

Landmarks in British history: The monarchy

Possible answers and solutions

1. Point out the various reasons why, according to Roy Hattersley's article, the British monarchy might be at risk.

- The republican principle is against the monarchy.
- The public is upset about the high cost of the extravagant lifestyle of the royals.
- A hereditary head of state is old-fashioned, an anachronism.
- There is a contradiction between the monarch as a human being and his/her high position.
- But above all the monarchy becomes the target of ridicule because of the wrong approach in explaining the high costs (not explaining the costs can be seen as arrogant, but explaining them is embarrassing, which is worse).

2. Explain the term "the myth of monarchy" (ll.45–46).

'Myth' suggests an extraordinary, maybe supernatural quality; thus the "myth of monarchy" means that

- the public is fascinated by the royal pomp and glamour.
- the public is reminded of fairy tales, princes and princesses; the royals appear special and superior because they are distanced from everyday life.
- the people only see the public role of the monarch.
- the people feel reverence and admiration for the monarch.

BUT as soon as the royals become ordinary people with ordinary problems, the myth is destroyed, e.g. when

- details from the monarch's private life show that he/she is a normal human being after all.
- aggressive media report scandals and spread embarrassing gossip.
- the royal family can be seen everywhere at any time (e.g. on TV, in magazines, etc.).
- the monarchy constantly has to give justifications for the money it spends, even for private things.

Task 1 aims at

Anforderungsbereich 1, the content of the text.

Point out means you have to find and explain certain aspects.

It may help to underline the key terms in the text. Then take notes on the most important reasons (see the examples on the left), which will help you to phrase your written summary. Use your own words as far as possible.

Task 2 aims at

Anforderungsbereich 2 (text analysis).

Explain means here that you have to make clear what the term "myth of monarchy" means. It might help to look up 'myth' in your dictionary.

3. Analyse the stylistic devices Hattersley uses to make his point more forcefully.

Alliterations	render Hattersley's statement more forceful
"wastrel princelings prejudice the public" (I.2)	reinforces the mocking tone
"blood and birth" (I.3)	emphasis
"neither right nor reasonable" (II.3–4)	emphasis
"Subaru salesman" (I.16)	emphasis comparison salesman = Reid sceptical customer = public
"gluttony of the guests" (I.38)	emphasis
"myth of monarchy" (II.45–46)	emphasis

Other devices	
<i>Personification:</i> "Even today, a monarchy can survive being hated or despised. But being the object of ridicule is lethal." (II.41–42)	Both "survive" and "lethal" imply that the monarchy is alive, thus heightening the danger the monarchy is in.
<i>Contrast:</i> Prince Charles "pontificates" (I.31) his views but produces "embarrassingly silly" (II.31–32) results.	The dogmatic way of expressing his views contrasts with their silliness, thereby heightening it.
<i>Irony:</i> "A spokesman, demonstrating a grasp of arithmetic that is beyond question ..." (II.39–40)	The irony exposes how trivial the calculation is, thereby ridiculing the court.

4. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of having a hereditary head of state.

Disadvantages:

- Most European countries have economic problems and democratically elected heads of state are cheaper, as there is no royal court or family to support.
- Electing the head of state, e.g. a president, is more democratic.
- Birth as a member of the royal family does not guarantee that a prince/princess is suited to become head of state.
- The religious argument for monarchies, which stated that the monarch was chosen by God, is not very strong any more.

Advantages:

- The long tradition of monarchy strengthens the representative function of the head of state.
- No elections and election campaigns are necessary.
- The monarch stands above political parties and is not involved in their disagreements.
- The crown prince/princess is being prepared for his/her high office from childhood.
- The glamour accompanying hereditary heads of state, i.e. monarchs, is attractive for tourists.

Task 3 also aims at

Anforderungsbereich 2 (text analysis).

In Hattersley's article a single stylistic device predominates. Have a closer look at the examples you have found in the text. Does the effect change if you replace them by synonyms, e.g. *Toyota car dealer* instead of *Subaru salesman*?

Task 4 aims at

Anforderungsbereich 3.

Discuss means to examine an issue from all sides, pointing out the arguments – supported by details, examples and other information- in a carefully organized way.

First collect advantages and disadvantages, as shown on the left. Then write a comment using your arguments.