taken control of the whole system of royal patronage, relieving James of the burden of making appointments, and using it to reinforce his own power as well as to line the pockets of his large and needy family. While he encouraged Cranfield’s efforts, he never allowed the new financial restraints to extend to himself, and the prosecution of Bacon in 1621 was partly managed by Buckingham to deflect attacks on his own power.

Even worse, Cranfield himself proved to be no different. In 1624, now Earl of Middlesex, he tried to extend his own influence at Buckingham’s expense by introducing the King to his handsome nephew. Buckingham arranged his fall by encouraging members of Parliament and resentful courtiers to impeach him for bribery. Cranfield had certainly taken bribes as Master of the Wards, and he now paid the price.

Cranfield’s failure illustrates the complexity of the Crown’s financial problems, and the difficulty of reforming the system from within. It also indicates that the difficulties faced by James were more deep-seated than personal extravagance. It was not only that income was inadequate, it was also badly managed. Essentially, the English monarchy lacked both resources and the means to manage them effectively. Without a professional, salaried civil service, the King had to rely on patronage and pensions to reward his servants; unless carefully monitored and controlled, this invited corruption.

George Villiers, Duke Of Buckingham (1592–1628)

George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, was born in 1592, and educated at Billesdon School, Leicestershire. His father, Sir George Villiers, was a member of the minor gentry of the county, but the family fortunes were transformed by his son’s charm and good looks. He was introduced to the King in 1613, in an attempt to undermine the influence of Robert Carr and the Howards. In 1614 he was appointed Cup-bearer to the King, and knighted and made a Gentleman of the Bedchamber in 1615. There is little doubt that his relationship with the King had homosexual elements, the full extent of which are impossible to gauge. Buckingham undoubtedly exploited the King’s sexual preferences but private letters written to James by his ‘Stenie’ reveal genuine affection. Certainly, Buckingham was charming and affable, no more ambitious and somewhat less vicious than other royal favourites.

From 1615 his rise in status was swift. He became Viscount Villiers in 1616, Earl of Buckingham in 1617, Marquess in 1618 and Duke of Buckingham in 1623. His rapid rise and the manner of his influence incensed the more established nobility, and his control of offices, selling of titles and creation of monopolies caused bitter resentment. Attempts to undermine him, however, were unsuccessful, as Cranfield discovered. He was skilled in the factional politics of the Court, and although he relieved the King of some of the burdens of government, he personified much that was wrong with the political system. Essentially, he was able to manipulate royal patronage in the interests of himself and a large number of needy relatives. Nevertheless, his influence on affairs of state was limited, and James remained in control of key policies.

It was not until he became chief adviser to Charles I that his political influence proved disastrous. Initially disliked by the reserved and pious Charles, he was able to win his friendship during the visit to Spain in 1623 (see page 39), and thereafter his political influence and significance increased. With a young and uncertain monarch, Buckingham was able to indulge his own pride and ambition, and embark on an aggressive foreign policy that England could ill afford. While he was capable, and even gifted, in controlling and manipulating Court rivalries and factions, he lacked statesmanship and had no political vision to pursue. The wars against Spain and France in which he embroiled England from 1624–27 had no clear purpose and were inefficiently managed. In 1628 he was described by MPs as the ‘cause of all our miseries’, but it has to be said that Buckingham’s responsibility for England’s troubles was shared with a monarch who identified totally with his favourite’s decisions and protected him at the cost of his own relationship with Parliament. When Buckingham was assassinated at Portsmouth in 1628, by an ex-army officer named John Felton, Charles wept alone while his people celebrated.
The effects of financial weakness

In these circumstances, the King had little choice but to ask Parliament for grants of taxation to supplement his income, and members were often ready to grant such aid. However, problems arose for two reasons. The first was that MPs were likely to be aggravated if they felt that the Crown’s financial difficulties arose from the King’s extravagance or the greed of courtiers. The second was that the King was also driven to apply other financial strategies, such as impositions and monopolies, which caused further friction. While these were offensive in themselves, driving up prices and restricting trade, they also raised constitutional issues. Friction between King and Parliament over finance led to quarrels over rights and privileges. Between 1606 and 1614 the issue of impositions raised concerns in Parliament about whether its right to control taxation was being eroded. This worry remained strong for many years and it certainly contributed to Parliament’s refusal to grant Tunnage and Poundage to Charles for life in 1625. In 1621 the desire to pursue the monopolists led Parliament to revive the medieval procedure of impeachment (see page 34) as a means of calling the King’s advisers to account.

The significance of financial problems was therefore threefold: they revealed serious problems within the structure of government; they caused a deterioration of the relationship between James and the political nation; and they raised constitutional issues concerning the rights and prerogatives of Parliament and of the King. In isolation, these problems could be dealt with by negotiation and compromise, but by 1621 political tension was increasing dangerously as a result of other problems relating to religion, foreign policy and war. In the parliamentary sessions of 1621 and 1624, these separate problems became interwoven in a way that made them much more difficult to handle, and created serious tensions between the rights and privileges claimed by Parliament and the King’s exercise of his power and prerogatives.

Foreign policy and war, 1618–23

How did events in Europe create problems for James and his Parliaments?

Since 1604, when he had ended Elizabeth’s war with Spain, James had kept England at peace. This was partly a matter of necessity, since he could not afford to finance military action, but it was also a matter of preference. James hoped that by standing aside from the religious struggles enveloping Europe he could maintain contact with both Catholic and Protestant powers, and act as peacemaker. Hence he married his daughter Elizabeth to a German Protestant prince, the Elector Palatine, and sought a Spanish Catholic wife for his son Charles.

His friendship with the Spanish ambassador, Gondomar, was regarded with suspicion by many of his subjects, whose fear of Catholic influence was exceeded only by their bitter memories of Spanish plots and Spanish threats against Elizabeth. Nevertheless, James hoped to cultivate contacts with the Habsburg rulers of Spain by marrying his son Charles to the King of Spain’s daughter, the Infanta Isabella. Problems arose, however, with the outbreak of the Thirty Years War in Europe, which created serious difficulties for James and for England.

