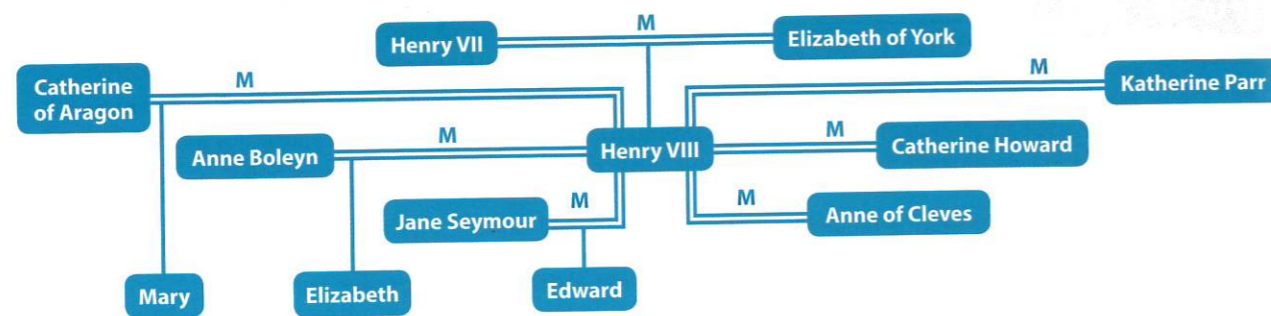


This topic focuses on the last 35 years of the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. To understand this period, you need to begin by exploring Elizabeth's childhood and what England was like before she became queen. In 1558, Elizabeth, the daughter of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn, became Queen of England. As the king's youngest daughter she did not seem destined for the throne yet Elizabeth would become a long-reigning and important monarch. She **inherited** a country that was divided and troubled after the uncertain years of her predecessor's reign and faced many challenges.

Objectives

- ▶ **Explore** who Elizabeth was and how she became queen.
- ▶ **Explain** why most people believed she would never be queen.
- ▶ **Consider** how Elizabeth's childhood experiences may have affected her approach to ruling England.

▼ The Tudor family tree



A new princess...

Far from being a cause for celebration, Elizabeth's birth was a disappointment to her father. Henry was desperate to have a son and heir to continue the Tudor line and he had gone to great lengths to try to make this happen. Henry had divorced his first wife, Catherine of Aragon, and married Anne Boleyn, who gave birth to Elizabeth in 1533.

Anne Boleyn was accused of committing adultery with several men in court and was executed for **treason** in 1536, shortly before Elizabeth's third birthday. Henry married Jane Seymour 11 days later and she gave birth to Edward, the male heir that Henry had wanted all along.

Family or threat?

For the rest of her father's reign Elizabeth was well looked after and educated in various subjects and languages. She was being prepared for life as a member of the **royal court**, the large group of advisors and other figures that surrounded the monarch. This would involve attending important events and, as a princess, most likely being married off to an important foreign figure to help form an alliance. Like other women, Elizabeth would have no role in decision making but would certainly play a valuable role as the king's daughter.

When Henry VIII died in 1547, Edward, aged just nine, became king. Elizabeth went to live with her father's sixth wife, Katherine Parr, and her new husband, Thomas Seymour, the king's uncle. After Katherine's death there were accusations made that Seymour and Elizabeth were to marry so that he could gain more influence over the young king. Seymour was executed for treason and Elizabeth's loyalty remained under suspicion through both her brother's and her sister Mary's reigns.

From princess to queen

Edward died in 1553 and Henry's eldest daughter, Mary, became queen. Mary spent much of her reign feeling paranoid about threats and rebellions. She saw her younger sister as a potential symbol or leader for her enemies and even had Elizabeth imprisoned in the Tower of London in 1554 after she was accused of supporting a rebellion. Due to religious differences, many of Mary's enemies wanted Elizabeth to replace her sister on the throne. These five years gave Elizabeth time to

grow as a future leader. She saw the mistakes her sister made and was often surrounded by powerful figures. She was forced to think in a political way for the first time. When Mary died in 1558, Henry VIII's youngest daughter became Queen Elizabeth I of England.

▼ **INTERPRETATION A** An illustration of Elizabeth's christening from a children's book published in 1966



When Elizabeth became queen she needed to establish her authority. When she was crowned, at the age of 25, she already had many enemies. She was also surrounded by powerful men, many of whom had served in the court of her father. Elizabeth had a difficult childhood, to say the least. Her mother had been executed on her father's orders and she had seen one stepmother die in childbirth and another follow her mother to the executioner's block. She then spent years under suspicion. It seems likely that these experiences would have had an impact later on when she made decisions about marriage or how to deal with her cousin, Mary, Queen of Scots.

▼ **SOURCE B** A portrait of Elizabeth in 1546, painted by William Scrots



Key Words

inherit treason royal court

Work

- 1 In your own words, explain the meaning of the following terms:
 - a royal court
 - b treason.
- 2 Who was Elizabeth I's mother?
- 3 Why was it considered unlikely that Elizabeth would ever be queen?
- 4 Look at **Sources B** and **C** and **Interpretation D**. What can they teach us about Elizabeth's childhood?
- 5 How might Elizabeth's experiences as a child have affected her approach to ruling England? Try to explain your answer using specific events and experiences.

▼ **SOURCE C** Adapted from a letter to Henry VIII's Chief Minister Thomas Cromwell from Margaret Bryant, Elizabeth's governess; it was written after the birth of Edward, the long awaited male heir, in 1537.

I beg you to be good to her and make sure that she has clothing, for she has neither gown, nor petticoat, nor handkerchiefs, sleeves, nightdresses, corsets, nor nightcaps.

▼ **INTERPRETATION D** Adapted from an article by Ashlie Jensen On the Tudor Trail, a history website focusing on the life of Anne Boleyn:

Even in toddlerhood Elizabeth was documented by multiple sources to be a vibrant, precocious and eloquent child. Those who encountered Elizabeth in her early years, particularly foreigners with no previous experience of her character, describe her as an exceptionally captivating young lady who had taken them by surprise.

Who was powerful in Elizabethan England?

Although she was queen, Elizabeth did not have complete freedom to do as she pleased. Elizabeth's court of advisors and other figures had a clear structure but government was dominated by a small number of powerful men who at times had great influence on the queen.

Objectives

- ▶ **Examine** the structure of Elizabeth's court and know some of the significant figures.
- ▶ **Explain** how the court and government worked and the difference between the two.
- ▶ **Assess** who held the power in Elizabeth's court.

Parliament

Parliament was made up of the House of Lords (lords, bishops and other members of the **nobility**) and the House of Commons ('common' people, although still wealthy and educated). It was much less powerful than the modern UK Parliament but it did have influence over tax and was responsible for passing laws. The queen decided when to call Parliament and how much of their advice she should listen to.

Privy Council

Took responsibility for the day-to-day running of the country. Its members were Elizabeth's main advisors. Technically Elizabeth could choose who was on the Council but in reality she had to appoint the most powerful landowners to avoid the risk of rebellion. The Council could be called upon to deal with almost any issue, including military and foreign affairs, religion and the queen's security. If the Privy Council agreed on a particular issue, it was hard for Elizabeth to refuse it. Luckily for her, privy councillors were rarely united. The Council was led by the **Secretary of State**.

Who had the power in Elizabethan England?

Lord Lieutenants

Appointed by the queen to take administrative responsibility for a particular area of the country. This involved settling disputes and collecting taxes. They were also responsible for raising a **militia** to fight for the queen if needed. Many Lord Lieutenants held other important roles in court, most notably **privy councillors** (if they served on the Privy Council, their day-to-day work would be carried out by a deputy – someone who did the job in their place). The position of a Lord Lieutenant could lead to great power and influence.

Justices of the Peace (JPs)

Each county had several Justices of the Peace to ensure order was kept. They were always selected from the local **gentry** and their main role was to ensure that the laws passed by Parliament were properly enforced. A single JP had the power to send somebody to prison but more than one JP was required to sentence a criminal to death. On taking office, JPs swore to treat everyone who they dealt with equally, whether they were rich or poor.

What was the royal court?

The royal court and the government were not the same thing. The court was made up of the government officials, ladies-in-waiting, servants and advisors who surrounded Elizabeth. Elizabeth's court consisted of around 1000 people from the highest nobles down to

servants. It was the centre of political power but also the source of trends and fashions for the country. The Privy Council was a key part of the court but other important positions like Justices of the Peace were external to it. The real power lay with around 12 men who were close to the queen. Along with Elizabeth herself, this group could be described as the government.

Significant court figures

Throughout Elizabeth's reign, various men became influential in her court. They often served on the Privy Council, in Parliament or as Lord Lieutenants but in reality their relationship with the queen was more important than the title they held. One way in which the queen could ensure loyalty was through **patronage**. This involved giving titles, power or other rewards to ensure individuals' support. Banishment from court was considered disgraceful, so patronage was highly desired.

Key Biography

William Cecil (1520–98)

- Cecil served as Secretary of State twice and as a Member of Parliament and was Elizabeth's most trusted advisor; it was said that, at times, the queen would listen to no one but Cecil.
- He encouraged Elizabeth to take control of Catholic Ireland and to fight other Catholic rivals in England and abroad.
- Cecil played a key role in developing the **Poor Laws** and the new religious policies.



Key Biography

Francis Walsingham (c1532–90)

- Served as Secretary of State and was one of the queen's closest advisors from 1573 until his death.
- Known as Elizabeth's 'spymaster', Walsingham was said to have 'eyes and ears' everywhere.
- He helped establish England as a powerful force at sea and took the lead in dealing with England's biggest rivals: Spain, France and the Netherlands.
- He played a role in the trial and execution of Mary, Queen of Scots, a rival for Elizabeth's throne in the 1580s.



Key Words

nobility Secretary of State militia
privy councillor gentry
patronage Poor Laws

Work

- 1 What was the role of the Privy Council in Elizabethan England?
- 2 Create a two-column table in your book. In the first column, write a list of the key jobs in Elizabethan government. In the second column, make a list of bullet points that explain the responsibilities of each job.
- 3 Who do you think had the most influence: the Privy Council, Parliament, the Justices of the Peace or the Lord Lieutenants?
- 4 How much freedom did Elizabeth have to make her own decisions? Explain your answer.

Practice Question

Explain what was important about the Privy Council.

8 marks

Study Tip

Remember that in an 'explain' question you should aim to go beyond describing what the Privy Council is. Include specific details about its role or who the members were.

Fact

Historians sometimes add a 'c' before dates. This stands for 'circa', which means 'around' or 'approximately'.

2.1

Why was it difficult to be a female ruler?

When Elizabeth became the Queen of England in 1558, she **succeeded** her elder sister, Mary. Her father, along with many others, had been convinced that no woman could successfully rule a country, and Mary had done nothing to change people's view.

Objectives

- ▶ Explore some of the challenges that Elizabeth faced during her reign.
- ▶ Explain why she faced these challenges.
- ▶ Evaluate the significance of these challenges.

What problems did Elizabeth face in the first ten years of her reign?

When Elizabeth came to the throne in 1558 aged 25, she was surrounded by men, many of whom had been powerful figures during the reigns of her father, Henry VIII, and both Edward VI and Mary. From the beginning and throughout her reign, Elizabeth faced challenges as a female ruler in a world where men had always held the power. Elizabeth was keen to assert her authority over Parliament and was not afraid to arrest those who questioned her policies.

