

Paper 1: A Level sample answer with comments

Section C

These questions require you to read two extracts carefully to identify the key points raised and establish the argument being put forward. For these questions remember to:

- read and analyse the extracts thoroughly, remembering that you need to use them in tandem
- take careful note of the information provided about the extracts
- deploy own knowledge to develop the points and arguments that emerge from the extracts and to provide appropriate context
- develop an argument rooted in the points raised in the sources and come to a substantiated conclusion.

Study Extracts 3 and 11 (pages 121 and 136) before you answer this question.

In the light of differing interpretations, how convincing do you find the view that, as a result of the Glorious Revolution, 'the English monarchy became limited' (Extract 11, line 4)?

To explain your answer, analyse and evaluate the material in both extracts, using your own knowledge of the issues.

Strong student answer

The two extracts contain differing perspectives on the issue of the balance between monarchical and parliamentary power. Harris in Extract 11 argues that the monarchy became 'limited, bureaucratic and parliamentary' but also a 'monarchy with more real power', while Morrill in Extract 3 states that the Revolution was sensible and cautious, but that it quickened a transitional phase that had already started. Both authors provide evidence to advance their arguments: Morrill focuses on the contradictory nature of the events and the rise in parliamentary parties, whereas Harris refers to the impact of the Nine Years' War. Harris also refers to the growth of a 'fiscal military state', where the king had no choice but to work with parliament.

Harris argues that the Revolution resulted in a monarchy that became 'limited, bureaucratic and parliamentary', and it is important to be aware of the reasons why historians have come to this conclusion. Whig historians such as Thomas Macaulay concluded that the Revolution was non-violent and in many ways non-revolutionary, as the English had no desire to fundamentally change the constitution. The succession was only slightly altered to exclude Catholics and the basic powers of the monarchy were unchanged. More recently, a number of historians have followed the lead of some Enlightenment thinkers who suggested that the Revolution was a transformative period and that it did limit the monarchy. There is evidence to show that the Bill of Rights and Triennial Act reduced the power of the monarchy. The monarch now had no choice but to submit to regular parliaments and had less control over the army and taxation. There is, however, a vagueness to the Bill of Rights, as it fails to include measures to deal with tyrannical monarchs and does not detail how elections should work or how often they should take place. Morrill, too, says that the Revolution established 'a new pattern of constitutional relationships', suggesting that the role of the monarchy had changed permanently as a result of the events of 1689–1701.

In order to place Harris' argument that the monarchy became limited into context, it is important to note that William's entire rule was based on the concept of a limited monarchy, and when he took the throne he was well aware of this. William's wife, Mary Stuart, was the closest living Protestant heir to the throne, and they were placed on the throne as a reaction to the absolutism experienced under James II. Earlier monarchs, especially Charles I, had failed to reach political settlements with parliament because they believed, justifiably, that parliament was not a partner in government but simply a law-making and tax-raising body that worked on behalf

A strong opening paragraph that is directed by the extracts and identifies the main arguments contained within them.

This paragraph argues that the monarchy was limited, with reference to both sources and some effective evidence deployed. An excellent knowledge of the historical debate is shown in order to put the sources into context.

This paragraph demonstrates a good understanding of the context of the argument contained in Extract 11.

of the monarch. This could not be further from the truth in the 1690s and in 1697 parliament approved a grant of £700,000 to cover William's expenses. This emphasises the limited nature of the monarchy.

Despite the fact that both sources show that the monarchy became limited, there is evidence to suggest that the monarchy remained relatively unchanged. Although Morrill accepts that the Revolution caused conflict in Ireland and Scotland, he states that 'it did not create damaging new rifts in the English nation', suggesting that little changed. Harris also follows this thread, when he suggests that the monarchy gained more real power. Here, Harris is stating that as parliament and king were working together in the 'fiscal military state', in the context of the Nine Years' War, William, as commander-in-chief and head of the Church, was able to direct where money could be spent to an extent. Despite this, the Country opposition were able to pass a bill restricting the army to 7,000 men and refused to allow the retention of William's Dutch Guard. When Morrill states that the political and religious settlements were 'fudges', he may be referring to the fact that many of the demands contained in the original Declaration of Rights were not implemented in the Bill of Rights, thus giving the monarchy significant power.

Harris emphasises the importance of the Nine Years' War in promoting revolutionary change, and weighs this up against the events of 1688–89. The War was important because it was in these years that the 'Whig Junto' rose in prominence to become key advisers to the king. In 1696, in the face of an assassination attempt against William, the Junto encouraged both Houses to adopt a proposal acknowledging William as the true and lawful king. By the end of the decade, the Junto collapsed in the face of opposition, and William was implored to agree to a bill of resumption depriving some of his advisers of their land in Ireland. This shows that, although the Junto was able to uphold royal authority for a time and govern as they pleased, the monarchy could still be constrained in a way that was not possible before.

In conclusion, the balance of the argument appears to favour Harris' argument that the Revolution limited the monarchy and enhanced the power of parliament because the monarchy became reliant on parliament for most (but not all) aspects of its existence, especially finance. Morrill is correct in stating that the Revolution was 'conservative' and was relatively organic and peaceful in nature, but it did fundamentally change the relationship between king and parliament. A number of Acts were passed between 1689 and 1701 that ensured that the monarch would have no choice but to work with parliament if they wanted to fund both their wars and their own reigns.

Makes some relevant points about the power that the monarchy still had. Own knowledge is used to put the arguments into context.

This paragraph maintains a focus on the key issues in the question. Some more factual information, perhaps on Whig and Tory voting statistics, would help to advance the argument.

The concluding paragraph comes to a clear judgement based on the balance of the evidence.

Verdict

This is a strong response because:

- it identifies and illustrates the arguments of the two extracts, and interprets them with confidence in order to analyse the key issues raised
- it deploys a sound range of specific evidence in most cases to develop points emerging from the extracts in order to provide a sense of context
- it presents a sustained evaluative argument throughout, reaching fully substantiated judgements by showing an understanding of the historical debate
- the answer is coherent and the quality of communication is excellent.