The Thirty Years War

The Thirty Years War began in 1618 when a German prince, the Elector Palatine, was invited to take the throne of Protestant Bohemia, in place of
Archduke Ferdinand of Styria (who was the Habsburg choice). The Elector was a Protestant, and the son-in-law of James I, who advised him not to accept. When the Elector ignored this advice, he was attacked and driven out of Bohemia by Ferdinand, who had become Holy Roman Emperor in 1617. Ferdinand then sought to punish him by seizing his hereditary lands in the Palatinate. This aroused the other German princes, especially the Protestants in northern Germany, who feared the same treatment. The war therefore escalated – the Protestants of the Dutch Republic and Scandinavia entered in support of the Princes, while the Spanish Habsburgs supported their Austrian cousins. Although nominally Catholic, France took the opportunity to challenge Habsburg power by helping the Protestants.

Europe during the Thirty Years War

The figure below shows the complicated arrangement of states in central Europe that led to the eruption of war in 1618. The Thirty Years War was the final stage of the two great rivalries that dominated Europe throughout the sixteenth century – between Catholic and Protestant, and between French and Habsburg monarchies. The Habsburg family controlled Spain and the Spanish Netherlands (today's Belgium) as well as parts of Italy and Austria, thereby surrounding France. They had also established a tradition of electing Habsburgs to be Holy Roman Emperor, with nominal lordship over the many petty princes who ruled Germany, and, as a separate title, to be King of Bohemia [now the Czech Republic]. The Habsburgs were devoutly Catholic, and supported the aggressive Catholicism of the Counter-Reformation.
Germany was ravaged by atrocities on both sides but, to the English, the war was portrayed as a struggle against Catholic tyranny. It finally ended in 1648, although the war between France and Spain continued until 1660, when French victory laid the foundations for the dominance of Europe by Louis XIV and introduced a new threat to English power.

**War, religion and Parliaments**

As the largest Protestant power in Europe, England could hardly stand aside in the face of Catholic aggression, but could not finance a prolonged war. As a Protestant King and the father-in-law of the victim, James needed to act, but lacked the means to do so effectively. Initially, he sought to use his contacts with Spain, but tried to increase his impact, and his value as an ally, by making preparations for war as an alternative strategy. In 1621 he summoned a Parliament and asked for money to finance intervention in Europe. Aware of the dangers of inflaming an already volatile fear of Catholicism, he stressed the need to prepare for war to secure peace, and redoubled his diplomatic efforts. At first it appeared that his strategy might be successful. Faced with a depression in trade caused by war in Europe, MPs had no wish to incur unnecessary expense. Nevertheless, they voted two subsidies, and then turned their attention to waste, extravagance and corruption at Court (see page 36).

These complaints were not directed at the King – in fact many of the attacks were orchestrated by courtiers and Court factions anxious to weaken rivals, especially the Duke of Buckingham. By allowing the Commons to impeach the Lord Chancellor, Sir Francis Bacon, for taking bribes, the Duke survived, and the session ended quietly. In November 1621, when members reassembled, they were directed once again to consider the need for war finance; many MPs did have strong Protestant views and in December they petitioned the King to enter the war against the Habsburgs. At this point, several MPs raised the issue of what kind of war should be fought. The relief of James’ daughter and the reconquest of the Palatinate would require a land war and the equipping of an army. Many members were aware of the expense involved, and were equally aware that Spanish strength came from her possessions in South America and the flow of silver from her colonies. To them, it made more sense to consider a naval war, with its echoes of Elizabethan glory and possible financial windfalls from Spanish treasure, and they said so in a Commons debate.

**Protestation and dissolution**

From James’ point of view, this debate over the nature of the war to be fought overstepped the bounds of parliamentary privilege, and strayed into the formulation of policy, which was the prerogative of the King. Angrily, he reminded members of the limits of their privilege of free speech – to freely discuss issues raised by the monarch, not to raise issues of their own – and that it came by the will of the sovereign. Provoked in their turn, the Commons set out a Protestation (see Source C), asserting that the rights of Parliament and the liberties of the subject ‘are the ancient and undoubted birthright and inheritance of the subjects of England’ – which James tore out of the Commons Journal.

**Source C** From the Commons Protestation of 18 December, 1621

That the liberties, franchises, privileges and jurisdictions of Parliament are the ancient and undoubted birthright and inheritance of the subjects of England; and that the arduous and urgent affairs concerning the King, State and defence of the realm and of the Church of England, are proper subjects and matter of counsel and debate in Parliament; and that in the handling
and proceeding of those businesses every member of the House of Parliament hath, and of right ought to have, freedom of speech to propound, treat, reason and bring to conclusion the same...

In essence, the quarrel was the same as that of 1604 (see pages 29–30), turning on the issue of whether Parliament’s privileges existed by right or by gift of the monarch. In this case, however, MPs were claiming the right to debate royal policy on foreign affairs and religion. Whatever the rights of free speech, these areas of policy came within the King’s recognised prerogatives, and the Commons were encroaching on royal powers. James had every right to object, although whether his reaction was politically wise is more debatable. To have allowed the debate would have set a dangerous precedent, but once the issue moved on to parliamentary privileges, there was little chance of agreement. It was clear to James that there would be no grant of taxes, and there had been some attacks on both his policy and his favourite, the Duke of Buckingham. Accordingly, he dissolved the Parliament and continued his diplomatic pursuit of Spanish friendship and a Spanish marriage for his son.

The legacy of the 1621 Parliament
The legacy of the Parliament of 1621 was complex. While his foreign policy had made little progress, the King had defended his prerogative with some success. Nevertheless, there were some worrying signs and precedents. The Commons had been able to bring some government office-holders to account, using the mechanism of impeachment. These proceedings had arisen from rivalries among government factions, but there was no guarantee that the Court or the Lords would always be able to orchestrate their use. The quarrel over privilege and prerogative had sharpened existing fears. Above all, the airing of concerns about foreign policy had alerted Protestant opinion to the Catholic threat and raised concerns about the King’s attitude towards Spain. Members had expressed concern about a Catholic marriage, and the concessions that would be required by Spain. The Parliament of 1621 had not precipitated a crisis, but the monarch might well find that it had increased the capacity of later assemblies to do so.