One big problem Elizabeth faced was who would succeed her. Her heir, when she came to the throne, was her cousin Mary,

▼ **INTERPRETATION A** *Queen Elizabeth in Parliament from The Journals of All the Parliaments during the Reign of Queen Elizabeth by Simonds D'Ewes (1682)*



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Queen of Scots. For many Englishmen, the prospect of the Scottish Queen Mary, a Catholic who had once been married to the King of France, becoming queen was something to be avoided at all costs. The way to avoid this was for Elizabeth to marry and give birth to a son, who could succeed her.

▼ **SOURCE B** *Adapted from The First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women by John Knox (1558); Knox was a Scottish Protestant who wrote the book during the reign of Mary I of England:*

To promote a woman to rule and have superiority over any nation is insulting to God because it goes against His design for order and government. It is the overturning of good order and all principles of justice. For no man ever saw the lion bow down to the lioness.

▼ **SOURCE C** *An assessment of the state of the nation made by one of Queen Elizabeth's privy councillors, Armagil Waad, in 1558:*

The Queen and the nobility are poor and the country is exhausted. There is a lack of good leaders and soldiers. The people are disorderly. The law is not properly enforced. All things are expensive. There are wars with France and Scotland. The French king threatens the country, having one foot in Calais and the other in Scotland. We know who our enemies are abroad, but we are not sure who our friends are.

Succession

Henry VIII had done all he could to ensure the future of the Tudor line but Edward VI and Mary had died childless and Elizabeth had yet to produce an heir. In the past, there had been wars when people were not sure who would become ruler after a monarch's death. In 1562, Elizabeth contracted smallpox and nearly died. This drew attention to how uncertain the future was. Parliament and others were keen for Elizabeth to marry and have a child as soon as possible.



Mary, Queen of Scots

Without a direct heir, the next in line to the throne was Elizabeth's Catholic cousin Mary. In 1568, Mary was **exiled** from Scotland to England and became a real threat to Elizabeth's rule. Catholics now had an alternative queen to fight for.



Ireland

Like her predecessors, Elizabeth considered herself to be Queen of Ireland. Unfortunately, many of the Irish disagreed. A major problem was a revolt in northern Ireland in 1559, the first of several during her reign. She spent thousands of pounds and sent many of her best soldiers to try to limit Irish rebellion but nothing seemed to work in the long term.



Elizabeth's problems

Taxation

The government needed money and one of the few ways to get it was through taxes. Unfortunately, at a time of great **poverty** taxes would be very unpopular with the people of England, so raising taxes would be very dangerous for a new monarch.



Foreign policy

Elizabeth had to deal with powerful countries that wanted influence over England. France and Spain, which were both Catholic and had the support of the **Pope**, saw Protestant England as a target. One major area of disagreement was the Netherlands. The mainly Protestant population was in conflict with the Catholic Spanish who ruled most of the area. Elizabeth would eventually need to decide how to deal with these concerns but initially her priority was keeping England secure.



Practice Question

Write an account of the problems Elizabeth faced in the first ten years of her reign. **8 marks**

Study Tip

Remember to include plenty of specific detail, including any key dates.

Extension

Historians need to be able to evaluate the relative importance of issues in the past. For example, they might make judgements about Elizabeth's problems. Which problem do you think could be the biggest threat to Elizabeth's rule? Give reasons for your choice.



Key Words

succeed exile poverty Pope

Religion

Elizabeth's father had broken from the Catholic Church in order to obtain a divorce. After Henry's death, Edward continued to establish the Protestant faith. When Mary came to the throne she tried to undo what had gone before and re-establish Catholicism. Elizabeth was a Protestant but she was also practical. She did not want to make her enemies angry immediately. She allowed Catholics to follow their faith privately, but many Catholics remained unhappy, with some believing she had no right to be queen as they did not recognise Henry's second marriage to Elizabeth's mother, Anne Boleyn. In addition, the growing popularity of Puritanism, an extreme version of Protestantism, was seen as a threat.



Work

- 1 When did Elizabeth I become queen?
- 2 Look at **Source B**. Why is John Knox so opposed to the idea of a female ruler?
- 3 Look at **Interpretation A** and **Sources B** and **C**. What problems did Elizabeth face?
- 4 Create a poster to illustrate Elizabeth's problems. You can use a maximum of ten words and one image for each problem.

Elizabeth and the importance of marriage

One of the biggest issues facing Elizabeth was that of marriage. Without an heir, the Tudor line would come to end. So from the day she became queen, her advisors were keen to find a suitable husband for her. Marriage also had another purpose. It was a way to secure alliances and increase influence at home and abroad.

Objectives

- ▶ **Recall** why the issues of succession and marriage were so important.
- ▶ **Explain** the arguments for and against Elizabeth's potential marriage, particularly in relation to succession.
- ▶ **Assess** Elizabeth's possible suitors and evaluate the arguments for and against marriage.

▼ **INTERPRETATION A** A still from a 2005 television drama about Elizabeth; *The Virgin Queen* focuses on her relationship with Robert Dudley and suggests that the two were in love



Why was marriage so important?

In Elizabeth's time, marriage, particularly for royalty, was less about love and more about making political deals between families and nations. As a young princess and then queen, who Elizabeth chose to marry could have a huge impact on England. She could choose to marry an Englishman and secure the support of an important family or she could marry a foreign prince and join two royal families together, and then their son would rule two countries. However, her choice was not quite so straightforward. If she married a foreign royal she risked losing control of England to her husband. Marrying an Englishman would avoid this but would lead to its own complications. As queen she would have authority over her husband but as a wife she must promise to obey him.

Arguments for marriage

- Marriage could create an alliance with a foreign country or win the support of a powerful English family.
- By marrying, Elizabeth could produce an heir to succeed her and continue the Tudor line.
- Marriage and children would prevent Mary, Queen of Scots (a Catholic and Elizabeth's cousin), from ruling England after Elizabeth's death.

Arguments against marriage

- Marrying a foreign prince or king could lead to England falling under their control.
- Marrying an Englishman could create problems over who had authority.
- Remaining unmarried meant that Elizabeth kept her independence. Marriage in the sixteenth century was not a partnership, as the husband legally had authority over the wife. It is possible that Elizabeth did not want to be answerable to her husband.
- Giving birth was risky for women at this time, often resulting in the death of the mother.
- Her sister Mary's marriage to King Philip of Spain was widely seen as a disaster and failed to produce an heir.

▼ **SOURCE B** Elizabeth replies to a call from Parliament for her to get married in 1566:

At present it is not convenient; nor never shall be without some peril unto you and certain danger unto me.

Who could be worthy of marrying a queen?

Throughout her reign, many men became potential husbands to Elizabeth. Some would be entirely political matches but others were more personal. There were three suitors who were particularly notable.

Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester



As the queen's childhood friend and one of her favourites throughout her reign, many assumed that they would marry. When his wife died after a fall he was free to marry once again, but the scandal of her death (some thought he killed her deliberately) meant that marriage became almost impossible. Dudley was also a key figure in the royal court. As a Privy Councillor he wielded great power and influence in government.

King Philip II of Spain

As King of Spain, Philip was one of the most powerful men in the world, as well as one of the wealthiest: Spain's control of South America and its resources had made the country very rich. Philip was in fact Elizabeth's brother-in-law having been married to Queen Mary I, but had spent very little time in England. The biggest barrier between Elizabeth and Philip was religion: Philip was a Catholic and Elizabeth was a Protestant. This created many problems, not least of which was the issue of which religion their children would be raised in.



Francis, Duke of Anjou and Alençon



As the French king's brother, marriage to Francis could lead to influence in France. As his brother was childless, Francis was also heir to the throne. The risk, however, was significant. By the

time their marriage was considered, Elizabeth was 46 and most assumed she was beyond having children. If she died childless while married to the French heir, England could fall under French control. For this reason, and the fact that Francis was a Catholic, many influential people and the public were against the marriage.

Work

- 1 What were the main arguments in favour of Elizabeth getting married?
- 2 Look at **Source B**. What possible 'peril' is Elizabeth describing?
- 3 Consider the three suitors on these pages. Create a dating website profile for each of the men. Do the same for Elizabeth. Who do you think is the best match for her?
- 4 Write a letter to Elizabeth explaining which (if any) of the suitors she should marry. Give reasons for your choice.
- 5 Look at **Interpretation A**. How convincing do you think the idea of a love story between Elizabeth and Dudley is based on what you know so far?

Study Tip

Use specific examples of possible marriages to explain your points: for example, 'Marrying Francis, Duke of Anjou and Alençon, could lead to an alliance with France.'

Practice Question

Explain what was important about Elizabeth's decision regarding her marriage.

8 marks

Elizabeth and the importance of marriage

Queen Elizabeth's marriage was not simply a matter of personal choice; it was about securing the future of the country. It was everyone's concern, from members of her Privy Council to Members of Parliament. How did Elizabeth react? What does this tell us about Elizabeth and her Parliament?

Parliament as matchmakers?

After Elizabeth almost died of smallpox in 1562, Parliament became increasingly concerned about the lack of an heir. Many in Parliament saw it as their duty to find a match for Elizabeth and guarantee stability for England. The smallpox scare was not the only concern. By the time of her illness, the queen was almost 30, by no means old, but the likelihood of her producing an heir was getting smaller. By 1566, Parliament began to openly discuss potential matches. Elizabeth was furious with what she saw as an unacceptable interference and she banned Parliament from ever discussing the issue again. One politician, Peter Wentworth, ignored Elizabeth's orders and argued that Parliament should be able to discuss what it liked. Realising how the queen might react, the rest of Parliament had him arrested and placed in the Tower of London before Elizabeth blamed them all for his opinions. No matter how important the issue of marriage was to the country, it was clear that Elizabeth considered it a decision that she alone should make. This is an example of how Parliament and the queen clashed over the role Parliament should take. Elizabeth believed that there were certain matters that were entirely hers to consider, without any interference from Parliament. Marriage was one of these.

Why didn't Elizabeth get married?

Despite the best efforts of Parliament and the Privy Council, Elizabeth never married. Historians have argued over why this was. At the time, some people felt that she was not doing her duty to her country while others felt that her decision was very clever indeed. The sources and interpretations opposite show some of the arguments and explanations that were put forward at the time.

▼ **INTERPRETATION A** *The Commons Petitioning Queen Elizabeth to Marry*, painted by Solomon Joseph Solomon in 1911; the subtitle reads: 'with this ring I was wedded to the realm'



▼ **SOURCE B** *Sir James Melville, Scottish ambassador to England, in conversation with Elizabeth, 1564:*

You will never marry. The Queen of England is too proud to suffer a commander. You think if you were married, you would only be Queen of England, and now you are king and queen both.

▼ **INTERPRETATION C** *Written by the historian Hugh Oakeley Arnold-Forster, in A History of England (1898):*

Who was the queen's husband to be, and what power was he to have over the government of the country? If he were a foreigner there was no knowing what power he might get over the queen, power which he would very likely use for the good of a foreign country, and not for the good of England. On the other hand, if he were an Englishman, he must be chosen from among the queen's subjects, and then it was certain that there would be jealousy and strife among all the great nobles in the country when they saw one of their number picked out and made king over them.

▼ **INTERPRETATION D** *Elizabeth and Dudley were very close friends and many believed that they were in love. This description of the death of Dudley's wife Amy is from Spartacus Educational, a history website:*

Amy Dudley insisted that everyone in the house attend a local fair in Abingdon. When her servants returned that evening, they found her lying dead at the foot of the staircase, her neck broken. Rumours began to circulate that Dudley had murdered his wife so that he could marry Elizabeth. It was now politically impossible for Elizabeth to marry Dudley.

