

Chapter 1

Monarchy and the Establishment in the UK

ESSENTIAL VOCABULARY

<i>to abdicate</i>	abdiquer
<i>to appoint</i>	nommer
<i>assent</i>	assentiment
<i>commoner</i>	roturier
<i>coronation</i>	couronnement
<i>craze</i>	engouement
<i>to cut down</i>	réduire
<i>to dissolve</i>	dissoudre
<i>to draft</i>	rédiger
<i>engagement</i>	fiançailles
<i>establishment</i>	establishment, élites
<i>expenses</i>	notes de frais
<i>former</i>	ancien
<i>heir</i>	un héritier
<i>to implement</i>	mettre en œuvre
<i>to inherit</i>	hériter
<i>to lay down</i>	imposer, stipuler
<i>line of succession</i>	ordre de succession
<i>outcry</i>	tollé
<i>overseas</i>	à l'étranger
<i>pageantry</i>	cérémonies officielles
<i>a palace</i>	un palais
<i>policy</i>	politique (appliquée à un domaine particulier)
<i>to prosecute</i>	poursuivre en justice
<i>realm</i>	royaume
<i>rule of law</i>	État de droit
<i>to sack</i>	virer
<i>to scrutinise</i>	examiner
<i>to set out</i>	préciser
<i>sovereign</i>	souverain

Introduction

Queen Elizabeth II's recent history has seen her break one record after another. In 2015, at the age of 89, she became the UK's longest reigning monarch. Indeed, she **ascended** the throne at the age of 25 on the death of her father King George VI on 6 February 1952. When the King of Thailand died in October 2016, Queen Elizabeth II became the world's longest-reigning living monarch. Last February, she became the first British monarch to reach a Sapphire Jubilee that is to say to have spent 65 years on the throne. Often **hailed** as a "rock of stability" through three post-war generations, the Queen remains extremely popular despite her status of unelected Head of State and her more than purely ceremonial powers. The Monarchy and the Church have traditionally been seen as the pillars of the Establishment, a dominant group or elite composed of leading politicians, senior civil servants, senior barristers and judges, aristocrats, Oxbridge academics, senior clergy in the established Church of England, the most important financiers and industrialists, governors of the BBC, and the members of and top aides to the royal family.

How can we **account for** the longevity of the British Monarchy? What is the role of the Monarch today? What **is to** become of the institution after Elizabeth II's death?

WRITING TIPS

- **To be to**, employé pour exprimer une action prévue, programme, a ici valeur d'insistance sur la notion de destin.

VOCABULARY

<i>to account for</i>	expliquer
<i>to ascend</i>	monter sur
<i>to hail</i>	acclamer, saluer

A brief history of a thousand-year-old institution

The British political system is a constitutional monarchy (also known as a parliamentary monarchy) which differs from absolute monarchy **in that** sovereigns must exercise their powers within the limits prescribed by an established **legal framework** (a written or unwritten constitution).

Constitutional monarchy in the UK is the result of a long evolution and of several adjustments by law or by convention over the centuries. The British monarchy goes back to small kingdoms of early medieval Scotland and Anglo-Saxon England, which had consolidated into the kingdoms of England and Scotland by the 10th century AD. In 1066, the last crowned Anglo-Saxon monarch, Harold II, was defeated and killed during the Norman conquest of England which meant that the English Crown passed to the Normans' victorious leader, William the Conqueror, and his descendants. The latter were followed by the Plantagenet dynasty in 1154. The **Magna Carta** (1215) began a process of reducing the English monarch's political powers, and Edward I adopted the "Model Parliament" in 1295, which included

members of the clergy and aristocracy, and representatives from the different **boroughs**, cities and counties.

The reign of the Tudors (1485-1603) saw the split from Rome and the creation of the Church of England, whose leader to this day has been the British Monarch. From 1603, when the Scottish King James VI inherited the English throne as James I, both the English and Scottish kingdoms were ruled by a single sovereign. His son Charles I, nearly **brought about** the end of the Monarchy as he believed in Divine Right. He was beheaded and Britain became a republic for 11 years (1649-1659). The experience was **short-lived** and there has been continuity since 1660. The Glorious Revolution of 1688 removed the reigning Catholic king, James II, and instituted the joint monarchy of his Protestant daughter Mary and her Dutch husband, William of Orange. It led to a constitutional monarchy restricted by laws such as the **Bill of Rights** (1689) and the Act of Settlement (1701), although limits on the power of the monarch were already in place.

