

Subject: History

Year 6 Who was king James I and why was he significant to Britain.

NC/PoS: Understand the development of church, state and society in Britain 1509–1745.

- Gain historical perspective by placing knowledge into different contexts and making connections between local, national and international history.
- Construct informed responses that involve thoughtful selection and organisation of relevant historical information.
- Understand historical concepts such as continuity and change, cause and consequence, similarity, difference, and significance.

Prior Learning (what pupils already know and can do)

- People in power
- Monarchs

End Points (what pupils MUST know and remember)

- Know that James VI of Scotland became James I of England in 1603, starting the Stuart period.
- Understand that James I believed strongly in the **Divine Right of Kings**, which created tensions with Parliament.
- Explain the causes and consequences of the **Gunpowder Plot** and why it is still remembered today.
- Recognise the importance of religion in James I's reign, including the **King James Bible**.
- Describe how exploration and colonisation (e.g., **Jamestown, 1607**) expanded England's influence overseas.
- Summarise James I's overall significance for Britain (union of crowns, religious challenges, beginnings of empire, cultural legacy).
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Key Vocabulary

- **People & Roles**

- **Monarch** – a king or queen.
- **James VI and I** – king of Scotland (James VI) and later England (James I).
- **Parliament** – a group of people who help make decisions and laws in the country.
- **Plotters** – people who secretly plan to do something, often illegal (e.g., Gunpowder Plotters).

- **Beliefs & Religion**

- **Protestant** – a Christian who separated from the Catholic Church.
- **Catholic** – a Christian belonging to the Roman Catholic Church.
- **Puritan** – a Protestant who wanted the Church of England to be more simple and strict.
- **Divine Right of Kings** – the belief that God gave the king his power and authority.
- **King James Bible** – the English translation of the Bible authorised by James I in 1611.

- **Events & Ideas**

- **Union of the Crowns** – when England and Scotland were ruled by the same monarch (James I) from 1603.
- **Gunpowder Plot** – a failed attempt in 1605 by Catholic plotters to blow up James I and Parliament.
- **Colonisation** – when one country takes control of land in another place and settles people there.
- **Jamestown** – the first permanent English settlement in America (1607), named after James I.

- **Historical Concepts & Skills**

- **Chronology** – the order in which events happen.
- **Cause** – why something happened.
- **Consequence** – what happened as a result.
- **Significance** – why something or someone is important.
- **Interpretation** – how history can be understood or told in different ways.

Component 1: To understand who King James I was and place him in the chronology of British history.

Prior Knowledge Evaluation:

- Quick class brainstorm: *"What do we remember about the Tudors and Elizabeth I?"*
- Timeline recall: pupils place Henry VIII, Elizabeth I, and James I on blank timeline.

Main Activities:

- **Timeline activity** – pupils place Tudor monarchs and James I in order.
- **Mini-research carousel** – fact cards (birth, reign, family, Scotland link). Pupils fill out a "Who was James?" sheet.

Alternate Activity Ideas:

- "Monarch Top Trumps" comparing Elizabeth and James.
- Drama freeze-frames of James arriving in England as king.

Adaptations:

- *Less confident:* Scaffolded timeline, simplified fact cards.
- *More confident:* Predict possible challenges for James based on Elizabeth's reign.

Component 2: LO: To understand the significance of the Gunpowder Plot during James I's reign.

Prior Knowledge Evaluation:

- Quick-fire quiz: *"What religious problems did Elizabeth I face?"*
- Think-pair-share: *"Why might Catholics dislike a new Protestant king?"*

Main Activities:

1. **Storytelling & sequencing** – present narrative of the Plot (short video/PowerPoint). Pupils put story cards in chronological order.
2. **Source analysis** – show two accounts: a government poster and a Catholic letter. Pupils highlight differences and ask: Who benefits from this version of events?
3. **Class discussion** – Was the Gunpowder Plot a genuine Catholic plot or a government exaggeration?

Alternate Activity Ideas:

- **Role-play** Guy Fawkes's interrogation and trial.

- **Escape-room activity:** hide “clues” around classroom (barrels, secret letters, Parliament diagram).