Charles and Buckingham
The likelihood of crisis was also increased by the fact that control of affairs was slipping from James to Buckingham and Prince Charles. As the King grew older, and his health deteriorated, he was more content to leave the running of government to his favourite, although he retained control of political strategy. In 1623, however, his strategy was wrecked by the actions of Charles and Buckingham in undertaking a secret visit to Spain to try to secure the proposed marriage. Their motives are not entirely clear – for Charles it was probably a romantic gesture prompted by naivety and youth, for Buckingham the chance to win the favour of the next King. Whatever their reasons, their secret departure and unannounced arrival in Spain wrecked James’ plans. His grand diplomatic strategy was reduced to a need to ensure the safety of his son. For Charles and Buckingham, it was a humiliation; the Spanish stalled on marriage negotiations, and then rejected the match. By 1624 they had returned to England, determined on revenge.

Under pressure from Charles and Buckingham, James summoned Parliament to ask for money to finance a war with Spain. His reservations were set aside by an anti-Catholic Parliament in alliance with his favourite and his heir. The King, who was weakened by age and ill-health, was powerless to resist. In order to secure their war, Charles and Buckingham agreed to the naval strategy favoured by MPs but, nevertheless, paid an army to serve in the Palatinate under the command of...
German mercenary, Count Mansfeld. This deception and the disastrous failure of the expedition infuriated Parliament when it reassembled in 1625, but it was Charles who reaped the bitter harvest, since James had died in March.

**Interpretations: James I – the Wisest Fool in Christendom?**

It was the contemporary King of France, Henry IV who is reputed to have made this unflattering comment on James I and his skills as a monarch, probably in reference to the publication of his work, *The True Law of Free Monarchies*, in 1598, and the apparent contrast between his philosophical wisdom and his practical management of the role of monarch. This was reinforced by the style of his court and the sometimes personally motivated attacks that are summarized in Trevelyan’s claims on page 34. However, the remark has also been interpreted as suggesting that, despite his high-flown claims and rhetoric regarding the Divine Right of Kings, James demonstrated a great deal of common sense and realism in dealing with tensions both in Britain and Europe. For whatever reason, many historians’ judgements of James have been deeply unflattering, but others have argued that he managed a difficult legacy well and that it was not until the accession of his son Charles that tensions within the system of government degenerated into open conflict.

**ACTIVITY**

The extracts on page 40–41 offer three different interpretations of James I’s character, court and his government for you to consider and evaluate in the light of your own study of his reign. You should begin by reading each one and listing the main points made and the evidence used to support them. Do not simply read the words – consider the implications as well. You may find it useful to list the points in two columns [headed ‘wisest’ and ‘fool’]. You can then compare the arguments from each extract and consider:

1. In what ways do the extracts agree and disagree?
2. Are they looking at the same aspects of James character and government or emphasising different areas?
3. Does this help to explain their conflicting views?
4. Does this mean that the conflicts can be reconciled?
5. What other reasons can you suggest for the different interpretations of James and his effectiveness as a monarch?

Finally, you should use the material from the extracts to present two conflicting views of James I, and then use your own knowledge in addition to construct a balanced judgement.

**Extract A**

For all his considerable intelligence and intellectualism, James was a practical, down-to-earth character, with little sympathy for rituals and florid formalities, let alone entertainments presenting the monarch as a god of love and nature. The Scottish King could be insensitive, blunt and grossly indecorous. Though his detractors exaggerated his personal failings and contributed to this bad press, James himself showed little concern with public relations. He presided over evenings of drunken debauchery and was personally slovenly and unkempt. Such lack of decorum, compounded by James’s own homosexual relations and the
sexual scandals of his reign, both sharpened the criticisms of the Court and diminished the authority of majesty which depended as much on style and image as on the talents and policies of the ruler.

[Yet] James's personal style in some ways reorientated the Court for the better. During the last years of her reign the isolation and difficulty of access to Elizabeth had dangerous repercussions....[and she] glossed over problems that needed to be confronted. James, in complete contrast, was willing to acknowledge and ready to tackle problems; and he remained open to a wide variety of influences. No figure or faction during the early years of the reign needed to despair of persuading the king to advance their persons or policies; the Court functioned, as it was meant to, as the centre of all political positions and groups.

From Kevin Sharpe, Stuart Monarchy and Political Culture, in John Morrill (ed.) The Oxford Illustrated History of Tudor and Stuart Britain, 1996

Extract B

James self-selected task in life had been to become King of England and that had been achieved. He had worked hard to survive in Scotland and to succeed to England. He had tried and failed to achieve political Union, and he had tried with more success to reduce religious tensions. He liked to strut as an international statesman and a European scholar, but neither role was, for him, a full-time occupation. There seemed little more for even a conscientious King to do – and James was not very conscientious. So he was free to hunt at Royston or Newmarket with his friends, Hay, Carr, and Villiers. Government was easy once again, with peace, good order, low mortality and religious unity, spoiled only by poor harvests in 1612, 1613 and 1615. He could take time off from England for a trip to Scotland in 1617. But his carelessness allowed royal finances to deteriorate still further, while links between central government and the country gentry were weakened.

From Christopher Haigh, Politics in an Age of Peace and War, in John Morrill (ed.) The Oxford Illustrated History of Tudor and Stuart Britain, 1996

Extract C

There is no news in stressing the financial difficulties of the early Stuarts. It is conventional to blame the Stuarts themselves for their financial misfortunes, and their reigns, especially that of James, give plenty of material to justify blaming them. However, to say that the Stuarts mishandled their financial system is not to say that it would have worked if they had handled it well, and it is the central contention of this chapter that the Stuarts inherited a financial system which was already close to the point of breakdown. In any country that believes in taxation by consent, the financial and political systems must be very closely related, and the English political system, although it still enjoyed almost universal support and affection, was becoming obsolete because it was no longer capable of successfully financing war. The system the Stuarts inherited was, in essentials, that of the fourteenth century.