In 1707, the kingdoms of England and Scotland **merged** to create the Kingdom of Great Britain. Queen Anne was the last monarch to veto an Act of Parliament (1707) and with George I and the Hanoverians power continued to **shift** from the monarch to his ministers, who had to rely on the support of Parliament. Queen Victoria was the last sovereign to exercise openly any real personal power but this diminished over the course of her reign, which also saw several extensions of the **franchise** (in 1832, 1867 and 1884) and therefore an increased representativeness and power of Parliament.

The British Monarchy is hereditary and the Monarch used to be the eldest male child or the eldest daughter if there were no male heirs to the throne. The Succession to the Crown Act 2013 **altered** the laws of succession to the British throne as it replaced male-preference primogeniture with absolute primogeniture (for those born in the line of succession after October 2011), which meant the eldest child **regardless** of gender would precede his or her **siblings**. The act also ended the disqualification of a person who married a Roman Catholic from the line of succession.

WRITING TIPS

- **In that**: dans le sens où.
- **Regardless of**: quel que soit.

VOCABULARY

<i>to alter</i>	modifier
<i>borough</i>	quartier
<i>to bring about</i>	provoquer
<i>franchise</i>	droit de vote
<i>legal framework</i>	cadre légal
<i>to merge</i>	fusionner
<i>to shift</i>	changer, évoluer
<i>short-lived</i>	de courte durée
<i>sibling</i>	frère ou sœur

COMPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

- **Magna Carta (1215):** is a charter agreed to by King John of England in 1215. First drafted by the Archbishop of Canterbury to make peace between the unpopular King and a group of rebel barons, it guaranteed the protection of church rights, protection for the barons from illegal imprisonment, access to swift justice, and limitations on feudal payments to the Crown, to be implemented through a council of 25 barons.
- **The Bill of Rights (1689)** is an Act of the Parliament of England that deals with constitutional matters and sets out certain basic civil rights. It lays down limits on the powers of the monarch and states the rights of Parliament, including the requirement for regular parliaments, free elections, and freedom of speech in Parliament. It guarantees certain rights of individuals including the prohibition of cruel and unusual punishment and it reinforced the liberty of Protestants to have arms for their defence within the rule of law. The Bill of Rights 1689 was one of the major inspirations for the American Bill of Rights (1791).

The powers of the Monarch today

At first sight, the Crown can appear purely ceremonial and of little consequence to the realities of government, politics and power, but it still holds real and significant powers, even if by convention they are not exercised. All acts of government are **carried out** in the name of the Crown, but **we have to bear in mind that** a Parliamentary monarchy is a state headed by a monarch who is not actively involved in policy formation. Instead, a cabinet and its head – a prime minister, a premier, or a chancellor – drawn from a **legislature** (Parliament) are in charge of governmental duties. The Queen **therefore** reigns but does not rule, in a society deeply committed to the ideal of democracy.

The Monarch opens parliamentary sessions and she **delivers** the Queen's speech (whose content she does not write) outlining her government's proposals for the parliamentary year. She can dissolve Parliament (after the decision of the Prime Minister) and call for new elections. **Crucially**, the Queen must give Royal Assent to any new legislation passed by Parliament (no veto has been opposed since 1707).

The Queen also officially appoints and dismisses the Prime Minister (and members of the Cabinet) but she does not choose him or her, as he or she is by tradition the leader of the majority party in the **House of Commons**. The Queen appoints senior magistrates, grants Royal Pardon. She also confers **life peerages**, **knighthoods** and honours such as **OBEs** and **MBEs**, and **attends** official ceremonies.

In addition, the Monarch is commander-in-chief of the armed forces and can alone declare war and peace. She is the Head of the Established Church (the Church of England), a legacy of the Tudor period. She appoints bishops on the recommendation of the Prime Minister. Church and State are indeed linked through the Crown.

