

# [Iran college essay](https://assignbuster.com/iran-3401-words-college-essay/)

Iran

Iran is a country located in the Middle East. The main

source of income for the country is oil, the one object that had

greatly influenced its history. Iran’s present government is run

as an Islamic Republic. A president, cabinet, judicial branch,

and Majilesor or legislative branch, makes up the governmental

positions. A revolution that overthrew the monarch, which was

set in 1930, lasted over 15 years. Crane Brinton’s book, An

Anatomy of a Revolution, explains set of four steps a country

experiences when a revolution occurs. Symptoms, rising fever,

crisis, and convalescence are the steps that occur. The Iranian

Revolution followed the four steps in Crane Brinton’s theory,

symptoms, rising fever, crisis, and convalescence occurred.

Numerous symptoms led to the crumbling downfall of Reza Shah

Pahlavi, ruler of Iran until 1978. One of these symptoms is

rising expectations which can be seen during the 1960’s and 70’s.

The rich Shah cleared the way for the land reform law, enacted in

1962. The land minority had to give up its land to the

government, and among those stripped of land, were the Shi’ah

Muslims. Iran’s power structure was radically changed in a

program termed the “ White Revolution”. On January 26, 1963, the

White Revolution was endorsed by the nation. By 1971, when land

distribution ended, about 2, 500, 000 families of the farm

population benefited from the reforms. From 1960-72 the

percentage of owner occupied farmland in Iran rose from 26 to 78

percent. Per capita income rose from $176 in 1960 to $2, 500 in

1978. From 1970-77 the gross national product was reported to

increase to an annual rate of 7. 8% (“ Iran” 896). As a result of

this thriving economy, the income gap rapidly widened. Exclusive

homes, extravagant restaurants, and night clubs and streets

loaded with expensive automobiles served as daily reminders of a

growing income spread. This created a perfect environment for

many conflicts to arise between the classes.

Iran’s elite class consisted of wealthy land owners,

intelligencia, military leaders, politicians, and diplomats. The

Elite continued to support the monarchy and the Shah. The

peasants were victim of unfulfilled political expectations,

surveillance by the secret police, and the severe social and

economic problems that resulted from modernization. The middle

class favored socialism over capitalism, because capitalism in

their view supported the elite, and does not benefit the lower

classes. The middle class was the most changeable element in the

group, because they enjoyed some of the privileges of the elite,

which they would like to protect. At the same time, they

believed that they had been cheated by the elite out of their

share of the industrialization wealth (Orwin 43).

About this time, the middle class, which included students,

technocrats, and modernist professionals, became discontent with

the economy. The key event should have further stabilized the

royal dictatorship, but the increase in oil prices and oil income

beginning in 1974 caused extreme inflation. This was due to the

investment strategy followed by the Shah, which led to a

spectacular 42% growth rate in 1974. (Cottam 14). And because of

the Shah’s support structure which enabled the new rich to

benefit from inflation, the government effort to deal with

inflation was aimless. Poor Iranians and Iranians with a fixed

income suffered major losses in real income. Better standards of

living were no longer visible. Thus, the majority of the Iranian

people developed a revolutionary predisposition.

As the middle class became discontent in Iran throughout the

1970’s, the desertion of intellectuals could be found in great

excess. Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini represented much of the

discontent of the religious sector of Iran. For speaking out

against the Shah’s autocratic rule, Khomeini was exiled to Turkey

in 1963. In 1965, Khomeini moved to Iraq where he became the

central spokesperson for expatriate opposition to the Shah. On

October 6, 1978, Khomeini was expelled from Iraq and moved to

Paris, where he was accessible to a larger body of opposition

forces. He was also accessible to the Western Press. Khomeini

preached that he would displace the Shah and expel the

foreigners. He also said he would enforce religious and

traditional values, and redirect Iran’s wealth away from large

industrialization schemes and toward reforms needed by the common

people. Throughout the 1970’s, Khomeini gained tremendous

popularity with the masses, and he became the symbol of the

opposition towards the Shah.

