

All About...

James I



Royal Houses

The British Royal family is often divided into family groups called houses.

House of Lancaster
1399 – 1461

House of York
1461 – 1485

The Tudors
1485 – 1603

The Stuarts
1603 – 1649, then
1660 – 1714

The Hanoverians
1714 – 1901

House of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha
(Changed its name to the House of Windsor in 1917)
1901 – Present Day



The House of Stuart

The House of Stuart reigned from 1603 to 1649 and then from 1660 to 1714. Much of the Stuart reign was turbulent. The Stuart monarchs were:

James I,
1603-1625



Charles I,
1625-1649



Charles II,
1660 – 1685



James II,
1685 – 1688



Anne,
1702 – 1714



William III and Mary II, 1688 – 1692 (Mary's death) and 1702 (William's death)



James' Early Life

James was born on 19th June 1566 in Edinburgh Castle. At the time of his birth, Scotland and England were separate countries. James' mother was Mary, Queen of Scots. His father was Lord Darnley.



James' Early Life



James' childhood was a troubled one. His father was murdered in 1567. His mother then married the man many thought was the murderer, which brought suspicion on Mary. A few weeks after the murder, Mary (who followed the Catholic faith) was arrested by Protestants (another form of Christianity). Mary was held prisoner in Loch Levan castle.

Talk About It

How do you think these events affected James as he was growing up?

James' Early Life

Although James was King, Scotland was actually ruled by Mary's half-brother, the Earl of Moray. When someone young was crowned, a family member often ruled in their place in a position called a regent.



Mary was held prisoner in various locations across England and Scotland. After nearly 19 years, Elizabeth I ordered the beheading of Mary, based on claims that Mary was plotting to become Queen of England.

The Union

Elizabeth I was getting older and had not married or had children. This meant no one knew who would rule after her death.

James and Elizabeth were distantly related; his great-grandmother and her father were sister and brother. Over many years, plans were made for James to succeed Elizabeth.

Elizabeth I died 24th March 1603 and James VI of Scotland was declared James I of England later that day.



Family

In 1589, James married Anne of Denmark, the daughter of the King of Denmark. During these times, members of royal families did not marry for love but to create links with other countries. James and Anne's marriage was arranged before they had even met.

James and Anne had three children who survived into adulthood. Henry (who died when he was 18), Elizabeth (who later became Queen of a country called Bohemia) and Charles who would one day become Charles I. They also had four children who died when they were young.

Did You Know?

Anne was 15 years old when she married James. This was considered normal at the time.



Anne of Denmark

Gunpowder Plot

One of the most significant events of James I's rule was the Gunpowder Plot.

At the time, there was a lot of tension between Catholic and Protestant forms of Christianity. James I was a Protestant. Although James I was generally considered to be accepting of the Catholic faith (his mother had been a Catholic), Catholics were not always treated fairly. Many lost powerful positions and, at times, Catholics had to practise their religion in secret.



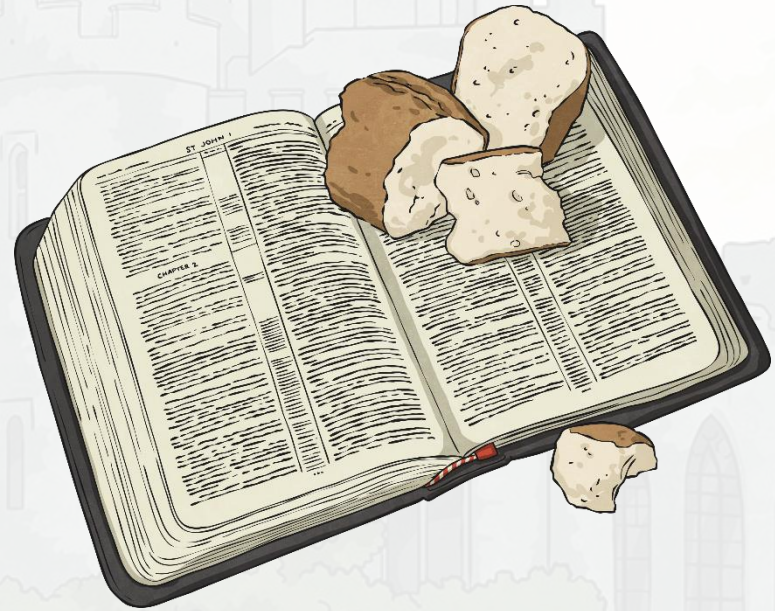
The Gunpowder Plot was formed by a group of Catholics. The plan was to blow up the Houses of Parliament while James I was there. However, the plot was discovered and all the plotters were executed.

The King James Bible

When England was a Catholic country, the only versions of the Bible available were written in Latin. Only priests read the Bible. Protestants believed that everyone should have access to the Bible. Both Henry VIII and Elizabeth I ordered that English copies of the Bible should be written.

The King James Bible has a letter to the King which starts:

“To the Most High and Mighty Prince James, by the grace of God, King of Great Britain...”



Late Life and Death

James worked to make Europe more stable. His daughter's marriage was to an important protestant ruler. At the same time, James tried to arrange a marriage between his son Charles and the daughter of the King of Spain (although this never happened).

Anne died in March 1619. James became ill with arthritis and a kidney disease and also had a stroke in the year of his death. He died on 27th March 1625.



Did You Know?

The time of James I's reign is known as the Jacobite era.

James I's Legacy

At the time of James' death, the country was again in turmoil. On the brink of another war with Spain, England faced problems from within.

James I was succeeded by his son Charles I. Like his father, Charles I believed that his authority came directly from God and should not be challenged. Members of Parliament frequently clashed with the King. This eventually led to a war known as the English Civil War. The war would end with Charles I being beheaded and England declared a republic (a country with no king).



Positives and Negatives

What would you say were the positive and negative aspects of James I's life?
Below are some ideas.



Positives

- He united the Scottish and English thrones, bringing some stability to both countries.
- He commissioned a Bible that is still used today.
- He worked to form connections with European countries to have peace.
- He overcame the Gunpowder Plot.

Negatives

- He had a troubled childhood, not seeing his mum from when he was a baby until her death nearly 19 years later.
- He didn't manage to secure peace with Spain.
- He possibly didn't teach his son to be a good ruler, which led to the Civil War.