

Question: Identify and analyze the reasons for and various reactions to the Glorious Revolution of 1688.

Historical Background: James Stuart succeeded his brother Charles as king of England and Scotland in 1684. He was the first Catholic monarch of England in 126 years. In 1688, several leading English parliamentarians called on William of Orange, leader of the Dutch Republic, to assume the powers of sovereign. William landed in England and drove James into exile in France. This event was called the Glorious Revolution because it did not directly involve the death of a single individual. The Revolution led to an eight year war for the English throne.

Document 1

Source: Lambeth Declaration by English Bishops, 18 May 1688

The Parliament, both in the late and present reign, had pronounced that the Sovereign was not constitutionally competent to dispense with statutes in matters ecclesiastical. The Declaration was therefore illegal and the petitioners could not in prudence, honour or conscience, be partner to the solemn publication of an illegal Declaration in the House of God, and during the time of Divine Service.

Document 2

Source: Declaration of William, 30 September 1688.

It is both certain and evident to all, that the public peace and happiness of any state or kingdom cannot be preserve where the Laws, Liberties, and Customs, established by the lawful authority in it, are openly transgressed and annulled; more especially where the alteration of Religion in endeavoured, and that a religion, which is contrary to law, is endeavoured to be introduced; upon which those who are to preserve and maintain established Laws, Liberties, and Customs, and above all, the Religion and Worship of God, that is established among them.

Document 3

Source: English Bill of Rights passed by Parliament, 16 December 1689.

1. That the pretended power of suspending of laws, or the execution of laws, by regal authority, without the consent of parliament, is illegal...
8. That the election of members of parliament ought to be free.
9. That the freedom of speech, and debates or proceedings in parliament, ought not to be impeached or questioned in any court or place out of parliament.

Document 4

Source: The Address of the Assembly to William, 26 December 1688.

We who have served as Members of Parliaments during the Reign of the late King Charles II, ...assembled at your Highness' Desire, in this Extraordinary Conjunction, do, with an unanimous Consent, tender to your Highness our humble and hearty Thanks, for your coming into this Kingdom, ...for the Preservation of our Religion, Laws, and Liberties, and rescuing us from the Miseries of Popery and Slavery:

And do desire your Highness, that, in pursuance of those Ends, and for the Preservation of the Peace of the Nation, your Highness will take upon you the Administration of public Affairs, both Civil and Military, and the Disposal of the public Revenue.

Document 5

Source: Triennial Act passed by English Parliament, 1694.

...That from henceforth a parliament shall be holden once in three years at the least.

II. And be it further enacted... That within three years at the farthest, from and after dissolution of this present parliament, and so from time to time for ever hereafter, ...legal writs under the great seal shall be issued by directions of your Majesties, your heirs, and successors, for calling, assembling, and holding another new parliament.

Document 6

Source: Act of Settlement passed by the English Parliament, 1701.

That all and every person and persons that then were, or afterwards should be reconciled to, or should hold communion with the see or church of Rome, or should profess the popish religion, or marry a papist, should be excluded, and are by that act made for ever incapable to inherit, possess, or enjoy the crown and government of this realm, and Ireland, and the dominions thereunto belonging.

Document 7

Source: Protestant battle anthem from the War of English Succession, 1689-1697.

*We'll fight to the last in
The honest old cause
And guard our religion,
Our freedom and laws.
We'll fight for our country,
Our king and his crown,
And make all the traitors and
Croppies lie down.*

Document 8

Source: Declaration of Indulgence of King James II, 4 April, 1687

We do likewise declare, that it is our royal will and pleasure, that from henceforth the execution of all and all manner of penal laws in matters ecclesiastical, for not coming to church, or not receiving the Sacrament, or for any other nonconformity to the religion established, or for or by reason of the exercise of religion in any manner whatsoever, be immediately suspended; and the further execution of the said penal laws and every of them is hereby suspended.

Document 9

Source: English nursery rhyme recalling the displacement of James' only son and heir, Young James, by William, 1688.

Rock-a-bye, baby,
In the treetop,
When the wind blows,
The cradle will rock;
When the bough breaks,
The cradle will fall,
And down will come baby,

Document 10

Source: Article I of the Treaty of Limerick, 3 October 1691.

1. The Roman Catholics of this kingdom shall enjoy such privileges in the exercise of their religion as are consistent with the laws of Ireland, or as they did enjoy in the reign of king Charles the second: and their majesties, as soon as their affairs will permit them to summon a parliament in this kingdom, will endeavour to procure the said Roman Catholics such farther security in that particular, as may preserve them from any disturbance upon the account of their said religion.

Document 11

Source: Declaration of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, 11 December 1688

And we do hereby declare, that we will, with our utmost endeavours, assist his highness in the obtaining such a parliament with all speed, wherein our Laws, our Liberties, and our Properties may be secured, and the Church of England in particular, with a due liberty to Protestant Dissenters; and in general, that the Protestant religion and interest over the world may be supported and encouraged, to the glory of God, the happiness of the established government of the three kingdoms, and the advantage of all princes and states in Christendom... In the mean time we will endeavour to preserve... the peace and security of these great and populous cites of London and Westminster and the parts adjacent, by taking care to disarm all Papists, and secure all Jesuits and Romish priests, who are in or about the same.

Document 12

Source: Ceiling of the Painted Hall, Old Royal Naval College, Greenwich, U.K., showing William and Mary being given scepter of England.