All this should be borne in mind when assessing the Stuarts difficulties in getting adequate supply out of their parliaments. A great deal of the trouble seems to have come from plain incomprehension of the sums needed... The Crown never seems to have reached a final decision about whether it was more impossible to finance itself with Parliaments or without Parliaments. The fact that Parliaments continued when the crown found that they were no longer fulfilling the function for which they had been created should alone be enough to acquit the crown of any conscious and deliberate absolutist programme.

From Conrad Russell, The Causes of the English Civil War, 1990

WORK TOGETHER

Evaluating the different interpretations of James I is essentially an individual task, but you could also develop your ideas more fully by working with a partner or as part of a group. When you have read and interpreted the extracts to define the different views of the historians, work together to prepare a short presentation that puts forward one view of James. By producing four presentations from different pairings or groups, two on each side, you can explore the ideas more fully and demonstrate how arguments will vary, before individually writing your own balanced judgement.
2 The early reign of Charles I, 1625–29

This section will look at Charles’ early reign, in particular his deteriorating relationship with parliament and the religious tensions underpinning this period. However, to understand some of the difficulties that arose, if it is necessary, begin by investigating his upbringing and personality, which played a significant part in the way that events unfolded from 1625–29.

Charles I: the role of the individual

How did Charles’ personal qualities affect his exercise of royal power?

The new King, portrayed opposite by Van Dyck, was the second son of James, a fact that had considerable influence on the events of his reign. Until the age of twelve he had lived in the shadow of his older and more confident brother, Henry. Henry had been physically strong, outgoing and aggressively Protestant – exactly the kind of heir to the throne that England desired. Until he died of a fever in 1612, little attention had been paid to the small, sickly and reticent Charles. He had therefore grown up to be shy and unable to communicate easily, as well as sensitive and lacking confidence in his own abilities. In fact, he was intelligent and perceptive in certain matters – he became, for example, a generous and discerning patron of artists and architects, and acquired a considerable collection of fine work, which was housed in Whitehall and at Windsor.

His early childhood left its mark on Charles’ behaviour as King. He tended to maintain a protective reserve and to place great emphasis on orderly formality. This was reflected in the procedures and rules that he adopted for his Court – immorality was frowned upon, rank and nobility were carefully preserved, and the royal family’s privacy respected. Charles had been greatly impressed by the formality of the Spanish Court during his visit in 1623, and sought to emulate its dignity. The same preferences may have influenced his religious views. A devout and conscientious Anglican, he was undoubtedly Protestant in his beliefs, but his appreciation of the ‘beauty of holiness’ represented in rich decoration and elaborate rituals encouraged his sympathy for the High Church party and even respect for Catholic views. Unfortunately, none of these qualities were likely to endear him to his subjects.

His lack of confidence was also a problem. His response to opposition was to take refuge in the appearance of certainty and to view those who disagreed as motivated by malice. To a degree, his conscientious attention to duty made it more difficult to accept criticism. Perhaps most seriously, it also created a lifelong tendency to rely on the advice of those close to him. In the words of Edward Hyde, who became chief adviser to both Charles I and his son, Charles II:

‘he will be found not only a prince of admirable virtue and piety, but of great knowledge, wisdom and judgement; and that the most signal parts of his misfortunes proceeded chiefly from the modesty of his nature, which kept him from trusting himself enough, and made him believe that others discerned better, who were much inferior to him in those faculties; and so to depart from his own reason, to follow the opinions of more unskilful men, whose affections he believed to be unquestionable to his service.’

Unfortunately the first of these was the Duke of Buckingham, closely followed by the equally determined and equally ill-informed Henrietta Maria.
Why did relations between King and Parliament deteriorate so quickly?

The brief alliance of Charles, Buckingham and the House of Commons collapsed with a refusal by MPs to vote the new King Tunnage and Poundage (customs duties, see page 32) for more than one year. Apart from the effect on his finances, the denial of the traditional lifetime grant was a considerable insult, but it came as a direct result of his actions during James’ last year of life. By agreeing to conduct a naval war and using the resulting subsidies to fund a (disastrous) land expedition, Charles had given MPs every reason to distrust him, even without the widely recognised problem of Buckingham’s influence. Granting the right for the King to levy customs duties for one year only was a means of ensuring that a Parliament would have to meet at the end of that time. Unfortunately, it was also a direct challenge to the new monarch.

The new reign therefore got off to a bad start, and it rapidly continued downhill. Unlike James, Charles lacked confidence and experience in diplomacy, and relied upon the advice of Buckingham. Freed from the restraints imposed by James, the Duke embarked on an adventurous foreign policy designed to glorify himself and his King. Unfortunately his lack of planning, failure to attend to detail and unrealistic expectations ensured that it was a disaster. An unsuccessful naval expedition to Cadiz was followed by demands for Buckingham to be impeached, and in 1626, in order to save his friend, Charles dissolved Parliament without receiving any financial supply.

Worse was to follow. In 1624 Buckingham had negotiated a marriage for Charles to Henrietta Maria, the sister of the French King, promising that she would be permitted to practise her own Catholic religion, and that English ships would help to suppress a French Protestant rebellion in La Rochelle. MPs

Three Faces of Charles I, painted by Van Dyke in 1635. What image of kingship does this portrait project?
were furious, and became even more so when in 1626 Buckingham’s inept diplomacy led to war with France, and an expedition sent in 1627 to help the Protestants in La Rochelle failed miserably because of inadequate planning. By the end of 1627 the influence of Buckingham and Charles’ stubborn refusal to contain it was directly threatening his ability to govern his kingdom.

Charles, Parliament, and the rule of law

How did tensions develop into a parliamentary crisis?

As complaints about Buckingham mounted, Charles recognised that he would obtain no money from Parliament without sacrificing his friend but, on this, he would make no concession. It was not only a matter of personal loyalty; Charles was also infuriated by the attempt to call his chosen adviser to account in Parliament. Convinced of the need to govern according to his own views, he moved to obtain money by alternative measures.

