

History - Lesson 1 of 4

The Restoration

Enquiry: How revolutionary was the 'Glorious Revolution'?

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The Restoration

When Oliver Cromwell died in September 1658, he was given a huge funeral. 30,000 troops lined the streets of London and over £2,000,000 was spent on remembering England's **Lord Protector**. Yet, within a year, Cromwell's son - Richard - had given up the position of Lord Protector.

This **power vacuum** enabled Charles II and his brother James to return from exile in France, where they had been since 1651. When Charles returned to London in May 1660, the **monarchy** was restored. To show the people that Puritan rule was truly over, Cromwell's head was dug up and stuck on a pike.



Religious divisions

Yet, when Charles became king in 1660, he realised that he ruled a divided and broken country. Catholics - who numbered perhaps 50,000 in a population of 6,000,000 - were treated with great suspicion. Puritans were also desperately unpopular, as were groups like the Quakers.

Charles II favoured **religious toleration**. His parliament did not. Instead, they passed a Test Act in 1661 that banned Catholics from working for the king. By 1666, England was a country on edge - just waiting for a spark to set it off.



Fears of Popish Plots

The spark came when London caught fire in 1666. The fire, which started in a bakery in Pudding Lane, destroyed 13,000 homes. The people wanted someone to blame; they attacked random Catholics and foreigners in the streets - even though they had not started the fire. This violence shows the suspicion that Catholics were treated with in Restoration England. The idea of '**Popery**' and 'Popish plots' terrified English Protestants. Years later, these fears allowed Titus Oates to make up his 'Popish Plot' in 1678 that saw at least 23 innocent people executed. People *wanted* to believe Oates' lies.



James II

When Charles II died in 1685, his brother, James the Duke of York, became king. This terrified the Protestants in Parliament. James, who was married to a Catholic princess, had converted to Catholicism in 1673. The English elites feared that James would try and rule like his father - Charles I or the French **absolutist monarch** Louis XIV.

Parliament tried to exclude James from the line of succession (the line of people who will become king or queen). But they failed. James II was crowned king and the Protestant elite began plotting to solve this problem.



Glossary

Lord Protector - Oliver Cromwell's role as ruler of England from 1653-58.

Power vacuum - When there is no clear leader of a country or an organisation.

Monarchy - The king, queen and royal family that rule a country.

Religious toleration - Allowing people with different religious beliefs to practice their faith without attacking them.

Popery - Things related to the Pope and the Catholic Church (eg. Popish Plots).

Absolutist monarch - A king whose power cannot be challenged by anyone. These monarchs rule without needing to listen to a Parliament.



Comprehension Questions

1. What was the Restoration?
2. What did the Test Act do?
3. Who was blamed for the Great Fire of London?
4. What did Titus Oates claim he had discovered in 1678?
5. Why did many of England's Protestant elites *not* want James II to become king in 1685?