Last but not least, she acts as Head of the **Commonwealth of Nations** and as such as Head of State in 16 of the 52 member countries, called the Commonwealth Realms.

WRITING TIPS

- **We have to bear in mind that** : il faut garder à l'esprit que.
- **Therefore**: donc.
- **Crucially**: point essentiel.

VOCABULARY

<i>to attend</i>	assister à
<i>to carry out</i>	mener à bien
<i>to deliver</i>	prononcer
<i>knighthood</i>	titre de chevalier
<i>legislature</i>	corps législatif
<i>life peerage</i>	pairie à vie ¹

COMPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

- **House of Commons**: The British public elects 650 Members of Parliament (MPs) for a maximum term of five years to represent their interests and concerns in the House of Commons (the Lower Chamber of Parliament). MPs consider and propose new laws, and can scrutinise government policies by asking ministers questions about current issues either in the Commons Chamber or in Committees.
- **The Order of the British Empire** is a British order of chivalry; rewarding contributions to the arts and sciences, work with charitable and welfare organisations, and public service outside the Civil Service. It was created in 1917 by King George V, and comprises five classes, in civil and military divisions, the most senior two of which make the recipient either a knight if male, or dame if female. The five classes of appointment to the Order are, in descending order of precedence: Knight Grand Cross of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (GBE), Knight Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (KBE or DBE), Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (CBE), Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (OBE), Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MBE).
- **The Commonwealth of Nations** is a voluntary intergovernmental organisation of 52 member states that are mostly former territories of the British Empire. It dates back to the mid-20th century with the decolonisation of the British Empire, which resulted in self-governance for its territories. Members are united by language, history, culture and their shared values of democracy, free speech, human rights, and the rule of law. Its estimated population is 2.328 billion people, nearly a third of the world population.

1. Donnant le droit de siéger dans la Chambre des Lords, la Chambre Haute du Parlement britannique

The role of the Monarchy

The powers still exercised by the Monarch are often said to provide a guarantee against extreme governments (which could seem paradoxical). For example, if a government were to call a general election for improper reasons and against the interests of the people, the Crown could refuse to dissolve parliament, or if a government were intransigent, she could in principle call on the police and the army to protect her right.

Besides, the Queen stands as a factor of national unity and cohesion, especially in times of crisis, such as natural disasters, conflicts or terrorist attacks. British history is characterized by continuity and one of the major aspects of British society is its political and institutional permanence. Many formal ceremonies were invented in the 19th century, in order to create an impression of **ageless** tradition and provide reassurance during a time of radical transformations.

Although she does not exercise her executive role, the Queen still holds the right to be informed, to advise and to warn, which is why she holds weekly audiences with the Prime Minister at Buckingham Palace to discuss current affairs. The Queen has been Head of State for more than 60 years and has known 13 Prime Ministers so far. This gives her a deep understanding of British political affairs, **on** which Prime Ministers can **draw**.

Her advice is particularly **valuable** concerning foreign affairs, especially **when it comes to** the other Commonwealth countries, 16 of which still accept the Queen as a Head of State. The monarch promotes British interests overseas, and, compared to the **transience** of governments, provides stability, which helps the running of harmonious relations.

WRITING TIPS

- **When it comes to:** lorsqu'il s'agit de.

VOCABULARY

<i>ageless</i>	éternel, intemporel
<i>to draw on</i>	puiser dans, s'inspirer de
<i>transience</i>	caractère éphémère
<i>valuable</i>	précieux

The popularity of Elizabeth II

The monarchy's **enduring** popularity was confirmed by a 2015 YouGov poll, with a **resounding** 68% of the British public believing the institution to be "good for the country". Support is wide-ranging – with the monarchy gaining majority support from voters of all political parties and every age group. Older people are most enthusiastic, with almost eight in ten over-60s saying the Monarchy is "good for Britain". The fact that the Queen does not interfere at all with political life is probably one of the major reasons why the British are still attached to the Monarchy.