▼ **SOURCE E** *Queen Elizabeth in a letter written to Parliament, 1564:*

I have already joined myself in marriage to a husband, namely the kingdom of England.

▼ **INTERPRETATION F** *From a newspaper interview with Alison Weir who wrote a novel based on Queen Elizabeth's life:*

Although Elizabeth loved Dudley she certainly did not want to marry him, or any other man. The reason goes back to a childhood that would have been considered highly dysfunctional in modern terms. Elizabeth hated the idea of marriage. This is understandable when you consider that her father was Henry VIII and her mother was his second wife Anne Boleyn whom her father ordered beheaded when Elizabeth was just three. Her stepmothers didn't fare so well either. At the age of eight she declared she would never marry.

Work

- 1 Why was Peter Wentworth arrested?
- 2 Look at **Interpretation A**. What do you think is meant by the painting's subtitle?
- 3 Look at the sources and interpretations on these pages. What different reasons do they give for Elizabeth not getting married?
- 4 If Elizabeth was in love with Robert Dudley, why didn't she marry him?
- 5 What would be the advantages of Elizabeth getting married? Answer in as much detail as you can.

Practice Question

How convincing is **Interpretation C** about the reasons why Elizabeth did not get married?

Explain your answer using **Interpretation C** and your contextual knowledge. **8 marks**

Study Tip

The interpretation puts forward a reason for Elizabeth not getting married. Aim to say whether you think this gives a fair and full explanation of why she never married or whether there are reasons that it does not mention.

It is clear that Elizabeth faced opposition throughout her reign. One major figure who rebelled against her rule was the Duke of Norfolk. He was involved in not one, but two plots against her. Who was the Duke of Norfolk? Why did he become involved in both rebellions?

Objectives

- ▶ **Examine** the events of the Northern Rebellion and the Ridolfi Plot.
- ▶ **Explain** the causes of the rebellions.
- ▶ **Assess** the significance of the rebellions and what it can tell us about Elizabeth's authority.

Challenges to Elizabeth's rule

After Elizabeth's coronation, she faced particular opposition from Catholics who felt that she had no right to be queen. Many believed that her father's marriage to her mother, Anne Boleyn, was illegal because Henry broke sacred laws by divorcing his first wife, the Catholic Catherine of Aragon. Increasingly, these opponents looked to Elizabeth's Catholic cousin, Mary, Queen of Scots, as an alternative monarch.

The first rebellion: the Northern Rebellion, 1569

Despite the official religious changes, many people in northern England retained their Catholic beliefs and there was support for the idea of Mary, Queen of Scots, replacing Elizabeth on the throne. Although many northerners were torn between loyalty to Elizabeth and their religious beliefs, they nonetheless questioned her right to rule. Elizabeth was fully aware of the threat. She kept Mary under a close watch to prevent a possible rebellion while she debated how to deal with her. She even stopped her marrying the Duke of Norfolk. Norfolk left the royal court without permission and headed north. Taking this as a sign, a group of northern lords led by Westmorland (Norfolk's brother-in-law) and Northumberland began a rebellion against Elizabeth. They took control of Durham Cathedral and celebrated an illegal Catholic **mass**. They then began a march south with around 4600 men. Elizabeth struggled to gather an army to resist them but eventually one of her loyal lords, the Earl of Sussex, raised an army and the rebels disbanded. The leaders of the rebellion fled to Scotland where Northumberland was quickly captured and executed. Westmorland escaped to France, where he lived until he died in poverty.

The rebels

The Duke of Norfolk

- He became the Duke of Norfolk after the death of his grandfather in 1554.
- He was Queen Elizabeth's second cousin and the leading English nobleman.
- He was raised as a Protestant despite being from a Catholic family.
- His Catholic background led to many people distrusting him.
- He was made Lord Lieutenant of the North.



The Earl of Northumberland

- His father was executed for leading a rebellion against Henry VIII.
- He was not allowed to inherit his father's title until the reign of Mary I.
- He was a Catholic but was treated well by Elizabeth.



The Earl of Westmorland

- A Catholic who had become powerful under Mary I's rule.
- He lost influence when Elizabeth was crowned.
- He remained powerful in the north.
- His wife was a member of the powerful Howard family to which three of Henry VIII's wives had ties.



The second rebellion: the Ridolfi Plot, 1571

Norfolk spent ten months in the Tower of London but was eventually released and kept under house arrest, meaning that he was forced to stay inside his home at all times. He quickly became involved in another plot, this time led by a Catholic banker from Florence named Roberto Ridolfi. Having seen the Northern Rebellion fail, Ridolfi felt that foreign support was needed. In 1570 the Pope had commanded Catholics in England not to obey Elizabeth, giving English Catholics the dilemma of choosing between their religion or their country. As a banker, Ridolfi was able to travel freely across Europe building support. The plan was for the Netherlands to invade England at the same time as another northern rebellion. Elizabeth would be murdered and replaced by Mary, Queen of Scots, who would then marry Norfolk.

Elizabeth's network of spies proved too much for the plotters and a bag of gold coins with some coded

Roberto Ridolfi

- An Italian banker who travelled widely across Europe.
- It is believed that he sent money to support Catholic rebels in England.
- It is likely that he worked as a spy for the Pope for many years.

Key Words

mass

letters was discovered on its way north. The code was cracked when the cipher key (secret instructions) was discovered under a doormat at Norfolk's house. Norfolk confessed to his involvement and was executed on 2 June 1572.

Extension

Historians are interested in evaluating the importance of particular events and comparing them with each other. For example, they might look at the two rebellions and consider which posed the biggest threat. Challenge yourself by answering the question: 'Was the Northern Rebellion or the Ridolfi Plot the biggest threat to Elizabeth's rule?' Think about the details of each plot: for example, one took place entirely in England, while the other involved the possibility of foreign invasion.

Work

- 1 Why were some people keen to replace Elizabeth with Mary?
- 2 How was the Duke of Norfolk involved in the two plots?
- 3 Why do you think an Italian banker wanted to become involved in a plot against the English queen?
- 4 Working with a partner, study the two plots carefully. One of you should look at the Northern Rebellion and the other the Ridolfi Plot. You need to record:
 - when the plot happened
 - how it occurred
 - the reasons behind it (why did they want to overthrow Queen Elizabeth?)
 - why it failed and what happened to the rebels.

Now share your notes with your partner.
- 5 Why do you think Norfolk became involved in a second rebellion having failed in his first attempt to overthrow Queen Elizabeth?

2.4 Essex's rebellion

The rebellions that Elizabeth was forced to deal with in her early reign did not disappear. Towards the end of her reign she faced a rebellion led by a man who was at one time considered as a potential husband for her, the Earl of Essex. Although the cause of many rebellions against Queen Elizabeth focused on religion, Essex's rebellion was all about power and influence.

Most beloved Essex

Robert Devereux was born in 1566 and inherited his title of Earl of Essex in 1573 when his father died. His father had been a loyal and respected member of the royal court who had helped to put down the Northern Rebellion in 1569. When Essex's mother remarried it was to the Earl of Leicester, who introduced Essex to the queen in 1587. Although more than 30 years older, Elizabeth took an immediate interest in the young earl. Essex made the most of being Elizabeth's latest favourite and in 1595 she made him a privy councillor. Essex's power grew further when the queen gave him the **monopoly** of sweet wine in England. This meant that by law anyone who wished to bring in sweet wine from abroad would have to pay him a tax, which made Essex lots of money. During this time, Essex developed a rivalry with another young man at court, Robert Cecil, who was a member of a very powerful family. Cecil, with his crooked back, could not have looked more different from the handsome Essex; this may well have played a role in Essex gaining the queen's attention. Essex won Elizabeth's further respect and admiration with his military success against the Spanish in 1596.

SOURCE A A portrait of the Earl of Essex from 1596; the handsome Essex was particularly well known for his legs!



Objectives

- ▶ Recall the events of Essex's rebellion.
- ▶ Explain the causes of the rebellion.
- ▶ Assess what the rebellion tells us about Elizabeth's authority.

A quarrel with the queen

Essex returned to England a hero but things soon began to go wrong for the queen's favourite. In 1598, he became involved in an argument with Elizabeth during a Privy Council meeting about Ireland. In a fit of anger, Essex turned his back on the queen and she retaliated by hitting him on the side of his head. He almost drew his sword, but was stopped by the other privy councillors. Elizabeth put him under house arrest but he still refused to admit he was wrong. However, Elizabeth took no further action against him. Many contemporaries thought that he had been lucky to escape with his life.

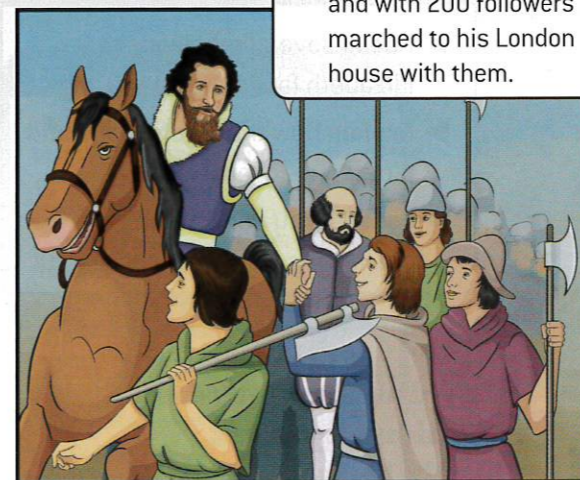
Essex in Ireland and his return to England

In January 1599, Elizabeth made Essex the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. He was reluctant to go at first, fearing that Cecil would become more powerful while he was away, but he eventually agreed. It was his job to crush the rebellious Irish, but not only did he fail to defeat the Irish rebel leader, he also made a truce with him, completely against the queen's orders. He knighted some of his army leaders in Ireland, which the queen had forbidden him to do.

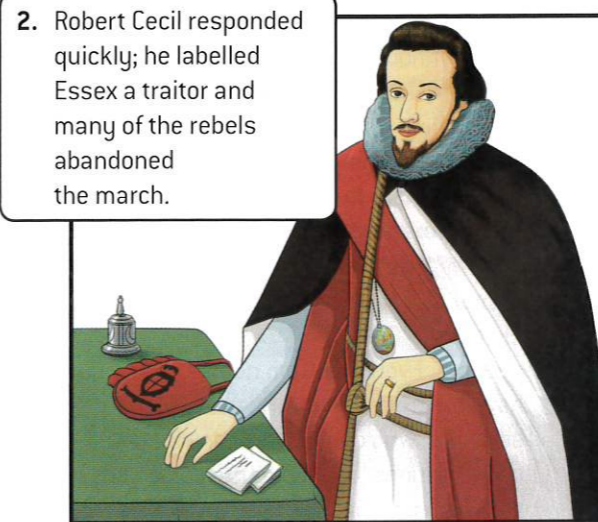
To make matters worse, when Essex returned to the queen's palace, dishevelled and dirty, he rushed into her private quarters and caught her without her wig! Essex experienced a spectacular and rapid fall from Elizabeth's favour and she did not renew his sweet wine monopoly. This caused him problems as he had large debts.

His position, wealth and all of his influence gone, Essex faced financial ruin. Angry, and with little left to lose, Essex was determined to remove his long-term rival, Robert Cecil, from power. In February 1601, he began to gather supporters.