Forced loans

Not only did he continue to collect Tunnage and Poundage without parliamentary approval, he also demanded a forced loan to be collected by JPs, and threatened that any who refused to lend the King money would be imprisoned or conscripted into the army. He was not the first monarch to demand such a loan, but he was the first to carry out his threats against those who refused. In 1627, five gentlemen, who came to be known as the Five Knights, challenged his right to imprison them. After a good deal of pressure from the King, the judges reluctantly found in his favour. Charles then sought to have their judgement entered as a precedent for the future. While he believed that he was merely asserting his right to govern effectively, in practice he was denying the rule of law and laying a foundation for tyranny. It was inconceivable that a Parliament, if one was called, would not attempt to challenge his actions in some way.

The Petition of Right

By 1628, therefore, Charles had provoked a constitutional crisis, which he lacked the means to handle. Still at war, and in desperate need of money, he was forced to call a new Parliament to ask for supply. Led by the experienced lawyer, Sir Edward Coke, the Commons put together a Petition of Right, which reversed the judgement in the Five Knights’ Case and asked the King to declare that in future there would be no more:

- forced loans
- imprisonment without trial
- use of free lodgings (billeting) for soldiers in civilian households
- use of martial law against civilians.

Five subsidies were voted, but would not proceed to the House of Lords until the King accepted the Petition. He had no choice but to agree.

The term, ‘Petition of Right’, was carefully chosen to convey the fact that Parliament were asking the King to help them – in this case to define the law – and also asserting a right rather than making a request. Hence it maintained an outward respect for the King while also avoiding any implication that such rights were dependent on his good will. By claiming that the rights already existed, and that the King was merely redefining the law to correct a mistake by the judges, the Petition avoided asking the King to admit a mistake while also
ensuring that, since he was not granting the right to refuse a forced loan, he could not take it away. Once he accepted the Petition, its contents had the force of law.

At this point it was possible that the Petition of Right and the grant of money could provide the opportunity for reconciliation between King and Parliament, and the chances of this improved in August 1628, when Buckingham was assassinated (see page 35). However, mistakes by both the King and the more volatile MPs destroyed this opportunity. When Parliament reassembled in 1629 there were open celebrations of Buckingham's death, which angered the grief-stricken King. In turn, when Parliament began to prepare a bill to extend the King's right to collect Tunnage and Poundage, Charles denied that it was necessary, undermining Parliament's control of taxation. The most serious rift, however, was caused by growing concern about the King's religious views and his policies regarding the Church.

**Religion and the Church**

*Why did religious fears increase after the death of James I?*

The caution and tact used by James in making changes to the Church had resulted in years of relative harmony over its organisation and the role of bishops. While the Puritan ministers and their sympathisers had not given up hope of further reform, and had preached their message with enthusiasm, they had been able to accept the existing rules to the extent of at least partial conformity. Under the leadership of Archbishop Abbot, the majority of bishops used their powers of enforcement with care. Above all, the Calvinist beliefs held by the King and the majority of bishops reassured Puritan minds and established an Anglican identity which most could accept.

**The Arminian group**

This tactful approach came to an end with the accession of Charles I. Unlike his father, Charles placed order and uniformity above tact, and he was not prepared to proceed slowly. His personal beliefs were closest to those of the Arminian group (see Table 2, page 46), who had recently emerged within the Anglican Church. Their name is derived from a Dutch reformer, Jacob Arminius, who had challenged the influence of Calvinism among Protestant thinkers, and rejected the doctrine of predestination (see page 11). However, the chief characteristic of the English Arminians was their emphasis on ritual and sacraments in place of preaching, and the enhanced role and status that they gave to the Church and the clergy in the individual's search for salvation. Because they regarded the Roman Catholic Church as misguided rather than evil, and respected the common heritage derived from the medieval Church, they traced the power and authority of the clergy back to Christ himself. They hoped that the next thing to happen would be for the King to use his power and authority to establish order, decency, and uniform practice throughout the Church of England.

To a man with Charles' love of beauty and sense of order, Arminian ideas held great appeal. Unfortunately, to many of his subjects both in and out of Parliament, they were uncomfortably close to Catholicism. Oblivious of the fears that he was generating, Charles embarked on a campaign to reform the Church according to his own vision. Where James had promoted and favoured men from all religious factions, Charles exclusively advanced the Arminians, who responded by supporting a heightened royal power.
### Table 2: The religious spectrum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Puritan view</th>
<th>Anglican</th>
<th>Arminian view</th>
<th>Catholic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Faith and salvation</strong></td>
<td>Salvation gained as a gift from God to those who were predestined to be saved. Evidence of predestination was the willingness to accept discipline and seek a godly life.</td>
<td>Salvation by faith alone.</td>
<td>The gift of salvation was open to all who would seek it through a true Church. God offers salvation to all – mankind is free to accept or reject it.</td>
<td>Salvation for all but only through the Catholic Church.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Role of the Church and priesthood</strong></td>
<td>To guide and educate according to the rules laid down in the Bible. The chief function of the minister is to preach God’s Word, to allow souls to find their way to Him. Ministers also apply discipline to support the saints and control the sinners.</td>
<td>The Church has authority to guide people to salvation.</td>
<td>The Church guides through a priesthood which has special powers and status. Their authority is symbolised by robes and ceremonies. There is a place for preaching, but teaching through set prayers and rituals is as important.</td>
<td>The Catholic Church and its rituals provide the path to God. Taking part offers salvation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ritual and preaching</strong></td>
<td>Preaching and private prayer, Bible study and reading are the key to salvation. Sacraments like communion are symbolic only. Ritual distracts the ignorant from true religion and creates superstition and idolatry.</td>
<td>There is a place for some ritual to symbolise aspects of faith – for example, Holy Communion.</td>
<td>Ritual creates reverence and brings the ignorant to God. If it is beautiful in itself, it is a form of worship. Ritual is essential to promote order and decency.</td>
<td>Ritual is part of salvation – we are saved by our actions and works, such as taking part in a ritual.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Role and power of bishops</strong></td>
<td>Bishops have no special power. The parish minister is the true leader of the congregation, and the best organisation would be with committees of ministers, advised by bishops if desired.</td>
<td>Bishops have authority to rule the Church and represent the King.</td>
<td>Bishops have a special place and authority, passed down from Christ himself through St Peter and the medieval Church. They receive power to enforce rules from the King.</td>
<td>Bishops have special authority from Christ passed through the Pope.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attitude to Catholicism</strong></td>
<td>Catholicism is evil: the devil seeking to corrupt true faith. The Pope is the Antichrist, the devil himself.</td>
<td>Catholics threaten true faith; but many of their errors are not a threat to salvation.</td>
<td>Catholicism represents the early Church, misled by error. It is a sister Church, like those set up by Calvin and Luther, and should be treated as such. There need be no Protestant identity which shuts out Catholics.</td>
<td>The true Church.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Obedience to authority</strong></td>
<td>Obedience should be given to those in authority unless they threaten God’s cause and true religion.</td>
<td>Obedience should be given to higher authority except on a few matters vital to salvation.</td>
<td>Obedience to authority in Church and state should be total. If, on rare occasions, conscience makes it necessary to disobey, the subject should surrender to authority and accept punishment.</td>
<td>The authority of the Pope is from God – the Pope is therefore speaking for God and obedience is essential.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### ABSOLUTE MONARCHY