Adaptations:

- *Less confident:* Use simplified sequencing cards with images; sentence frames for source analysis.
- *More confident:* Write a short evaluation weighing up whether the Plot was a real threat or propaganda.

Component 3: LO: To understand James I’s religious challenges and their impact.

Prior Knowledge Evaluation:

- Recall: *Why did Henry VIII break from the Catholic Church?*
- Quick quiz: Match terms (Catholic, Protestant, Puritan) with definitions.

Main Activities:

- **Group activity** – pupils examine info cards on Catholics, Protestants, and Puritans. Record what each group wanted from James.
- **Case study** – the King James Bible: show image of early edition. Discuss why translating it into English was significant for ordinary people.
- **Class debate** – Did the King James Bible bring people together or divide them?

Alternate Activity Ideas:

- Pupils create a “Religious Newspaper” – each group writes a front-page article demanding what they want from James.
- Compare side-by-side Bible extracts (Latin vs English), with teacher guidance.

Adaptations:

- *Less confident:* Fill-in-the-blank chart with key phrases; simplified Bible extract comparison.
- *More confident:* Write an extended response: “The King James Bible was James’s most significant achievement. Do you agree?”

Component 4 LO: To investigate how exploration and colonisation expanded under James I.

Prior Knowledge Evaluation:

- Class recall: Who were Drake and Raleigh? Why did they explore?

- Map starter: Mark Tudor voyages before adding Jamestown.

Main Activities:

1. **Mapping task** – locate Jamestown on a blank world map. Pupils add arrows showing trade/exploration routes.
2. **Case study Jamestown** – pupils read short accounts of settlers’ hardships and successes. Create a “Jamestown fact sheet.”
3. **Class enquiry** – Was Jamestown good for England? Was it good for the people already living in America?

Alternate Activity Ideas:

- Role-play “recruiters” persuading poor Londoners to travel to Jamestown.
- Create a Jamestown travel poster highlighting positives but hiding negatives in small print.

Adaptations:

- *Less confident:* Pre-labelled maps with key features, guided notes for fact sheet.
- *More confident:* Diary entries from two perspectives – English settler vs Native American.

Component 5 LO: To evaluate James I’s leadership and relationship with Parliament and his people.

Prior Knowledge Evaluation:

- Recall: How did Elizabeth I use Parliament? Did she always get along with it?
- Prediction task: Will Parliament like James more, less, or about the same as Elizabeth? Why?

Main Activities:

1. **Hot seating** – one pupil as James, others as MPs questioning him about money, religion, and power.
2. **Evidence sorting** – pupils sort statements about James (e.g., “Spent lavishly on favourites” / “Enjoyed learning and writing”). Create “James the Good King / James the Bad King” columns.

3. **Discussion** – Did James I help or harm relations between king and Parliament?

Alternate Activity Ideas:

- Structured class debate: *“James I was a successful king.”*
- Pupils design a political cartoon showing James’s belief in Divine Right.

Adaptations:

- *Less confident:* Use speech cards with sentence starters for hot seating; simplified evidence sheet.
- *More confident:* Write a persuasive speech from an MP criticising James I.

Component 6 LO: To assess why James I is remembered and his overall significance.

Prior Knowledge Evaluation:

- Recap quiz: James I timeline, Gunpowder Plot, Bible, Jamestown, Divine Right.
- Pair task: Which of these events do you think is most important? Why?

Main Activities:

1. **Legacy Diamond** – pupils rank James’s legacy (Gunpowder Plot, King James Bible, Jamestown, Union of the Crowns, Divine Right of Kings). Discuss reasons.
2. **Extended writing** – Balanced essay: “Was James I a good king for Britain?” Pupils must use evidence from across the unit.

Alternate Activity Ideas:

- Group posters: “James I’s Legacy – Why should we remember him?”
- Create a museum display board or exhibition case labels summarising his reign.

Adaptations:

- *Less confident:* Provide sentence starters, word banks, and scaffolded diamond.
- *More confident:* Write structured essay using connectives (*However, On the other hand, Therefore...*).