As Khomeini gained popularity, many religious groups grew in

numbers and in status. In the early 1950’s, the technocrats had

showed core support for Mohammad Mossedeq and Iran’s national

movement. They saw Mossadeq’s overthrow as the removal of the

symbolic leader of the Iranian nation by an American directed

coup d’etat. Many of his followers formed groups in opposition

to the Shah. Leaders of the Freedom Front, one of the groups

that grew out of the Mossadeq movement, were a group composed of

intellectuals who tended to be centrist in philosophy, more

religious, anti-Marxist, and militant (Cottam 13). They

recognized Khomeini’s large and potentially enormous following,

and associated themselves with him

The rise of religious opposition groups and Khomeini proved

to be a great test for the Shah. As time progressed the weakness

of the Shah became apparent. Waves of opposition began building

after 1975, due to the formation of the Rastakhiz , the legal

political party in Iran, and the banning of opposition political

parties. It also became clear that the increased oil revenues

following oil price increases, were spent on arms and

industrialization. In mid-1977 the religious leaders began

demonstrating against the modernization brought on by the Shah.

In November, several people were killed when police broke up

demonstrations. As time went on, protests became more radical.

To try and quiet dissent, the Shah became more of a dictator. As

a result, those who had been moderate in demands for reform

became more radical. In the fall of 1978, strikes against the

oil industry, the post office, government factories, and banks

demolished the economy. This pattern continued throughout most

of 1978 (Orwin 45). As these protests became more frequent there

were more and more people killed. This reflects the Shah’s loss

of power over his government and his people.

In late 1978, the Shah came to the conclusion that he would

and could not rule a country in which he had to stand in the

flowing blood of his people. In short, he understood that he

could not militarily occupy his own country. The Shah’s early

mistakes had been devastating as the years went on. His forceful

actions did not work and it’s no wonder that his grip weakened

and his mid wavered.

These events all led to the march against the government of

the Shah, in which eight million Iranians protested on December

10, 1978 (Bill 25). One-fifth of the Iranian government was

willing to join in a massive and nonviolent manifestation of

opposition even though most of them knew that thousands of their

countrymen had been shot in previous demonstrations. The banners

and slogans made clear the religious and political essence of the

revolutionary movement. This massive demonstration was the

turning point from symptoms to rising fever. It clearly

reflected the weakness of the Shah, and the inevitability of

revolution in Iran.

After a year of public demonstrations against him, the Shah

of Iran left Tehran on January 16, 1979, for an “ extended

vacation” (Orwin 46). He left the country in the hands of a

regency council and Prime Minister Shahpur Bakhtiar, who was a

former member of the National Front.

The opposition leader, Khomeini, was to become the new

ruler, and he returned to Iran on February 1, 1979. Khomeini

occupied preeminent positions among Iran’s most respected

religious scholars, the Mujahedin-e Khalq.. Although Khomeini

wanted a stable government that could cope with the problems of

reconstruction, he wanted to eradicate the evil roots of the old

system, which he describes as satanic. He denounced the

materialism of the recent past and called for a climate in which

social justice would prevail.

On April 1, 1979, after a landslide victory in a national

referendum, Khomeini declared an Islamic republic. This republic

consisted of a new constitution reflecting Khomeini’s ideals of

Islamic government. He was named Iran’s political and religious

leader for life. Khomeini tapped the deep-seated conservatism of

the Muslim fundamentalists by making moderate changes in the law.

Women were required to wear the veil, Western music and alcohol

were banned, and the punishments described by Islamic law were

reinstated. Political vengeance was taken, executing hundreds of

people who had worked with the Shah’s regime (“ Iran” 897).

The large moderate center composed of the professional and

bourgeois middle class had proved to be ineffective in their

leadership abilities. Moderate Bakhtiar, the last prime minister

under Pahlavi rule, was very unpopular, and he was unable to

compromise with his former National Front colleagues or with

Khomeini. He was then forced to flee to France.

