After the Glorious Revolution in 1688 in which James II was overthrown, England's absolute monarchy became a constitutional monarchy where laws limited royal power. In 1689, Parliament drafted a Bill of Rights, stating the rights of Parliament and of individuals. As you read a portion of the English Bill of Rights, think about what England's monarchs could not do.

**The English Bill of Rights, 1689**

Whereas the said late King James II having abdicated the government, and the throne being thereby vacant, his Highness the prince of Orange (whom it hath pleased Almighty God to make the glorious instrument of delivering this kingdom from popery and arbitrary power) did (by the advice of the lords spiritual and temporal, and diverse principal persons of the Commons) cause letters to be written to the lords spiritual and temporal, being Protestants...to meet and sit at Westminster upon the two and twentieth day of January, in this year 1689, in order to such an establishment as that their religion, laws, and liberties might not again be in danger of being subverted; upon which letters elections have been accordingly made.

And thereupon the said lords spiritual and temporal and Commons, pursuant to their respective letters and elections, being now assembled in a full and free representation of this nation, taking into their most serious consideration the best means for attaining the ends aforesaid, do in the first place (as their ancestors in like case have usually done), for the vindication and assertion of their ancient rights and liberties, declare:

1. That the pretended power of suspending laws, or the execution of laws, by regal authority, without consent of parliament is illegal.
2. That the pretended power of dispensing with the laws, or the execution of law by regal authority, as it hath been assumed and exercised of late, is illegal.
3. That the commission for erecting the late court of commissioners for ecclesiastical [religious] causes, and all other commissions and courts of like nature, are illegal and pernicious [destructive].
4. That levying money for or to the use of the crown by pretense of prerogative, without grant of parliament, for longer time or in other manner than the same is or shall be granted, is illegal.
5. That it is the right of the subjects to petition the king, and all commitments and prosecutions for such petitioning are illegal.
6. That the raising or keeping a standing army within the kingdom in time of peace, unless it be with consent of parliament, is against law.
7. That the subjects which are Protestants may have arms for their defense suitable to their conditions, and as allowed by law.
8. That election of members of parliament ought to be free.
9. That the freedom of speech, and debates or proceedings in parliament, ought not to be impeached or questioned in any court or place out of parliament.
10. That excessive bail ought not to be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted... .
13. And that for redress of all grievance and for the amending, strengthening, and preserving of the laws, parliament ought to be held frequently, and they do claim, demand, and insist upon all and singular the premises, as their undoubted rights and liberties...


**Research Option**

**Comparing and Contrasting** Read the United States Constitution's Bill of Rights. Then make a Venn diagram in which you compare and contrast the American Bill of Rights and the English Bill of Rights. Share your diagram with a small group of classmates.
LITERATURE SELECTION from The Cat and the King by Louis Auchincloss

The Cat and the King is a work of historical fiction about Louis XIV. The novel's narrator—Louis de Rouvroy, the second duc de Saint-Simon—is based on a real-life French noble who observed life at the court of Louis XIV and recorded in his memoirs all that he saw and felt about the reign of the Sun King. The following excerpt, which is drawn from an incident that actually happened, takes place shortly after Saint-Simon has married Gabrielle. What impressions of Louis XIV and life at Versailles does this passage convey?

Gabrielle's first substantial contribution to my career at court was in the affair of the almsh bag. It was the custom after mass for the young duchesse de Bourgogne, the king's grand-daughter-in-law, who, as we had lost both queen and dauphine, was the first lady of France, to ask a duchess to pass a velvet purse for contributions to the church. The "Lorrainers," members of the House of Guise, who should have ranked with us as peers, were always claiming a higher position as "foreign princes," based on silly titles bestowed on them by the Holy Roman Emperor because of scraps of land held along the border. I now learned the latest outrage: that their ladies were claiming exemption from the almsh bag duty. There was nothing for me to do but organize the dukes to make a similar claim.

"But who will pass the almsh bag?" Gabrielle asked me.

"How should I know? Perhaps some simple gentlewoman."

"But if the duchess asks me?"

"If she asks you, of course, you must. But she can't ask you if you're not there. What I'm saying is that the duchesses should abstain from mass."

"Won't it anger the king?"

"I can't help that, my dear. It's the Lorrainers he should be mad at. They've been an infernal nuisance ever since the days of the League. Why a monarch who's so sensitive to treason should put up with them, I can't conceive."

Gabrielle, I had to admit, was correct about the king's reaction. After the first day, when half the duchesses at court absented themselves from mass, the duc de Beavilliers sent for me, and Gabrielle and I went at once to his apartment in the north wing. The duke, who, as I have indicated, was the only peer in the king's council, was an old friend of my parents and had been my guide and mentor ever since I first came to court. I admired him without reserve and had even once offered to marry any one of his eight daughters. Fortunately for me and Gabrielle, the oldest had wished to take holy orders, the second had been a cripple and the rest too young.

"I think you ought to know," Beauvilliers told me, "that the king spoke of you this morning at the end of the council. He said that ever since you had resigned your commission, you have been obsessed with petty questions of rank and precedence."

"Oh, he remembered about my commission?"

I had left the army, two years before, to devote myself to the court.

"The king remembers everything."

"Then I wish he would remember the countless disloyalties of the Lorrainers!"

"If he doesn't appear to, you can be sure he has a reason. In any case, he wishes me to convey to you his desire that the duchesse de Saint-Simon should pass the almsh bag on Monday."

I hesitated. "Is that an order, sir?"

"Is the king's desire not always an order?"

"Very well. But surely I need not be present. He will not require me to assist at my own humiliation?"

"That is up to you."

"Ah, but, my dear, may I make a suggestion?"

I turned to Gabrielle in mild surprise. It was not like her to intervene in my conversation with an older person. "Certainly."

"Request an audience with the king! Tell him you raised the issue of the almsh bag only because you thought it was one in which he was not concerned. But now that you know he wants me to carry the bag, you are not only proud but honored!"

I looked into her anxious eyes with even greater surprise. Then I turned to the old duke.

"Do it, Saint-Simon!" he exclaimed with a laugh. "And be thankful for a smart little wife."