A monarchy in which the king has virtually absolute, or complete, power and his will and decisions alone make the law. Fear of absolutism was increasing at this time, because the French and Spanish monarchies were moving in this direction by destroying the independence and in some cases even the existence of local assemblies and Parliaments. Because these were Catholic monarchs, and the Catholic Church was also organised in this way, the association of Catholicism, absolutism and tyranny in English minds was deeply entrenched.

When they defended the King’s behaviour over the Forced Loan of 1627, and argued that subjects had a duty to obey even an unjust King, they reinforced the fears of all those who believed that Catholicism, absolute monarchy and tyranny went hand in hand. In 1628 the Arminian leader, William Laud, became Bishop of London. By 1629 there were many who feared that Charles intended to restore Catholicism and establish an absolute monarchy in England; or that if he did not, he was being led in that direction by his advisers and his Catholic Queen.

The result was another stormy session of Parliament in 1629, which the frustrated King decided to prorogue (suspend). Fearing that they would have little opportunity to protest in future, a group of MPs ignored the summons to disperse, held the Speaker in his chair to keep the House of Commons in session, and passed Three Resolutions against the growth of Arminianism, the levying of Tunnage and Poundage, and the actions of those who paid it. Angered by such open defiance, Charles dissolved Parliament, and declared that he would not call another until his subjects should ‘see more clearly
into our intentions and actions' and have 'a better understanding of us and themselves'. What this represented was an open breach between King and Parliament, and a significant breakdown within the system of government.

Chapter summary

- From 1603 to 1620 there were occasional tensions between the King and parliaments, mainly over finance and the extravagance of the Court.
- However, James’s handling of religious issues was reasonably effective, especially after the appointment of Archbishop Abbot to Canterbury in 1611.
- From around 1620, and certainly by 1621, that tension had increased because financial problems were compounded by the outbreak of the Thirty Years War and the Commons Protestation of 1621.
- From 1621–24 relations were complex, and made more difficult by the actions of Prince Charles and Buckingham.
- In 1625 the death of James and the accession of Charles I brought a rapid deterioration in relations, leading to the Petition of Right in 1628 and eventually to an open breach in 1629.
- By 1628–29 there were serious problems, arising from the interaction of the personalities of Charles and Buckingham with a growing opposition in Parliament.
- In 1628 the Petition of Right highlighted fears that Charles’s autocratic behavior threatened basic liberties and the rule of law, but offered a carefully worded and face-saving opportunity for the King to find a way around the problem and begin to repair the damage.
- However, Charles was unwilling to compromise and the assassination of Buckingham made the situation much worse.
- In addition, Charles’s continued promotion of Arminians in the Church raised fears of a Catholic, absolutist conspiracy.
- In 1629 the opportunity to settle the fears and conflicts had passed, and after the defiant behaviour of MPs in delaying their departure to pass the Three Resolutions, Charles issued a Proclamation in which he made it clear that he intended to govern without Parliaments for the foreseeable future.

WORK TOGETHER

- Firstly, compare the notes that you have made on this section. Add anything that you have missed and check anything that you have disagreed on.
- Next, one of you should identify how Charles as an individual contributed to the difficulties he faced in his relationship with Parliament. The other should note the other factors that caused these difficulties.
- After you have finished, discuss your findings. Overall, how would you assess Charles’ role in contributing to his difficulties?
- Find examples of situations where Charles was under pressure because of other issues, and consider how this influenced his actions.
- Similarly, consider areas where Charles made existing problems worse.
- By doing this you will be developing a sense of how different factors combined and interacted to cause problems. For example, Buckingham was a very bad political adviser and administrator, who created big problems for Charles. However, Charles allowed him to make decisions of a kind that James never did, probably because of his lack of confidence. Therefore the interaction of their particular personalities could be said to be the real problem, rather than the individual actions of either man.
- To complete the process, you should each write a summary to explain how the different factors worked together – for example, how older problems became worse, or how the personalities of Charles and Buckingham interacted, which will help you to come to a conclusion about Charles’s role and responsibility.
### SUMMARY DIAGRAM