On April 1, 1979, his replacement, Mehdi Bazergan was

appointed by Khomeini (Cottam 15). This 73-year-old engineer was

a leader of the Freedom Front, and president of the committee of

human rights. The middle and upper middle classes looked to

Bazergan to provide stability so the economy would recover and

the government services could be restored. Bazergan appointed a

cabinet, mainly, from the ranks of the Freedom Front, the

National Front, and the religious bureaucracy. Bazergan’s

position was weak, however, and he steadily lost ground to the

due to the attacks from the far right and left. As their base of

support narrowed, their dependence on Khomeini intensified.

During this time, Iran’s relation with the US went downhill.

It reached a stage of outright confrontation, when, on November

4, 1979, 500 extremist students seized the US embassy in Tehran.

They took hostage 66 citizens at the embassy and the foreign

ministry (“ The Iranian Revolution” 835). The takeover seemingly

sanctioned by Khomeini, continued for the next 444 days, and

American-Iranian relations sunk to an all-time low. This led to

trade conflicts with the United States and its allies, causing

economic problems.

During the rising fever stage there is a presence of a dual

government. During Bazergan’s rule, it became difficult to

administer justice with a court system that had been particularly

lenient to the royal will. To deal with these problems on a

temporary basis. Khomeini set up a system of revolutionary

committees presided over by a revolutionary council. Religious

leaders clearly predominated in the revolutionary council-

committee-courts system, which came to be almost a parallel

government.

In November, 1979, Bazergan resigned, and in his place

Khomeini appointed Abol Hassan Bani Sadr. Bani Sadr was an

idealist, a bookworm, and most personally ambitious of all the

liberal revolutionaries. Like the other moderates, he was a

representative of the professional middle class, who had little

skill or patience to build political organizations. Bani Sadr’s

efforts were fruitless in dealing with the hostage releases.

After being elected Iran’s first president in January 1980, he

and his followers, out of self defense and desperation, formed an

alliance with the Mujahedin-e Khalq (“ Iran” 897). He also

attempted to work hard to establish close relations with the

military leaders. He ineffectively tried to appeal to the

Iranian people, who had little in common with a Paris trained

intellectual. One can see that during this stage of rising

fever, moderate control is losing power. The people of Iran

became upset with the little change that was taking place, and

wanted more extreme measures taken.

In mid-1981, leaders of the Islamic Republican Party (IRP)

convinced Khomeini that Bani Sadr was plotting against them, and

suggested evidence indicating that he was a threat to the

revolution. This led to his dismissal on June 20, of position of

commander-in-chief of the armed forces. His presidency lasted 17

months. He was arrested and dismissed as president on June 22.

Forced into hiding, he fled Iran on July 29, 1981, and was

granted political asylum in Paris. On July 24, extremist

Muhammad Ali Rajai with substantial IRP backing, won the

electoral victory over the moderates. Thus, the period of rising

fever ended, and the period of crisis began.

In 1981, Khomeini took complete control over Iran and took

many extremist measures. He made sure the government completely

controlled the media, as well as newspapers, television

broadcasts, and radio programs. He had strict control of

everything, including the treasury and flow of money to religious

leaders. Those who disagreed with him faced severe economic

retribution. The crisis had begun and radicals had taken over.

Under Khomeini’s rule (1981-1989) came a great period of

reign of terror. For example, after a speech the Ayatollah made,

right wing revolutionary guards fired into a rally of

approximately one hundred thousand Muslim leftists outside the

U. S. Embassy in Teheran. Five people were killed and more than

300 were wounded. Supporters held food riots in Tunisia, and

others held six car bombings in Kuwait. The Islamic Jihad held

suicide bombings that killed two hundred-forty one U. S.

Servicemen, and fifty-eight French troops in Beirut. These acts

were not looked at as being bad acts of terrorism, but rather as

acts of patriotic heroes. The reign of terror, the next step in

the crisis, brought extremists into complete control.