Popular sentiment continues to view the Monarchy with affection. It does provide the people with the eventful life stories of a dynasty, with births, christenings, engagements, weddings and deaths getting **blanket coverage** in tabloids and celebrity magazines (as well as the sometimes questionable conduct of the Princes). The current popularity of the Royal Family, which probably **owes a great deal** to Kate Middleton, Prince William's wife, and Meghan Markle, Prince Harry's fiancée stands in sharp contrast with 1992, the Queen's "annus horribilis" or the **aftermath** of Princess Diana's death (1997).

However, the question of the cost of the Monarchy remains a **sore point** with many people. The need to finance a Head of State inevitably means high costs to a nation, and efforts have been made in the past to cut the cost of the institution for the taxpayer. Since 1992, the Queen has also paid tax on her personal income. Although the British do not directly fund any royal activity, they do bear the cost of providing police protection for royals, which is funded via the **Home Office**. If taxpayers are generally happy to pay for the Queen, the Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Charles, the Duchess of Cornwall, the Cambridges and Prince Harry, a new poll has revealed that most want the rest of the family to take a pay cut.

Today, the cost of the Monarchy is met through the Sovereign Grant (which replaced the annual Civil List payment in 2011) and money from the Duchies of Lancaster and Cornwall. The Sovereign Grant is taken from the revenues generated by the **Crown Estate**, a portfolio of properties and investments (mostly in London) belonging to the Monarch for the duration of his or her reign, but that cannot be sold by him or her and whose profits go straight to the Treasury. In fact, the Monarchy brings in much more money than it costs. In 2016, the Crown Estate delivered a record £304m to the **Treasury**, **whilst** the Queen received a grant of nearly £43m, currently calculated at 15% of the Crown Estate's profits.

WRITING TIPS

- **Whilst**: tandis que, alors que.
- **A sore point**: un sujet qui fâche.

VOCABULARY

<i>aftermath</i>	au lendemain de
<i>blanket coverage</i>	couverture médiatique complète
<i>duchy</i>	duché
<i>enduring</i>	durable
<i>grant</i>	subvention
<i>to owe a great deal to</i>	devoir beaucoup à
<i>resounding</i>	écrasant

COMPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

- **Home Office:** Ministère de l'Intérieur.
- **Crown Estate:** Biens de la Couronne.
- **Treasury:** Ministère des Finances.

The future of the Monarchy

Even though the Monarchy offers constitutional guarantees, some argue that it should either be abolished or that its legal powers should be **stripped away** (leaving the Royal Family with purely ceremonial duties) or even take example from Denmark and Sweden, which have effectively privatized their monarchies.

Of course, the strongest argument against this system is the hereditary principle, which offers no guarantee of the **suitability** of the heir to the Crown and is a matter of pure **chance**. It could be argued that the Monarchy **underpins** an outdated class system and gives the impression that Britain is a **backwards-looking** nation. But, even if there is a significant Republican movement in Australia, the idea of Republicanism has never taken deep root in the United Kingdom, probably partly due to the political apathy of the British, who are not a revolutionary people. Looking to the future, most of the British are confident that the Royal Family is here to stay. According to a 2015 YouGov poll, more than six in ten (62%) believe Britain will still have a monarch in 100 years' time – a view that has not changed **dramatically** since the Diamond Jubilee in 2012.

As we have seen, political anonymity and neutrality are some of the keys to the longevity of the institution (should the British wish to keep it), which is why Prince Charles is often considered a questionable successor to Elizabeth II when she **eventually** passes away. Regular revelations about his love life and the fact he has expressed his personal views on a range of different matters make him unsuitable in the eyes of many British people. In the coming months and years, the Queen will, inevitably, do less **as** other Royals take on more responsibilities – most notably Prince William, who, it has been suggested, should reign instead of his father. More pressing perhaps than the question of the future of the Monarchy is that of the future of the United Kingdom post-Brexit.

WRITING TIPS

- **Dramatically:** énormément.
- **Eventually:** finalement.
- **As:** alors que, tandis que.

VOCABULARY

<i>backwards-looking</i>	rétrograde
<i>chance</i>	hasard
<i>to strip away</i>	enlever, retirer
<i>suitability</i>	aptitude
<i>to underpin</i>	étayer, soutenir