This thematic summary of events traces the development of tensions and the growth of conflict between King and Parliament from 1603–29.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Finance and financial reform</th>
<th>Religion and foreign policy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1603</td>
<td>James becomes King</td>
<td>Millenary Petition presented to James by Puritans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1604</td>
<td>Peace with Spain</td>
<td>Hampton Court conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disputed election leads to quarrel in Parliament and Commons ‘Apology’</td>
<td>Appointment of Bancroft as Archbishop of Canterbury marks attack on Puritan ministers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1605</td>
<td>Debates over union with Scotland lead to tension and failure of James’ plan in 1607</td>
<td>Gunpowder Plot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1606</td>
<td>Bates Case – judges approve the ‘imposition’ of new duties</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1608</td>
<td>New Book of Rates published</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1610</td>
<td>Complaints in Parliament about ‘impositions’ Failure of Great Contract</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1611</td>
<td>Bates Case – judges approve the ‘imposition’ of new duties</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1612</td>
<td>Death of Robert Cecil</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1614</td>
<td>Impositions help to cause chaos in the ‘Addled Parliament’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1618</td>
<td>Lionel Cranfield becomes Master of the Court of Wards and begins to reorganise royal finances</td>
<td>Elector Palatine becomes King of Bohemia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1620</td>
<td>Expenses reduced by 50 per cent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1621</td>
<td>Impeachment of monopolists and of Lord Chancellor (Francis Bacon) for bribery</td>
<td>Elector Palatine defeated by Emperor Ferdinand and driven from his lands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English Parliament vote subsidies for war but the quarrel over Parliament’s right to discuss foreign policy leads to Commons Protestation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1623</td>
<td>Charles and Buckingham visit Spain</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1624</td>
<td>Fall of Cranfield</td>
<td>War with Spain and marriage of Charles and Henrietta Maria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parliament passes an act to restrict the sale of monopolies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1625</td>
<td>Accession of Charles I</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1626</td>
<td>Parliament dissolved to prevent impeachment of Buckingham Forced Loan levied</td>
<td>Failure at Cadiz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>War with France King’s right to imprison those who refused the forced loan defended by Arminian writers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1627</td>
<td>Five Knights Case</td>
<td>Failure at La Rochelle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1628</td>
<td>Petition of Right presented</td>
<td>William Laud (Arminian) appointed Bishop of London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Buckingham assassinated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1629</td>
<td>King and Parliament quarrel over Arminian appointments and Tunnage and Poundage</td>
<td>Peace negotiations bring wars to end</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This leads to the Three Resolutions and dissolution of Parliament</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Working on essay techniques

Whether you are doing the AS or the A-level, Section B in the examination presents you with essay titles. If you are doing the AS exam you answer one (from a choice of two). If you are doing the full A level exam you answer two (from a choice of three). Each question is marked out of 25.

Several question stems are possible as alternatives, but they all have the same basic requirement. They all require you to analyse and reach a conclusion, based on the evidence you provide. For example:

- ‘Assess the validity [of a quotation]’
- ‘To what extent…’
- ‘How successful…’
- ‘How far…’

Each question will reflect, directly or indirectly, one of the breadth issues in your study. The questions will have a fairly broad focus.

Over the following chapters, you will practise these type of questions, but the first stage is to consider basic essay technique and to develop your awareness of the historical concepts involved – the concepts of causation and change. Because you cannot really begin to address change until you have covered a long enough period for changes to take effect, this section will focus on the concept of causation.

You should also be aware that this section is not intended to provide examination practice – that will come later. The main purpose here is to introduce essay planning and show you how to explain the causes of an event, i.e. a basic causal explanation.

**How to plan your essays**

You will already have experience of writing essays from previous study. Some of this will be really useful to build on.

Effective essays are planned essays and, in exam conditions, planned quickly. To achieve this you need to develop and practice a method of planning, so that it comes quickly and easily when you need it. The suggestions below offer you a method that can be adapted to suit different individuals and circumstances, and you will find out what suits you best by practising it over a period of time.

Basic method: a good essay will have

- an **introduction** (no more than a paragraph long) that sets out the issues to be discussed
- a **main essay** which works through points in order to set out an explanation
- a **conclusion** that summarises the explanation as an answer to the question.

Before you start writing it you need to plan all these things together. Let’s take, for example, the breadth question posed at the beginning of this chapter:

**Why did tensions develop between King and Parliament to the point where they were in open conflict by 1629?**

This is not the kind of question that you will meet in an examination, but it is a good one to consider how to plan a causal explanation. Once you know how to do that, you will be able to adapt it to a range of more complex questions.

Taking the following steps will help you to write an effective answer to this question.

**Step 1: Analyse the question**

Analyse (break down) the question to decide what it is asking you to do – what are the key issues that is raises? A summary of these issues will often make good introduction, which enables you to focus on the question from the start and sets out where your explanation is going.

This is a question about **causes**, so you will need to start by looking into what happened to identify the **causal factors** that created and built up the tension. Notice:

- The question refers to ‘King and Parliament’ rather than individual kings and parliaments. You know that the king in 1629 was Charles I, but until 1625 the king was his father, James, so the question requires you to consider events involving both.
- In addition it refers to tensions ‘developing’ to ‘a point where’, implying a process by which they built up and gradually got worse.

Both these things indicate that this is a ‘breadth’ question. To answer it, you will need to take a broad view and look for causes across the whole period that you have covered in this chapter. Throughout the essay it is important to remember that you are not discussing the causes of tension generally, but specifically why they affected the relationship between king and Parliament to the point of an open conflict. This open conflict is your main focus. What you are looking for across the period are the long-term and short-term factors that brought it about.
Step 2: List your main points
A clear structure makes for an effective essay and is crucial in achieving the highest marks in an exam. Write down the main points of your explanation in the order you intend to make them. Numbering will help.

Step 3: Write your conclusion
Write out a paragraph that answers the question, to serve as your conclusion. You may well find that you adapt it slightly when you come to use it at the end of the essay, but it will serve as a guide while you are getting there.

Some people find that they prefer to reverse the order of steps 2 and 3. Once they have analysed the question they write their answer in a paragraph, then underline the main points. Once you have tried it a few times you will know what works best for you.

EXAMPLE
In an essay dealing with causation, you must break down ‘what happened’ into causal factors. In this case you will find them by looking at what the kings and parliaments quarrelled about, to see if there were similar issues that appeared over the period. This would give you three key factors:
- The powers of the monarch and claims to Divine Right.
- Religious conflicts and fear.
- Finance, extravagance and the impact of war.

These factors apply right across the period, but given that it involves two kings, it makes sense to divide the period into two, and see if the individuals made a difference. This would give you five factors to cover.

- The exercise of powers by Charles I, 1625–28
- Religious conflicts and fears, the impact of Arminianism, 1625–29

At this point you could write these out as a numbered list, in the order that you intend to deal with them. However, you need to think about the links between them if you are going to turn them into an answer to the question. A better way may therefore be to write out a paragraph that links them together into an answer – in other words, a potential conclusion.

