Document Based Question

This question is based on the accompanying documents. The question is designed to test your ability to work with historical documents. Some of these documents have been edited for the purposes of this question. As you analyze the documents, consider the source of each document and any point of view that may be presented in the document.

Historical Context:

During the 1600s, England grew more divided between Parliament (the elected representatives of the people, usually rich lords and nobles) and people who supported the monarchs James I (1603-1625) and Charles I (1625-1649). The divisions were based on religion, and when Oliver Cromwell led a civil war in the 1640s, he became a dictator who changed England for 15 years.

Task: Using the information from the documents and your knowledge of global history, answer the questions that follow each document. [at least 3 paragraphs, one page]

- Explain 2 reasons for why Oliver Cromwell wanted to change England
- Explain 2 changes he made while leading England
- Discuss 2 impacts of Cromwell’s rule on England and/or Ireland

In developing your answers, be sure to keep these general definitions in mind:

(a) explain means “to make plain or understandable; to give reasons for or causes of; to show the logical development or relationships of”
(b) discuss means “to make observations about something using facts, reasoning, and argument; to present in some detail”

Document 1:

“...this country crawls with greed and corruption. It is governed by adventurers and profiteers who think more of their money than their morals...we have a king who taxes the rich and steals the land from the poor to maintain his rich courts and his Catholic wife. And when Parliament objected against these injustices, he closed his Parliament down. And our men dare not speak his mind for fear of prison. Oh yes, all my life I believed it was God's work to fight against evil, but God has turned his back upon this nation...”

-Oliver Cromwell, from the film Cromwell

Document 2:

Despite being a highly religious man, Cromwell had a hatred for the Irish Catholics. He believed that they were all potential traitors willing to help any Catholic nation that wanted to attack England. During his time as head of government, he made it his task to ‘tame’ the Irish. He sent an army there and despite promising to treat well those who surrendered to him, he slaughtered the people of Wexford and Drogheda who did surrender to his forces. He used terror to ‘tame’ the Irish. He ordered that all Irish children should be sent to the West Indies to work as slave laborers in the sugar plantations. He knew many would die out there - but dead children could not grow into adults and have more children. Cromwell left a dark stain on the history of Ireland.
Document 3:

One of the main beliefs of the Puritans was that if you worked hard, you would get to Heaven. Pointless enjoyment was frowned upon. Cromwell shut many inns and the theatres were all closed down. Most sports were banned. Boys caught playing football on a Sunday could be whipped as a punishment. Swearing was punished by a fine, those who kept swearing could be sent to prison.

Cromwell believed that women and girls should dress in a proper manner. Make-up was banned. Puritan leaders and soldiers would roam the streets of towns and scrub off any make-up found on unsuspecting women. Too colorful dresses were banned. A Puritan lady wore a black dress that covered her almost from neck to toes. She wore a white apron and her hair was bunched up behind a white head-dress. Puritan men wore black clothes and short hair.

Document 4a:

“A curse upon you Oliver Cromwell, you who raped our motherland, I hope you're rotting down in hell for the horrors that you sent”.
-From the song "Young Ned of the Hill" by Terry Woods and Ron Kavana, Irish songwriters

Document 4b:

“Cromwell and his English/ battered all we knew/ shackled bolts of freedom/ we're now stolen goods.”
-From the song “Tobacco Island” by Flogging Molly, an Irish rock band

Document 5:

Cromwell was buried in Westminster Abbey. This is where kings and queens were buried. His son, Richard, took over leadership of the country. However, Richard was clearly not up to the task and in 1660 he left the job. In that year, 1660, Charles II was asked to return to become king of England. One of Charles’ first orders was that Cromwell’s body should be dug up and put on ‘trial’ as a traitor and regicide (someone who is responsible for the execution/murder of a king or queen). His body was put on trial, found guilty and symbolically hanged. His head was put on display in London for many years to come.

Document 6:

Selections of Top 100 Greatest British Citizens from the BBC’s 2002 Survey:

1 Winston Churchill (1874–1965) Twice British Prime minister, notably during World War II
4 Charles Darwin (1809–1882), naturalist, originator of the theory of evolution.
5 William Shakespeare (1564–1616), English poet and playwright.
6 Sir Isaac Newton (1643–1727), physicist
7 Queen Elizabeth I of England (1533–1603), monarch, (reigned 1558–1603)
8 John Lennon (1940–1980), musician with The Beatles
10 Oliver Cromwell (1599–1658), Lord Protector
41 King Henry VIII monarch (reigned 1509–1547)

-British Broadcasting Company survey, 2002