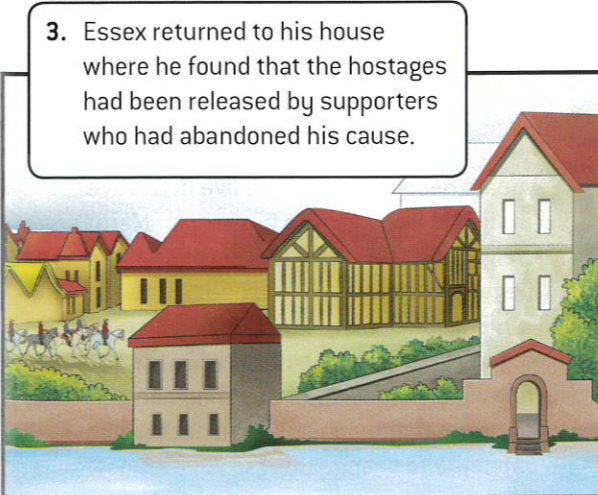
Essex's rebellion



1. Essex took four of the queen's privy councillors hostage and with 200 followers marched to his London house with them.



2. Robert Cecil responded quickly; he labelled Essex a traitor and many of the rebels abandoned the march.



3. Essex returned to his house where he found that the hostages had been released by supporters who had abandoned his cause.

Key Word

monopoly

4. Essex and his remaining supporters were arrested.



Executing Essex

Two weeks after the disastrous rebellion, Essex was put on trial for treason. In an attempt to save his soul (although not his life) he agreed to identify many other members of the rebellion, including his sister, Penelope. He was executed on 25 February 1601. In exchange for his information, Elizabeth allowed Essex to be executed in private, rather than suffer a public beheading. Several other rebels were executed but most of them were simply fined.

Work

- 1 Retell the story of Essex's rebellion in the most creative way you can. You could create a play, a giant storyboard, a newspaper article or something else.
- 2 Create a table in your book to show the reasons for the rebellion's failure. In one column list the mistakes and failings of Essex and in the other list the strengths of Elizabeth's court.
- 3 What does Essex's rebellion tell us about the authority of Elizabeth and her court?
- 4 Look back at your work on the Norfolk rebellions. Do you think Essex was more or less of a threat than Norfolk? Explain your answer.

Practice Question

Write an account of the career of the Earl of Essex.

8 marks

Study Tip

Remember to explain why Essex was such an important figure; don't just tell the story of his life.

Why did rebellions against Elizabeth fail?

During her reign, Elizabeth faced many challenges and a number of rebellions. There were rebellions from Catholics who questioned her right to be queen and there were rebellions from nobles who wanted to increase their own power. Despite these challenges Elizabeth not only remained in power until the end of her reign, but her position never really looked vulnerable. How was this possible?

▼ **INTERPRETATION A** A portrait of Elizabeth in old age, painted nearly 20 years after her death



A tired queen and a weary nation

By the end of her reign many people's attention had moved on from Elizabeth and become focused on the future. After four decades people were ready for a change. Whether at the beginning of her rule as a young and inexperienced monarch, in the middle at the height of her powers or at the end, Elizabeth still needed to control and command the loyalty of her subjects. In her 45 years as queen she faced a number of rebellions.

Objectives

- ▶ **Recall** several rebellions that Elizabeth faced during her reign.
- ▶ **Explain** how these rebellions and plots were foiled.
- ▶ **Assess** why none of the challenges were ever successful.

Why did the plots and rebellions against Elizabeth fail?

For a plot or rebellion to succeed, secrecy is needed. Messages need to be sent and plans made without any outsider knowing what is intended. The problem for those who tried to plot against Elizabeth was that she had the largest and most effective network of spies and informers that England had ever seen. These were not spies in the modern sense; they were employed through much less formal arrangements. Francis Walsingham, Elizabeth's Chief Minister, oversaw the network. Everyone from nobles, who might have the trust of plotters, to innkeepers and servants, who could overhear whispered conversations, could potentially be kept in Walsingham's pay.

The second thing necessary for a plot to succeed is popular support. All of the rebellions relied on others seizing the opportunity and joining the fight. The problem was that most people were happy with the way things were. For the first time in many years people were able to live in relative religious freedom. The brutality of Mary I's reign was something that no one wished to return to and even many Catholics preferred an English queen over Mary, Queen of Scots, or a foreign ruler like Philip of Spain. For many in England, it seemed that they had never had it so good. There simply was not the general appetite to change things.

Spies

The network of spies headed by Walsingham meant that very few plots ever got beyond their earliest stages.

Unconvincing alternatives

Regardless of their religion, most people preferred an English queen over the alternatives: Mary, Queen of Scots, or a foreign king like Philip. Mary was not only a former Queen of France but was also blamed by many for her second husband's death. Philip had been King of England before and had shown little interest in the country, while his wife oversaw the brutal execution of hundreds of Protestants.

Religious settlement

Elizabeth's religious policy kept most of the population happy. Although things became tougher for Catholics as her reign went on, there remained a level of tolerance. In areas where Catholicism was more popular, the new settlement was often not enforced to the same extent.

A skilled politician

Elizabeth dealt with her most difficult relationship, the one with her Parliament, very effectively. She was skilled at getting her own way while still allowing Lords and MPs to feel influential. The issue of marriage and succession is a perfect example of this. She would listen to Parliament's advice but was clear where its power ended.

Why did plots against Elizabeth fail?

Punishments

Elizabeth took swift action against traitors. Rebels were tortured and put to death. Her former favourite, Essex, whose plot never aimed to remove her from the throne, was beheaded and her own cousin, Mary, Queen of Scots, was kept locked up for many years before she was executed. For those who challenged Elizabeth, the consequences of failure were plain to see.

Work

- 1 Look at **Interpretation A**.
 - a Describe what you can see in the painting. Look carefully at what surrounds the queen, as well as the queen herself.
 - b Look at **Source B** on page 145. How does this image of Elizabeth compare to **Interpretation A** opposite?
 - c This painting was created 20 years after her death. Can you suggest reasons why it was not created while she was alive?
- 2 Explain two reasons why rebellions against Elizabeth failed.
- 3 Look back at the Northern Rebellion earlier in the chapter. Explain why this failed with reference to the factors in the spider diagram above.
- 4 Would a successful rebellion ever have been possible? Explain your answer.
- 5 Working with a partner, choose one of the rebellions that you have studied and create the script for a television news report about it. You should explain what happened, who was involved and then give a detailed account of why it failed.

Extension

An important skill for a historian is comparing factors that caused things to happen and deciding which factor played the largest role. Challenge yourself by using the information in this chapter to decide which of the factors in the spider diagram was the most important in stopping a successful rebellion against Elizabeth from ever taking place. In your answer, remember to say *why* one factor is more important than others by *directly comparing* them.

Practice Question

Write an account of a rebellion you have studied that took place in Elizabeth's reign. **8 marks**

Study Tip

You could consider including the following: the causes, the key people involved, the events of the rebellion itself and both the immediate and longer term consequences.

Wealth and fashion in Elizabethan England

In Elizabethan society, everyone knew their place. The queen was at the top as the most important and the peasants were at the bottom. In the sixteenth century, wealth and owning land meant power. Nobles owned huge amounts of land and held positions of power but the Elizabethan age saw the growth of a new group of wealthy people. Known as the gentry, they did not have the social status of the nobles but they became increasingly wealthy, and therefore powerful. Who were the nobility and gentry?

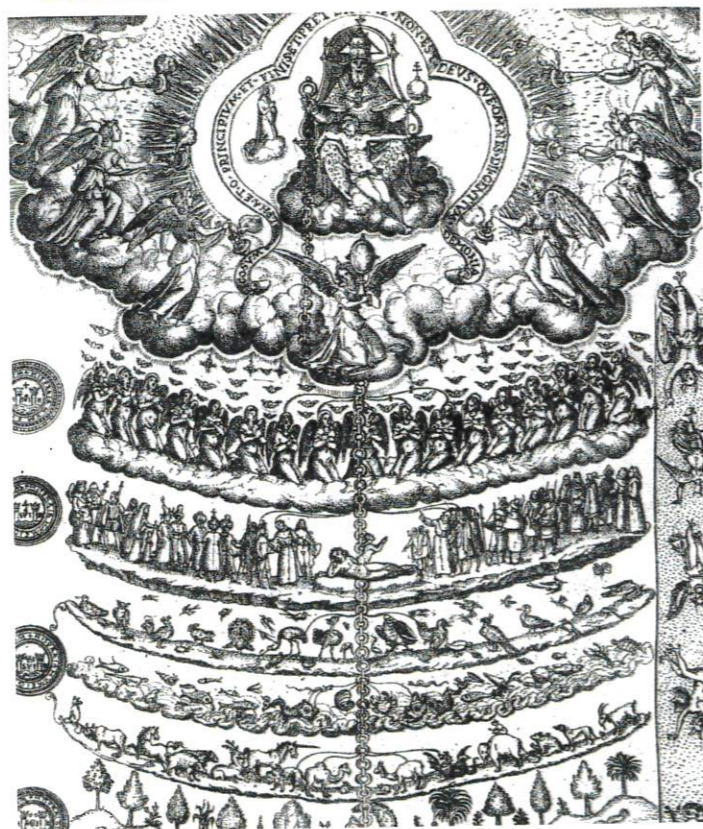
Objectives

- ▶ Describe the structure of Elizabethan society.
- ▶ Explain the positions, roles and daily lives of the nobility and gentry.
- ▶ Judge whether the gentry or the nobility had the most influence and power.

The Great Chain of Being

Elizabethan society was based on an idea called 'the Great Chain of Being'. In the Great Chain, God is at the top, followed by his angels and other residents of Heaven. Human beings are beneath, followed by animals and plants. The Elizabethans broke the chain down further by having subdivisions (or categories) of humans. The monarch was at the top, followed by the nobility, the gentry and then the peasants. It was almost impossible to move between the human divisions.

▼ SOURCE A 'The Great Chain of Being' from 1579



Fact

The population of England

In 1558, the population was around 2.8 million but by 1603 it had increased to 4 million. This was a huge increase in such a short time.

The rich and the powerful

Two groups made up the wealthier members of Elizabethan society: the nobility and the gentry. If someone made money through trade or some other means they would use it to buy land. Land could provide a source of income from rent or growing crops to eat or wool to trade. Land made money and raised social status.

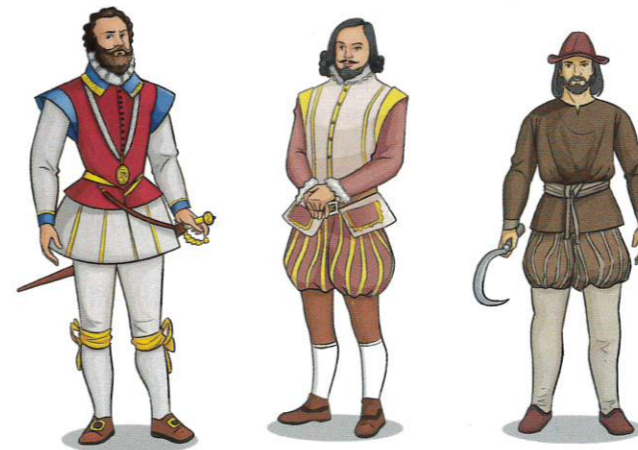
The nobility was made up of the most respected members of society, second only to the queen herself. The highest noble title was duke but others included earl and baron. Their average income was £6000 per year (equivalent to about £1 million today). A member of this group was born into it or awarded a title by the queen (which was very rare). Nobles had special privileges, including protection from torture. A noble who committed treason would always be beheaded and never hanged, avoiding public humiliation. Most nobles had large amounts of land, which was passed down from father to son. The richest in society were members of this group. It is estimated that 14 per cent of all the country's income went to just over 1 per cent of the nobility. Any influence they had was the queen's to give and take away.