For example:
When James became King of England he found that the monarchy was facing problems caused by religious conflicts, a lack of money, and an expensive war with Spain. James ended the war, and eventually created a fairly tolerant Church, which helped to calm religious conflicts, but his high-flown claims to Divine Right and his financial extravagance caused a number of arguments with Parliaments. The situation became much worse after the Thirty Years War broke out, because it heightened religious fears and raised issues in Parliament about the costs of a war and what kind of war to fight. However, it was not until Charles I became King that relations began to break down. His reliance on Buckingham, his attempts to raise money without parliament and his promotion of Arminians in the Church created fears that he intended to establish an absolute monarchy, and possibly a Catholic one. It was the combination of these underlying fears and problems with the particular personality of Charles I that brought open conflict in 1629.

ACTIVITY
The concluding paragraph in the example above sets out how tensions built up in three stages:
- The first covers the underlying problems/factors.
- The second brings in the impact of the Thirty Years War.
- The third adds the extra factor of Charles I.

Using this structure you should now write an answer to the question by taking each sentence in the conclusion separately as the beginning of a paragraph and developing it with detailed examples and support. To do this you will need to add relevant detail to back up the claims made in the sentence and finish each paragraph with a specific link to the question, showing how the events you have covered helped to build up tension. There is advice to help you deploy detail and keep focused on the question on page 51.

Some sentences may well give you two or three paragraphs if they contain reference to different factors. When you have completed each paragraph you will have the main body of your essay, and will only need to add a focused introduction (see page 51), and an amended conclusion in the light of your further research.
How to use detail effectively

As well as focus and structure your essay will be judged on the extent to which it includes relevant and accurate detail. Detailed essays are more likely to do well than essays which are vague or generalised.

What is detail?

There are several different kinds of evidence you could use that might be described as detailed. This includes correct dates, names of relevant people, statistics and events. If you look back through Chapter 2 you will find profiles and names, key dates and definitions to help. Many of the events have particular titles, like the Great Contract, the Addled Parliament, the Petition of Right and the Three Resolutions, which provide specific points of reference. You can also make your essays more detailed by using the correct technical vocabulary. The glossary terms will help you here.

How to use detail

You should use detailed evidence to support the points that you are making. For example, the first sentence refers to 'religious conflicts'. To develop this you could refer to anti-Catholic feeling, the war with Spain (and memories of the Armada), the Puritan demand for further reform, the Hampton Court conference and the appointment of Archbishop Bancroft.

Later, when the second sentence mentions James's successes, you can use his support for a preaching ministry and his appointment of Archbishop Abbot in 1611. The purpose of detail is to show that the claims made in the sentence are accurate and to give examples to illustrate them.

How to stay focused

Throughout your answer it is the specific links that you make to the question that maintain the focus of your essay and show why you have included that material in it. The advantage of writing a 'conclusion' as part of your planning lies in establishing such links in your own mind. In a similar way, a focused introduction helps to set out where your essay is going and how it will answer the question. It should not be the same as a conclusion, but it should set out the direction of your argument.

How to write a focused introduction

One way to do this is to use the wording of the question to help write your argument. The first sentence of the answer to the question ‘Why did tensions develop between King and Parliament to the point where they were in open conflict by 1629?’ could read, for example:

The open conflict that developed between King and Parliament in 1629 arose from a series of clashes that had begun when Charles I succeeded to the throne in 1625, but its roots lay much deeper, in tensions that had existed since 1603.

This could be followed by reference to long- and short-term problems, and the need to explain why they built up over the period.

Throughout the essay

You can then move into the main body of your essay, using the structure that you have set out in your list of factors and your brief conclusion. To maintain this throughout the essay you can again use the wording of the question, by ensuring that you refer to it at both the beginning and end of each paragraph. Thus each paragraph will explicitly show how a particular factor helped to develop tension, either directly or in combination with other factors, until you can pull it all together in your final conclusion.

What next?

When you have completed this task you will have considered how causation works through a combination of factors interacting to bring about a particular result. In this case the question simply asked you to explain why something happened and to construct an answer by defining and linking a range of factors. However, causation can be explored at more complex levels involving the role and significance of different factors, in essays that require you to construct arguments and counter arguments before coming to a judgement. These issues will be considered in later chapters.

SUMMARY

When writing causal explanations:

- Work out the main focus of the question.
- Plan your essay with a series of factors focusing on the question.
- Use the factors to construct a conclusion that brings them together to answer the question.
- Use the conclusion to create the main sections of your answer.
- Use the words in the question to formulate an introduction.
- Return to the primary focus of the question at the beginning of every paragraph and make explicit links to the question at the end of it.
Stuart Britain
The Crisis of Monarchy 1603–1702

This sample chapter is taken from AQA A-level History: Stuart Britain and the Crisis of Monarchy 1603–1702 which has been selected for for AQA’s official approval process.

Series editors: Robin Bunce, David Ferriby, Sarah Ward

Develop and expand your students’ knowledge and understanding of History at A-level through expert narrative, progressive skills development and bespoke essays from current historians on key debates:
- Build their understanding of the issues of the period through the expert, well-researched narrative
- Develop their skills in tackling interpretations and essay writing as you advance through the course
- Further their knowledge of historians’ work through extended reading opportunities, consisting of specially commissioned essays from current historians on relevant debates
- Cement their understanding of the breadth issues underpinning the period through overview sections which address the specified key questions

Stuart Britain and the Crisis of Monarchy 1603–1702
A revised edition of Access to History: An introduction to Stuart Britain 1603–1714, this title explores the relationship between monarchs and parliaments under James I and Charles I, the causes of the Civil War, the republican period, restoration and establishment of constitutional monarchy at the end of the period. It considers breadth issues of change, continuity, cause and consequence in this period through examining key questions on themes such as power, religion, opposition, ideology and the impact of key individuals.

ALSO AVAILABLE
Dynamic Learning

AQA A-level History Student eTextbooks
Powered by Dynamic Learning, the Student eTextbooks are downloadable versions of the printed textbook that teachers can assign to students so they can:
- Download and view on any device or browser
- Add, edit and synchronise notes across 2 devices
- Access their personal copy on the move

To request Inspection Copies, trial the Student eTextbooks or pre-order your class sets visit: www.hoddereducation.co.uk/ALevelHistory/AQA