The people of Iran in the early 1980’s, had just about

enough of all these laws and regulations, and were outraged at

their standard of living. People were finally starting to revolt

against the way that they have been treated. This period

according to Crane Brinton, is known as the civil war. Civil war

started in Iran with the conflict with the Kurds. These people

were pushed out of their homes, religious temples, and places of

business, because of the overpowering radicals. An entire

religious group was almost completely annihilated because of the

savage behavior of the radicals. It was later found that the

Kurdish problem was merely a pretext on Iran’s part to engage in

meetings and collaborations with two influential middle eastern

states, Turkey and Syria. People suffered so that government

could gain allies. The poor treatment of the Kurds led to

confusion in the nation.

Because of all of the chaos in the country, due to different

public demonstrations and mass rioting, government groups were

forming. The IRP, one of these groups, was in support of a

nationalistic movement. Opposed to it was the Hojatieh, and a

third party, which represented the Mullahs and the high

ayatollahs. This third group thought Khomeini was reckless, so

there was great hostility towards the IRP. These groups formed

different factions among the people of Iran, and led to a divided

nation.

In the early 1980’s, patriotic fever was bordering on

hysteria, and the nationalism was incredible. This patriotic

fever fits in to the next part of the revolution, the republic of

virtue. Iran’s people had a great sense of nationalism inside of

them. People held many parades and marches to express their

nationalism. During this time, women were forced to wear veils

in public, modern divorce laws were repealed, and harsh courts

were set up, which set strict laws and harsh penalties.

The colliding views of the Iranian groups, as well as the

republic of virtue, made it hard for Iran to deal with other

countries. During this period, Iran’s relationship with Iraq

became troubled. The war began with a fight for land and oil and

as a result of the personalities of the two leaders. Both

Hussein, the leader of Iraq, and Khomeini are headstrong. In

addition, they disliked each other (Orwin 42).

All of the circumstances that resulted from the war may have

contributed in some measure to the outbreak and continuation of

the conflict between Iran and Iraq (Iran-Iraq War 77-78). The

situation worsened in September of 1980 when Iraq launched an

attack on Iran to take control of the waterway that divided the

two countries (“ Iranian Revolution” p. 835).

During the war, industry suffered. Chemical, steel, and

iron plants in the war zone were heavily shelled. There have

been shortages in electricity, fuel, and spare parts. The

available pool of workers has diminished as thousands of men

marched off to the front lines to fight. This caused great

economic problems throughout the mid-1980’s. Iraq attempted to

devastate oil economy even further. Tankers and ships 50 miles

off the oil terminal were struck. Iran would be deprived of a

major source of income (Orwin 41).

By 1984 it was reported that there were one million refuges

in the Iranian province of Khuzestan. Some 300, 000 Iranian

soldiers and 250, 000 Iraqi troops had been killed, or wounded.

Among the injured were Iranian soldiers who sustained burns,

blisters, and lung damage from Iraqi chemical weapons (Orwin 47).

The war lasted about 8 years and Iran suffered casualties, not

only in people, but in economy and leadership as well.

Because of the war with Iraq, and the purges going on in

Iran, the economy was severely depressed. Besides the enormous

human cost, economic losses from the war exceed $200 billion.

Agricultural growth has declined as a result of war, also (Orwin

34).

During the crisis and during the war with Iraq, industry is

plagued by poor labor management, a lack of competent technical

and managerial personnel, and shortages of raw material and spare

parts. Agricultural suffers from shortage of capital, raw

materials, and equipment, and as a result, food production has

declined. Also, out of an estimated work force of 12 million,

unemployment is up to 3-4 million (Orwin 16). Iran’s economy was

desperate.