The gentry were the landlords of the countryside. They lived on the rents of their tenants and did no manual labour themselves. The income of a member of this group could vary between £10 and £200 per year (around £1700 and £34,000 in today's money). Some members were wealthier than the poorer nobles. They had significant influence and power over their lands with many filling important roles such as Justice of the Peace (JP), and serving in Parliament. Some were given the title of knight and others had the title esquire. As the country was more stable and secure after the unpredictable years of Elizabeth's predecessors, people were able to settle and make money from trade. The gentry grew as a result.

▼ **Nobility:** most powerful and (usually) wealthiest; held titles that were passed from father to son; held the most senior positions such as privy councillor

▼ **Gentry:** often wealthy landowners; held important positions like JP; might be richer than some nobles but still below them in society

▼ **Peasantry:** the poorest members of society, worked as farm labourers; often struggled for work; rising population made this even more of an issue



▼ SOURCE B The Cobham family portrait, dated 1567; Frances (standing on the right) was best friends with Bess of Hardwick (see page 162)



Key Word

ruff

What was it like to be wealthy in Elizabethan England?

Rich Elizabethans were proud to show off their wealth. They often built fine houses in the countryside. One area in which the gentry could show their wealth was through food. Rich Elizabethans tended to have meals made up almost entirely of meat and drank mainly wine. For the richest, banquets were an important way to show off the fact that they could afford lots of the very best produce. Fashion was also important. Women often paired fine clothes with whitened faces. This was intended to show that they did not have to work outside and get a tanned face. The effect was often created using lead-based make-up. A key element of both men's and women's fashion was the elaborate **ruff** worn around the neck. The fashions and wealth formed part of what became known as the Elizabethan 'golden age'. The wealthy, Protestant or Catholic, were free to live their lives and enjoy their success while the country was secure and stable.

Work

- 1 Explain the term 'the Great Chain of Being'.
- 2 Split a section of your book in half. On one side describe a member of the nobility, on the other describe a member of the gentry. You are limited to ten words but can use as many pictures as you like.
- 3 Why do you think Elizabeth and the nobility were so keen to maintain the strict structure of society?
- 4 a Look at **Source B**. Which social group do you think this family are part of?
b What evidence in the image supports your conclusion?
- 5 Which do you think had the most power and influence: the nobility or the gentry? Explain your answer.

The role of theatre in Elizabethan England

During Elizabeth's reign, one of the most popular forms of entertainment was the theatre. Every week everyone, from the queen down to the ordinary people, would come and watch performances of comedy, tragedy and history plays. Many of these plays proved so popular that they are still performed to this day. What made the Elizabethan theatre so popular?

Objectives

- ▶ Explore the key features of Elizabethan theatre.
- ▶ Explain why there was some opposition to the theatre.
- ▶ Assess the importance of theatre during Elizabeth's reign.

All the world's a stage

During Elizabeth's reign, rich and poor alike visited public theatres. These audiences had a huge appetite for new plays and many writers became very successful trying to keep up with the demand. Playwrights, including William Shakespeare, produced many new plays every year and their work was performed by theatre companies such as the Lord Chamberlain's Men and the Admiral's Men. The companies were usually named after the person who provided their funding: the **patron**. Acting was an entirely male profession with the female roles performed by boys. The most successful and popular actors could become very famous and would often return to roles they had played before or have parts specifically written for them in new plays.

A day at the theatre

At the beginning of Elizabeth's reign, a visit to the theatre generally meant visiting an inn and watching a performance inside or out in the yard. By the end of Elizabeth's reign, a number of purpose-built theatres existed and visiting one became a popular way to spend an afternoon. Performances

Fact

Shakespeare's history plays tended to suit the Tudor view of the past. For example, in *Richard III*, the king is portrayed as an evil hunchback – probably because Elizabeth's grandfather (Henry VII) defeated Richard III in battle, so Shakespeare wanted to show Richard in a negative way.

Key Biography

William Shakespeare (1564–1616)

- The most celebrated playwright of all time, Shakespeare was the principal writer for the Lord Chamberlain's Men, a theatre company.
- He wrote 38 plays, which can be divided into three categories: histories, tragedies and comedies. Histories included plays like *Julius Caesar* and *Henry V*. History plays often followed each other chronologically with the same characters and actors appearing in them. Tragedies included *Romeo and Juliet*, and comedies such as *A Midsummer Night's Dream* were designed to keep the audience laughing and coming back for more – common features included mistaken identity and endings involving marriage.



Key Biography

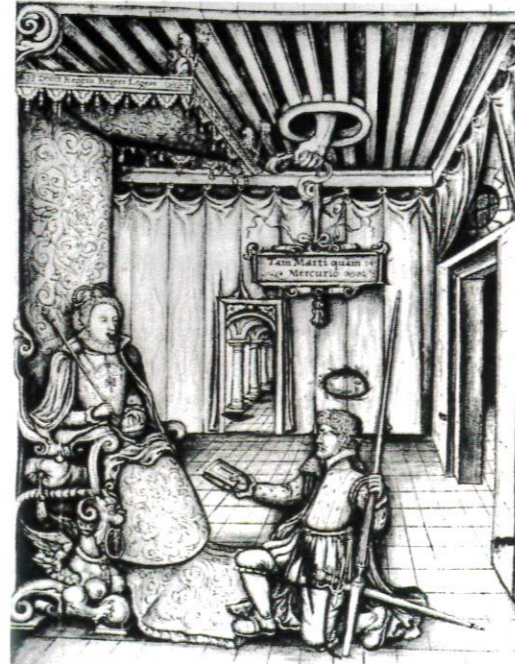
Richard Burbage (1568–1619)

- Burbage was one of the most celebrated actors of the Elizabethan period. As a leading member of the Lord Chamberlain's Men, he was the first to play many famous roles including Hamlet and King Lear.
- As well as acting, Burbage was a theatre owner.



usually began at 3:00pm and continued into the evening. Prices varied, depending on where you sat (or stood). The performance itself was often more like a circus than what we might expect at a modern theatre. Audience members would push and shove to try to get a better view and heckling was not uncommon. The theatre became an important part of life during Elizabeth's reign, particularly among the nobility. Being the patron of a theatre company was an important way to show how cultured you were and also a good way to please the queen. For ordinary people, a trip to the theatre offered a cheap afternoon's entertainment. Although they occupied very different parts of the theatre building, the rich and the poor watched and enjoyed the same performances.

▼ **SOURCE A** The writer George Gascoigne presents Elizabeth with his latest work in this sixteenth-century engraving



▼ **INTERPRETATION B** A description of Elizabethan theatre-goers adapted from *The Facts about Shakespeare* (1913):

These people who watched with joy the cruel torment of a bear or the execution of a Catholic also delighted in the romantic comedies of Shakespeare. These people were so appallingly gullible and ignorant, so brutal and childish compared with Englishmen of today, yet they set the standard of national greatness.

Opposition to theatre

Although very popular, some saw theatre as sinful and campaigned to have it banned. Theatres were seen as dangerous places where drunkenness, crime and other immoral behaviour took place. Many were concerned that such large gatherings of people might spread disease (although they had no understanding of germs). Religious groups such as the Puritans

Key Word

patron

Work

- 1 What were the three main types of play performed in Elizabethan theatres?
- 2 Why were Shakespeare's history plays popular with Elizabeth and her supporters?
- 3 Imagine a visit to the theatre in Elizabethan times. Write a diary entry to describe your afternoon. You should include what you saw and what it was like, where you sat and who else was there. Use the information on this page to help you.
- 4 Look at **Interpretation B**. What opinion does this give about Elizabethan theatre-goers? How fair do you think it is?
- 5 In what ways did theatre play an important role in Elizabethan society?
- 6 Look at **Source A**. What does this image suggest about Elizabeth's view of the theatre?

Practice Question

How convincing is **Interpretation B** about the Elizabethan theatre?

Explain your answer using **Interpretation B** and your contextual knowledge. **8 marks**

Study Tip

What impression of Elizabethan theatre is given in this interpretation? Do you think it is fair? Use your own knowledge to explain why.

wanted the theatres closed down completely as they saw them as a distraction. They believed that people should be spending their free time praying and studying the Bible rather than watching plays. Attending these entertainments may have made them less willing to sit through a sermon! Although restrictions were put in place at various times, the theatre's popularity continued, largely due to Elizabeth I's enjoyment of it. The opposition that theatre faced shows just how influential and important it had become.

Was Elizabethan England really a 'golden age'?

The period of Elizabeth's reign is often referred to as a 'golden age' because it is seen as a time when England became a great country. Elizabeth's reign was an era of new scientific experimentation, technological development and new ideas in the arts. Did people at the time think that they were living through a golden age?

Objectives

- ▶ **Describe** the key features and developments of the Elizabethan era.
- ▶ **Explain** why many would argue that it was a golden age.
- ▶ **Evaluate** whether 'the golden age' is an accurate description of the Elizabethan era.

A time of great accomplishments

The phrase 'golden age' is used to describe a time of great achievement. There is certainly no doubt that the Elizabethan era saw new ideas and accomplishments in many areas. Elizabethan England falls within the Renaissance period in Europe, a key time in history when art, medicine, science and literature developed greatly.

Art



Portraits became very popular and were much more than just representations of the sitters. They often included a lot of symbolism: for example, Elizabeth was painted with her hand on a globe to show her power. The miniature portrait was popular. These were very small, detailed paintings intended for personal possession rather than public display. Other forms of art included decorative silverware and highly detailed textile patterns.

Exploration



Europeans discovered new lands and peoples, and England began to become a major power at this time.

Theatre



Theatre was hugely popular during the Elizabethan era. Many theatres were built and the period produced plays that are still performed and studied today.

Elizabethan accomplishments

Peace, power and pride



Before Henry VII became king, England had spent many years in chaos with different men claiming the throne. Elizabeth's long reign established peace and order, while military success and the country's growing wealth also made people proud to be English.

Science and technology



There were some significant breakthroughs in navigation and astronomy and a growing understanding of how magnetism worked. Elizabeth's reign also saw more effective printing presses, which produced books and **pamphlets**. These allowed ideas to spread much faster.

Education



Education was seen as increasingly important during Elizabeth's reign. Although still focused on wealthy boys, some girls also received a limited education.

Literature



In addition to the great plays written during Elizabeth's reign, poetry became very popular. Shakespeare wrote many sonnets but several respected nobles also wrote poems. A lot of Elizabethan poetry made references to stories of Ancient Greece and Rome.

Buildings



The Elizabethans built many of the stately homes that still stand today. These houses were built to impress the queen and other nobles. For the first time houses were not designed specifically with defence in mind.

▼ **INTERPRETATION A** Dr William Gilbert demonstrates his latest experiments in electricity to Elizabeth in this late nineteenth-century painting by Arthur Ackland Hunt



▼ **INTERPRETATION B** An alchemist in his workshop, painted c1650



Was it really a golden age?

Although Elizabeth's reign is often seen as a time of great advancement and success, it could be argued that this is myth and that, in fact, England was the same brutal place that it was before Elizabeth came to the throne. Blood sports like dog fighting and bear baiting remained popular, and cruel torture and punishments continued to be used. The population was very much divided too: a small minority lived in luxury while most people were very poor and grew just enough food or made just enough money to survive. Life expectancy was low and illnesses that would not kill us today were lethal. While it was a time of scientific experimentation, much of it was questionable. **Alchemy**, the attempt to turn cheap metal into gold, was very popular, as was astrology (using the planets to predict the future).

The idea of a golden age was certainly present at the time. There was a deliberate attempt to spread the idea of great success and advancement as a way of securing Elizabeth's position on the throne. This way of presenting the Elizabethan age was known as '**Gloriana**' and was achieved through plays and festivals as well as the printing of special pamphlets.

Key Words

pamphlet alchemy
Gloriana

Work

- Why is the Elizabethan era often described as a 'golden age'?
- In what ways does **Interpretation A** support the idea of a golden age?
 - How useful is it in telling us whether people at the time saw it as a golden age?
- Look at **Interpretation B**. What does this source suggest about the Elizabethan period?
- Split a page in two. On one side list the arguments for it being a golden age and on the other list the arguments against.

Practice Question

Write an account of the ways in which Elizabeth's reign could be seen as a 'golden age'.

8 marks

Study Tip

This type of question is not just asking you to describe the features of a particular period but also to explain how and why it could be described in this way. Think about whether people at the time would have seen it as a golden age.

Why was there so much poverty in Elizabethan England?

The lives of the wealthy during Elizabeth's reign often involved great luxury. They had power and influence, lived in grand and beautiful houses and followed all the latest fashions. At the other extreme were the very poor. Those lucky enough to find regular work earned very little and others were left to beg on the streets. Who were the poor and what were their lives like?

Objectives

- ▶ Describe who the Elizabethan poor were.
- ▶ Explain why poverty increased.
- ▶ Evaluate the importance of different factors in the increase in poverty.

▼ **SOURCE A** A woodcut from 1569 showing a rich man giving money to a beggar; giving charity to the poor was seen as a good, Christian thing for the wealthy to do.



The life of the poor

Look back at 'the Great Chain of Being' on page 160. At the bottom of the human section, just above the animals, were ordinary people. For some lucky members of this group life could be straightforward. As long as they kept on the right side of their lord, they could provide for themselves and their families. For those without this security, however, life was much harder. Those without work were known as **paupers**, who relied on charity. This meant either begging or going to the local church for help.

The Tudor approach to poverty

Elizabeth's grandfather, Henry VII, wanted to limit the threat of uprising among his nobles so he limited their right to have their own **retinues** (private armies). This left many soldiers without work. One of the most significant changes of the Tudor era was the **Reformation** during Henry VIII's reign. Between 1536 and 1540, Henry closed all of the **monasteries** in England and many people who had worked for the Church were evicted. In addition to causing unemployment, there was a huge impact on the poor. Before the Reformation, monks and nuns had played a vital role in looking after the sick and the poor, giving them charity and caring for them. The evicted poor had nowhere to go and this was still the case when Elizabeth came to the throne.

As Henry VIII's reign went on, economic problems increased and the cost of war was great. In order to save money, from 1542 he began to debase coins: this means that he mixed in less valuable metals with the gold and silver allowing coins to be produced much more cheaply. The problem with this was that

foreign traders came to expect more coins for their goods. This damaged trade and jobs, and the cloth trade collapsed completely during his son Edward VI's reign. Elizabeth inherited a country that was in an economic mess. Unemployment and poverty were high, and as Elizabeth's reign began things became even worse.

Failures in agriculture

England was hit by bad harvests between 1594 and 1598, which led to food shortages and some people died of starvation. In addition, a new system of farming was developing. More and more landowners began to keep sheep on their land rather than renting it out to farmers who had traditionally grown crops on it. This system, known as land **enclosure** (as opposed to the open fields that had existed before), meant fewer workers were needed and left many people jobless and homeless. A significant number headed to the towns and cities to try to find work but there were not enough jobs to go around. London's population went from around 60,000 in 1500 to over 200,000 in 1600. Norwich, Bristol and York had populations between 8000 and 12,000.

The population and prices go up

During Elizabeth's reign the population of England grew from 2.8 million to 4 million. This was the result of both an increased birth rate and a falling death rate. Limited places to live gave power to landlords who unfairly increased rents (known as **rack renting**). As a result of the bad harvests, there was less food, which led to price **inflation**. A terrible outbreak of flu in 1556 had killed around 200,000, including many of the workers who were involved in producing food. All of these factors contributed to creating a very poor group of people at the bottom of Elizabethan society.

▼ **INTERPRETATION B** From *Spartacus Educational*, a history education website:

Unemployment was a major cause of poverty. When large landowners changed from arable to sheep farming, unemployment increased rapidly. The closing down of the monasteries in the 1530s created even more unemployment. As monasteries had also helped provide food for the poor, this created further problems. Unemployed people were sometimes tempted to leave their villages to look for work. This was illegal and people who did this were classified as vagabonds.

Key Words

poverty pauper retinue Reformation monastery enclosure rack renting inflation

Work

- 1 Explain what is meant by 'debasement' of coins. Why did Henry VIII do this and what were the consequences?
- 2 Explain the term 'enclosure'.
- 3 Look at **Source A**. What does it suggest about the different parts of Elizabethan society?
- 4 Create a spider diagram to show the reasons for the increase in poverty in Elizabethan times.
- 5 'The rise in population led to the increase in poverty in Tudor England.' How far do you agree with this statement? Remember to consider all of the factors and make comparisons between them based on their relative importance.

Practice Question

How convincing is **Interpretation B** in explaining the causes of poverty in Elizabethan England?

Explain your answer using **Interpretation B** and your own knowledge. **8 marks**

Study Tip

The interpretation gives a number of factors for the increase in poverty. Are these factors accurate? Is there anything that is missed out?

How did Elizabethans respond to poverty?

It is clear that poverty and the poor became a major issue during Elizabeth's reign. There were a lot more poor people than there were rich and there was always the potential for the poor to rise up and rebel. In the towns and cities finding a job was difficult, but the same thing was occurring in the countryside where changes in farming led to high levels of unemployment. Bad harvests meant that many poor people were close to starvation. In these pages, we will explore how wealthier Elizabethans responded to the poor.

Objectives

- ▶ Describe the different groups of pauper.
- ▶ Explain why so many wealthy people had a negative view of the poor.
- ▶ Evaluate the effect of contemporary publications on public opinion of the poor.

A sympathetic approach

Their belief in 'the Great Chain of Being' made it clear to Elizabethans where they were positioned in society. In the views of the time, the wealthy (nobles and gentry) were simply 'better' than the peasants. However, just as God looked after his people and the queen looked after her subjects, the wealthy were expected to offer some help to those below them. In practice, this might mean making the odd charitable donation, but not something that was going to solve the problem completely. Before Elizabeth, attitudes to the poor were largely unsympathetic. There was certainly recognition that some poor people could not help their situation, because of injury or ill health, so it was seen as correct that charities should help them. If someone was able-bodied, however, it seemed logical to the wealthy that the person could find work if they chose to.

As unemployment and poverty grew under Elizabeth there was a change in attitude. People began to recognise that many able-bodied paupers, particularly in **urban** areas, could not find work. They wanted to help themselves but they were not able to. These people were seen as the **deserving poor**. The response to this change in attitude was that many wealthier people worked hard to provide more help and charity to those in need. Archbishop Whitgift established **almshouses** in Croydon in south London. Almshouses were buildings that provided accommodation and food for those in need.

The undeserving poor

While more people began to recognise the idea of the deserving poor, they also saw a group that was

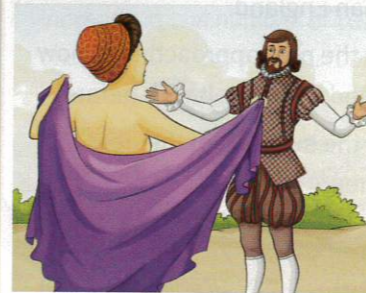
▼ **INTERPRETATION A** A painting from 1911 of an almshouse built by Archbishop Whitgift in 1596



undeserving. These were untrustworthy beggars who had no interest in honest work. In 1567, Thomas Harman published a book that drew attention to some of the scams and tricks used by these conmen and women. The book was very popular and hardened some attitudes towards the poor. Many wealthy people began to question the honesty of all beggars they encountered.

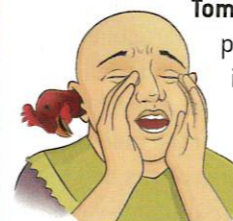
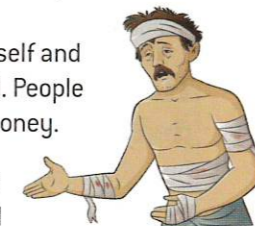
Common vagabonds in Elizabethan England from Thomas Harman's *Warning Against Vagabonds*

The Counterfeit Crank would bite on soap so that he frothed at the mouth and then pretend to have a fit. The idea was that people would feel sorry for him and give him money.



The Baretop Trickster was a woman who would trick men into following them, and perhaps buying them a meal, by removing items of clothing. The man would then be beaten and robbed by the woman's accomplices.

The Clapper Dudgeon would cut himself and tie dirty bandages around the wound. People would feel sympathy and give him money.



Tom O'Bedlam would pretend to be mad in order to get money.

He might bark like a dog for hours, follow people around or stick a chicken's head in his ear. The money people gave him may have been out of sympathy or perhaps just to get rid of him!

▼ **SOURCE B** Adapted from *A Description of England* by William Harrison (1587):

The vagabonds abide nowhere but run up and down place to place; idle beggars cut the fleshy parts of their bodies to raise pitiful sores and move the hearts of passers-by so they will bestow large gifts upon them. It makes me think that punishment is more suitable for them than generosity or gifts. They are all thieves. They take from the godly poor what is due to them.

Work

- 1 Explain the term 'deserving poor'.
- 2 What was an almshouse?
- 3 Create a poster warning visitors to your town of the dangers of Elizabethan vagabonds.
- 4 Look at **Source B**. What kind of vagabond is Harrison describing?
- 5 a Why do you think Thomas Harman's book and the picture in **Source C** were produced?
b What effect do you think these publications might have had on how people viewed the poor?
- 6 Explain how attitudes to poverty in Elizabethan England changed.

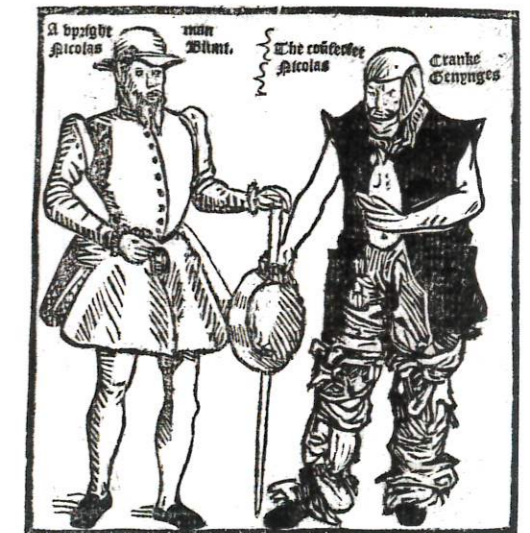
Key Words

urban deserving poor almshouse undeserving poor

The idle poor

Harman's book was based on the idea of beggars being criminals but his view was not unique. Many believed that the best way to deal with begging was to threaten severe punishment. Beggars were often seen as idle or lazy and unable to change their ways.

▼ **SOURCE C** This illustration shows the same man in normal dress (left) and disguised as a cripple (right)



Extension

As a historian it is important to know the background information of any source that you use. In order to make use of Thomas Harman's book we need to understand who he was and how he went about writing it. Spend some time researching Harman. Who was he? What did he do? How did he get the information for his book?

4.3A

The government's treatment of the poor

As poverty increased, it became clear that the government needed to do more to combat it, so cities around England began to take new approaches to the problem. Inspired by these new ideas, in 1601 Elizabeth went further than any of her predecessors when she backed a fresh approach: the Poor Law. However, this was not the first new method of dealing with poverty as a number of towns and cities had already begun their own schemes. How was poverty dealt with in English cities?