In connection with the devastating economy with the war,

there was economic suffering through purges, the next step in

crisis. Extensive purges were carried out in the army, in the

school and university systems, and in some of the departments of

government although the Ministries of Justice and Commerce proved

significantly more resistant because of the entrenched power of

conservative elements there). Additionally, new institutions

were created, like the Revolutionary Guards – including the

creation of a ministry for them – and the counsel of Guardians,

along with a string of other judicial bodies (Akhavi 53).

Purges eliminated many qualified personnel, and lowered the

morale of the Iranian people.

Finally, after about 9 years of crisis and fighting among

different groups, there was a breakthrough in the revolution,

with the return of conservatives. The Ayatollah Khomeini died in

May of 1989, and a new leader by the name of Ali Hashemi

Rafsanjani was elected and came to power two months later. This

would start the convalescence stage of Crane Brinton’s

revolution. Rafsanjani has not actually called for a reversal of

strict Islamic injunctions, but in oblique ways he is signaling

that he favors a more relaxed approach, especially in the

enforcement of the hijab (Ramazani 7).

Under Rafsanjani, the return of the church has been allowed

to occur, which is another step in the theory of a revolution.

On August 2, 1991, Iran resumed diplomatic relations with Iraq

and had also resolved the issue over the pilgrimage of Iranian

Muslims to Mecca, which has been suspended for three years.

Inside Iran, the most significant development in the last few

months took place in October, when several Iranian leaders teamed

up in a maneuver to marginalize opponents (Igram A-10).

Twelve years after Khomeini came to power, Iran’s Islamic

revolution has finally softened around the edges. The signs of

fitful change are everywhere. On Tehran’s streets women still

observe hijab (the veil), the Islamic injunction that women keep

themselves covered except for their faces and hands. But some

have exchanged their shapeless black chedors for slightly fitted

raincoats in colors like green and purple. Women’s fingernails

are starting to sport glosses, too (Ramazani 32). Obviously,

the republic of virtue has been eliminated, which is the next

part in the convalescence.

After Khomeini’s death, many radical groups were weakened.

This led to the elimination of radicals. President Rafsanjani,

with the support of Khomeini, swiftly eliminated four of his most

hard-line adversaries from the political scene by challenging

their right to re-election. With Rafsanjani in control, Iranians

took a new look at crisis. His pragmatic policies were firmly

established, replacing militancy and isolation. Rafsanjani

campaigned to decrease the influence of important opponents,

therefore improving ties with the western world. As well as

attracting foreign trade. The radicals were finally eliminated,

and Iran could return to the way it was.

Economic problems after a revolution are good. Iran had

been in debt from the time the revolution started, and an

economic recovery was needed. There was an increase in oil

revenue in 1990, since ties with non-oil bearing countries had

been replaced. There was also and increase in oil price, as well

as other raw materials. Iran did have ten billion dollars froze

in American banks, which still partly remain there today. The

country’s economic problems were starting to be resolved.

The return of status quo, is the final step in the

convalescence stage. Iran has returned to the status quo. They

have many ties, including ties with North Korea, Libya, Syria,

and Europe. Trade and friendliness has increased with Russia, as

well. Russia currently want to build nuclear reactors in Iran.

Commerce opened with Japan, Pakistan, Turkey, and even some

allies of Iraq. Rafsanjani wants to end Iran’s pariah status in

the world community and gain desperately needed aid. He thinks

they are in a period of reconstruction (Desmond 32).

The Iranian Revolution is over, and the country is back on

its feet. Rafasanjani was an incredible help to the economy and

the government, and remains in power today. Iran has a great

number of allies, which improves its ties with the west. Iran’s

oil industry is booming, and the country’s economy remains

stable. Americans are again allowed to be seen on the streets of

Tehran, and the foreign debt has reduced. The U. S. still has

their problems with Iran (the money in the banks), but these

problems are still in the process of being resolved. Iran is

progressing steadily, and has recovered from the revolution. The

Iranian Revolution follows Crane Brinton’s theory on a revolution

because the revolution included symptoms, rising fever, crisis,

and convalescence, just as the theory states.

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