Objectives

- ▶ Describe the approaches to poverty in Elizabethan England.
- ▶ Compare the new approaches to how poverty had been dealt with before.
- ▶ Evaluate the success of the new approaches.

The Tudors and poverty

Henry VIII and Edward VI passed laws to try to deal with poverty, but not only did the problem remain, it actually grew more serious as time went on. As far back as 1495, beggars were being punished in the **stocks** and sent back to their home towns if they had gone to another area. From 1531, with a few exceptions (who were given licences), beggars were publicly whipped. If they were caught for a second time they would have a hole burned in their ear and a third offence would mean they were hanged. Some laws were abandoned because they were seen as too harsh but most of the 1531 laws remained in place for most of Elizabeth's reign. The 1576 'Act for setting the poor on work' placed the responsibility for finding work for

the poor in the hands of the local authorities while the national policy still focused on punishment.

How did different towns and cities deal with poverty?

Different approaches to poverty were taken in various areas of the country. The problem was particularly felt in urban areas. In London, for example, Bridewell Palace was used as a shelter for the homeless; a new hospital, known as Bedlam, was established for the mentally ill; and other hospitals were opened for orphans and the sick. However, conditions in these institutions were harsh and the problem of poverty in the city continued to grow. With more and more paupers coming from the countryside, many of whom turned to crime, the

▼ SOURCE A A beggar is publicly whipped in 1567



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authorities struggled to cope. Look at how three cities dealt with the problem of poverty:

York

In the early Tudor period, York had become very prosperous and large numbers of poor people from the countryside moved into the city to try to find work. As a result, the city saw an increase in the number of beggars. In 1515, the York Corporation had begun issuing beggar licences, 16 years before other cities. Licensed beggars were required to wear a badge so that they could be identified. From 1528, a Master Beggar was appointed, whose job it was to keep a check on the rest. During Elizabeth's reign, many beggars were expected to work; weaving and spinning in particular helped increase the city's growing industry. Those who refused were sent to the **House of Correction** (a type of prison for those who refused to work) or were returned to the town or village that they had come from.

Ipswich

In 1569, Ipswich introduced a licensing system for beggars and increased support for the poor. It also became one of the first towns to open a hospital specifically to help the old and sick who could not afford treatment. A youth training scheme was introduced, designed to help children learn a trade that would lift them out of poverty. The town was also one of the first to build a House of Correction.

Work

- 1 Create a warning poster for beggars in Tudor England that tells them what could happen if they are caught.
- 2 Look at **Source A**.
 - a What is happening in this image?
 - b How far does it reflect the Tudor approach to poverty?
- 3 a Explain how Norwich dealt with poverty.
 - b In what sense did this represent a change to what had gone before?
- 4 Which of the measures taken by these towns would have done the most to deter vagabonds?
- 5 'Cities like York and Ipswich took a much more sympathetic approach to poverty.' How far do you agree with this statement?

Key Words

stocks House of Correction

Norwich

In 1570, the authorities in Norwich conducted a survey which found that 80 per cent of the population lived in poverty. They separated the poor into two categories: 'idle poor' and 'unfortunate poor'. The 'idle poor' were given work such as knitting or sewing while the 'unfortunate poor' were given food and other forms of care and support. This system was effective in limiting the numbers who received poor relief, as the poor had to be officially identified. Norwich taxed its rich citizens to pay for the care of the vulnerable.

Practice Question

Write an account of the different ways in which towns and cities dealt with poverty in Elizabethan England.

8 marks

Study Tip

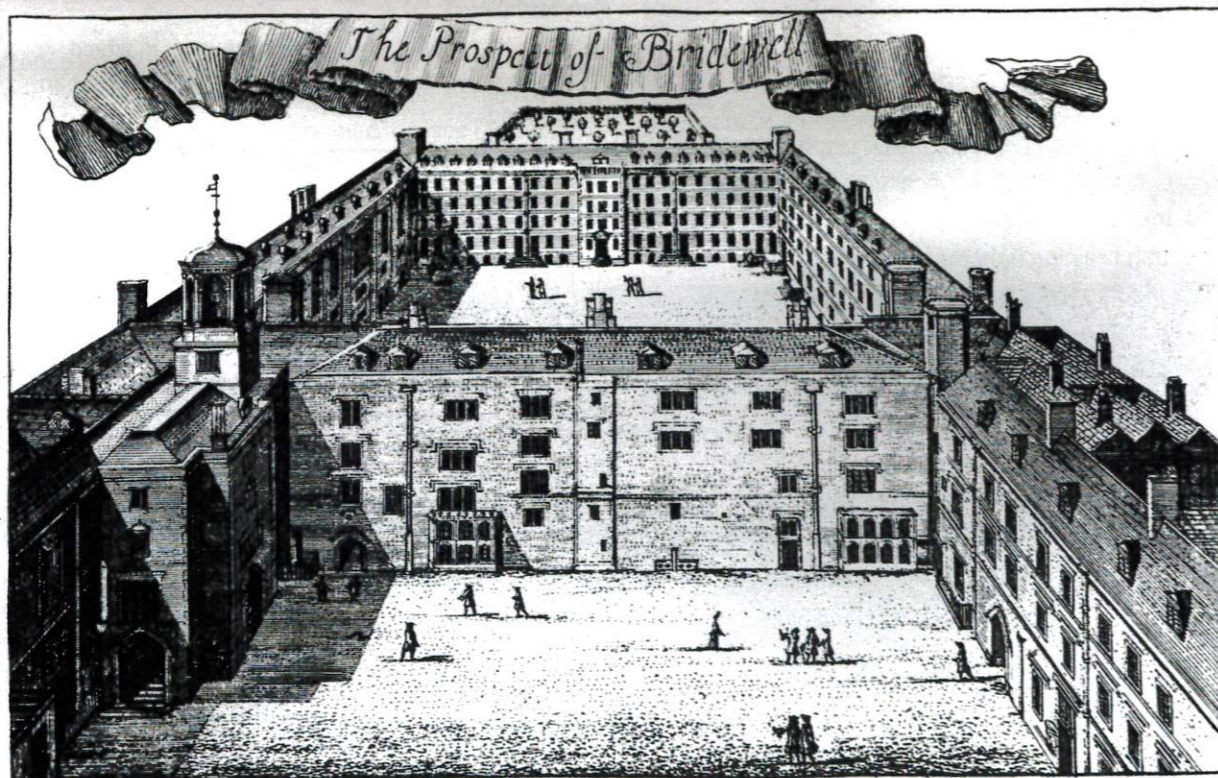
For this type of question you should aim to write about more than one example. Try to compare and contrast the towns and cities and consider how effective their methods were. Did they have an influence on national policy?

The government's treatment of the poor

A new direction from Elizabeth?

In 1601, right at the end of her reign, Elizabeth and her government introduced the first ever Poor Law. The law said that in each area of the country, the wealthy should be taxed to pay for the care and support of the vulnerable, including the old and the sick. The fit and healthy poor were to be given work. This reflected the change in attitude that had taken place during this period. These kinds of taxes had existed before but never on this scale. This was not a total change in direction, however. Those who were deemed able to work, but who did not, were still dealt with harshly. They were whipped and then placed in a House of Correction. The box opposite shows how different groups were dealt with.

▼ **INTERPRETATION B** A late seventeenth-century sketch of Bridewell House of Correction in London, opened in 1553



The types of poor in Elizabethan England

The helpless poor: The sick and the old were provided with food to live on and placed in special homes where they could be cared for.

The able-bodied poor: Those who were considered fit, including children, were expected to work. They were given food and drink as payment and, in some cases, somewhere to sleep.

The idle poor: Those who were seen as lazy were whipped and then sent to a House of Correction where they would be forced to work. Those who went beyond begging into a life of crime might be dealt with even more harshly.

▼ **SOURCE C** Adapted from a punishment that was recorded in Middlesex County Records in 1574:

29th March. At Harrow on the Hill in Middlesex, on the said day, John Allen, Elizabeth Turner, Humphrey Foxe, Henry Bower and Agnes Wort, being over 14 years and having no lawful means of livelihood, were declared vagabonds and sentenced to be **flogged** severely and burnt on the right ear.

How effective were the Poor Laws?

The success of places like York, Ipswich and Norwich helped to convince Elizabeth and her government that a new approach was needed nationwide. Simply punishing the poor did not work. The 1531 laws did attempt to recognise the difference between the genuinely poor and those who were **vagrants**, but they remained focused on punishing the majority. Various attempts were made by individual MPs to introduce new Poor Laws but it was not until the end of Elizabeth's reign that things really began to change.

The aim of the 1601 law was to help those who were genuinely poor, but it still maintained the clear threat of punishment for those who were considered lazy. Initially, the Poor Law seemed to work but it was inconsistently used and many areas did not fulfil the requirements. Over the following few years instances of begging did seem to decrease but this may have been as much due to the threat of the House of Correction as the increased help available.

Some argue that the 1601 Poor Law was not entirely successful. As it made each area responsible for its own poor, there were arguments over which area paupers belonged to. Without a clear home, some paupers were simply sent from one area to another. Despite criticism, the Elizabethan Poor Law remained in effect until it was reformed in the nineteenth century.

Fact

The Poor Law was finally reviewed in 1834. Many of the debates about who deserved to be helped and who did not were revisited and argued about at this time.

Key Words

flogged vagrant

Work

- Describe the punishment that would have taken place at the location in **Interpretation B**.
 - Why do you think such harsh punishments were used?
- How did the Poor Law change the way poverty was dealt with?
- Imagine you are responsible for the changes that have been introduced. Create a presentation to explain how the poor should now be dealt with. You can use ideas from these pages and earlier in the chapter.
- How far could the 1601 Poor Law be considered successful?

Extension

Significance is a key concept for historians. Something that is significant had a big impact on people at the time and continued to have a big impact long after it happened. How significant do you think the 1601 Poor Law was?

Practice Question

Write an account of how the Poor Law system changed under Queen Elizabeth I. **8 marks**

Study Tip

Remember that this type of question is asking how things changed. This means that you need to explain how systems to deal with poverty worked *before* Elizabeth's reign as well as during it.

Drake and voyages of exploration

One of the most famous figures of the Elizabethan age is Sir Francis Drake, an explorer, adventurer and military leader. As we have seen, the reign of Elizabeth has often been described as a 'golden age' and a major reason for that is the exploration of new lands and the great new discoveries that were made during the period. In this chapter we will look at some of these discoveries and the adventurers and traders who made them, beginning with Drake himself.

Objectives

- ▶ Explain how and why the Elizabethan period is described as an 'age of discovery'.
- ▶ Investigate the life of Sir Francis Drake.
- ▶ Analyse what Drake's voyages tell us about Elizabethan England.

The age of discovery

The Elizabethan period was a time of great discovery and exploration. Several European countries, most notably Spain, played a major role in this but in many areas it was England that led the way. At the forefront of exploration was Francis Drake, who **circumnavigated** (sailed all the way round) the world between 1577 and 1580. The discoveries of Drake and others led to a completely new understanding of the world.

Drake and his cousin, John Hawkins, made one of the first voyages to Africa to capture people as slaves to sell in the 'New World' of America. They sold the slaves at a Spanish port (San Juan de Ulúa in the Gulf of Mexico) and made lots of money, but were betrayed. Spanish warships attacked them and destroyed many ships. Drake and Hawkins escaped but wanted revenge on the Spanish. Drake became a **privateer**, attacking enemy ships (mostly Spanish) and taking their cargo. This made him (and Queen Elizabeth) a fortune.

Key Biography

Francis Drake (c1540–96)

- Became an English hero but the Spanish saw him as a pirate and nicknamed him 'El Draque' or 'the Dragon'.
- Although he circumnavigated the globe he didn't set out to do so – but rather to get revenge for what the Spanish did at San Juan de Ulúa. When he returned he had so much gold on board that the half he gave to the queen was more than the entire royal income of the previous year!
- Knighted in 1581.
- In 1588, he led the successful defeat of the Spanish **Armada**.



▼ **SOURCE A** A map from 1590 showing Drake's circumnavigation; with more exploration, Europeans were gaining a greater understanding of how the world actually looked



▼ B Drake's great journey

5. June 1579: In order to avoid separation, Drake destroys two ships. A third is wrecked and a fourth remaining and looking for a safe route home, Drake lands in North America and claims the area for Queen Elizabeth, naming it New Albion.

6. March–June 1580: After sailing through the Indonesian islands, he navigates the feared Cape of Good Hope.

7. 26 September 1580: Drake returns to Plymouth.

1. December 1577: Drake sets out with five ships to raid Spanish ports in the Americas.

4. The remaining ships sail up the South American coast, raiding Spanish ports as they go.

3. September 1578: Drake becomes the first Englishman to sail through the dangerous Straits of Magellan. A storm blows the ships southward, destroying one and separating the others. The lack of accurate navigation makes it difficult to get back on course.

2. June–July 1578: There are rumblings of a mutiny led by Drake's friend Thomas Doughty. Drake takes swift action; after a trial, Doughty is executed on arrival in South America.

▼ **INTERPRETATION C** A nineteenth-century engraving showing Drake being knighted by Queen Elizabeth aboard his ship the Golden Hind; knighting Drake angered Philip of Spain, which may have been exactly why Elizabeth did it!



How was all this possible?

The main reason for the increase in exploration was new technology. Ships built at this time were of higher quality, with new **lateen** (triangular) sails making them faster and easier to steer. Improved defences and weapons made sailing through hostile waters much safer. Advances in navigation also played a significant role. The **astrolabe** allowed sailors to judge how far north or south they were and better compasses made navigation more accurate. But voyages remained dangerous. Drake's circumnavigation, for example, began with five ships and 164 men but ended with just one ship

Key Words

circumnavigate privateer Armada lateen astrolabe

and 58 men. However, men like Drake embarked on them knowing that success would bring wealth, influence and respect for themselves and for England.

Work

- 1 Why might the Elizabethan period be referred to as an 'age of discovery'?
- 2 Create a comic strip to show the key events and problems during Drake's journey around the world. Write your own captions for each panel.
- 3 What does Drake's journey suggest about the reasons for voyages? Think about why he set off rather than what he achieved.
- 4 How did improved technology help voyages like Drake's?
- 5 Look at **Interpretation C**. Why do you think Queen Elizabeth chose to knight Francis Drake?

Extension

Look at **Source A**. What does this map and Drake's voyage tell you about Elizabethan England?

Did voyages abroad make England rich and powerful?

One major reason why Elizabethans embarked on voyages was to get rich. To begin with, this was about stealing and looting. However, over time more formal trade agreements were established with different countries and different people. In these pages, we will explore this trade and consider its importance. How did trade develop? Who did England trade with?

Objectives

- ▶ **Describe** the developments in trade and exploration.
- ▶ **Investigate** why English men embarked on voyages.
- ▶ **Evaluate** how rich and powerful England became as a result of these voyages.

The age of trade

The actions of explorers certainly increased the queen and the country's income (indeed the purpose of many voyages of discovery was to make money) but the real prize lay in trade, the buying and selling of goods. Before Elizabeth's reign, the majority of English trade was with other European countries but people began to look further afield, in particular the Far East where spices could be bought. Initially it was necessary to go through middlemen, traders who bought the spices and then sold them to the Europeans, making a big profit. The English were keen to cut the middlemen out by finding direct routes to India and the Far East in order to raise their own profits.

Trade with the East

Several attempts were made to find a direct route to India and China. The first notable ones were those of Sir Martin Frobisher who tried on three occasions but failed each time. Attempts to reach the East led to the exploration of other areas including the Americas. Companies began to be established with the purpose

▼ **SOURCE A** *The official seal of the Muscovy Company*



of trading in particular areas. The Muscovy Company was created in 1555 and given the monopoly of trade with the city of Moscow in Russia, so that no other company could trade in this area. A similar model was followed elsewhere with the Eastland Company (1579) in Scandinavia and the Baltic, and the Levant Company (1581) in Turkey and the Middle East.

The biggest prize lay further east, however, and in 1582, Queen Elizabeth sent Ralph Fitch to India and the Far East and when he returned he told the queen that profitable trade was more than possible. The East India Company was established in 1600 to oversee this trade. Although English trade in the Far East was limited compared to that of other European countries, this period saw the foundations laid for dominance in later centuries. These companies brought products to England that had rarely been seen before, such as spices, silks and porcelain.

▼ **SOURCE B** *Ralph Fitch's account of what he saw in India:*

They have a very strange order among them – they worship a cow, and esteem much of the cow's dung to paint the walls of their houses. They will kill nothing – not so much as a louse: for they hold it a sin to kill anything. They eat no flesh but live by roots and rice and milk. And when the husband dieth his wife is burned with him, if she be alive: if she will not, her head is shaven and then is never any account made of her after.

The human trade

In 1564, with the authorisation of the queen and accompanied by his cousin Francis Drake, **John Hawkins** kidnapped several hundred West Africans. They were taken by ship to the South American coast where they were sold as slaves. This was not the first case of

Europeans enslaving Africans, but it was the first time an Englishman had carried out the entire process (Hawkins had captured some slaves from a Portuguese ship two years previously). Throughout Elizabeth's reign, England's involvement in the slave trade grew and many more slave traders made their fortune. Demand grew for slaves to work the land in the Americas and produce materials to be returned to England.

▼ **SOURCE C** *John Hawkins' coat of arms, awarded in 1568*



Practice Question

Explain what was important about exploration and trade in Asia for Elizabethan England. **8 marks**

Study Tip

You could explain how trade developed with India and the Far East and why it was considered a priority. What was the impact on Elizabethan England?

Work

- 1 What is meant by the term 'trade'?
- 2 What made John Hawkins an important figure during the reign of Elizabeth?
- 3 Why were the English so keen to find a direct route to the Far East?
- 4 What does **Source B** suggest about European sailors' impressions of the East?
- 5 Look carefully at **Source C**. How does Hawkins' coat of arms demonstrate the way in which he made his money?
- 6 Design the cover of a book about John Hawkins. You need to decide what should go on the front, what the title should be and then write a blurb [the short piece of information on the back] that summarises his life.

Key Biography

John Hawkins (1532–95)



- Key figure in Elizabeth's court, even working as a spy joining the Ridolfi Plot against the queen and passing information about the plot to the authorities.
- Hawkins was responsible for building up the Royal Navy and was a respected military leader, playing a major role as a commander in the battle against the Spanish Armada. He was also a successful privateer, raiding Spanish ports and ships.
- From 1562 he became involved in the African slave trade, first seizing slaves from the Portuguese and then capturing them himself.
- He is believed to be responsible for introducing tobacco to England after discovering it during one of his voyages.

Did voyages abroad make England rich and powerful?

The New World

In addition to the Far East and Africa, English and other European sailors crossed the Atlantic Ocean to the Americas. Like elsewhere, these voyages were about gaining wealth and influence, but they were also about establishing **colonies**. Where and why were European countries so keen to establish colonies? Where was the New World and why did it prove such a challenging place for the English?

Raleigh's New World

In 1584, Elizabeth gave **Sir Walter Raleigh** permission to explore, colonise (take ownership of) and rule any land that was not already ruled by a Christian. In return he had to give the queen one fifth of all the gold and silver that he found there. The aim was to increase England's influence and gain the country more wealth. Raleigh, who was a respected, famous explorer and adventurer, did not set sail for North America himself but rather sent others to form the first English colony in what is now the United States.

▼ **INTERPRETATION D** An engraving from 1618 that shows the establishment of a colony in North America



Key Biography

Sir Walter Raleigh (1552–1618)



- Born into a Protestant family and had struggled to survive the reign of Mary I.
- Very loyal to Elizabeth and spent years in Ireland fighting Catholic rebels.
- Became a favourite of the queen when he returned to court.
- Embarked on voyages to South America in search of a legendary city of gold: El Dorado.
- Funded an attempt to establish a colony in North America.
- His secret marriage to one of the queen's ladies in waiting led to a jealous Elizabeth banishing him from court for five years in 1592.

A colony was established at Roanoke but did not last. A second was established in 1587 and seemed set to succeed. However, when the colony's leader, John White, returned after a trip to England, the other colonists had disappeared. The only clue was the word 'CROATOAN' carved into a tree, the name of a local tribe. No trace of the colonists was ever found. It would not be until the reign of James I, Elizabeth's successor, that a colony was successfully established in North America.

How did the voyages of exploration benefit England?

Elizabeth was a great supporter of the voyages of exploration that set sail from England during her reign. Their aim was clear, to increase the wealth, power and territory of England – but how successful were they in doing this?

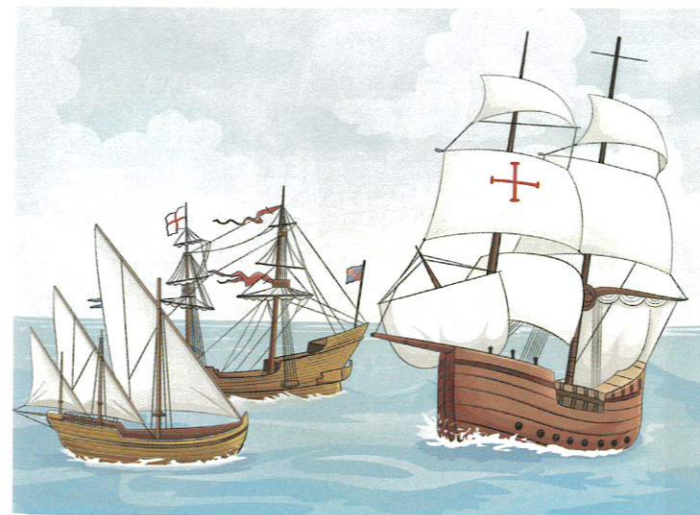
Wealth

By raiding Spanish ships and ports, English sailors like Sir Francis Drake brought riches back to England. Sailors like John Hawkins made his fortune and added to the country's wealth by trading in African slaves. However, other countries like Spain and Portugal also made huge amounts of money at this time by trading in spices and taking gold from South America. Despite this, England did build the foundations of the great trading empire it later became, with many of the trading companies established under Elizabeth becoming very important in the following century.



Power

English naval power was a growing force under Elizabeth. It was clear that England could hold its own in any sea battle and was able to exert its influence over many weaker countries.



Key Words

colony

Territory

England failed in its first attempt to build a colony in America – and other countries beat England in the race to colonise South America. However, English explorers and settlers persevered and over the next few centuries England began to build up more and more territory overseas.



Work

- 1 In what ways did Walter Raleigh's religion play a role in his rise in Elizabeth's court?
- 2 What does the attempted colony in North America suggest about Elizabethan England?
- 3 Look back at John Hawkins' coat of arms. Design one for Walter Raleigh that reflects his life.
- 4 Explain how exploration made England wealthier.
- 5 Look at **Interpretation D**.
 - a What does this engraving suggest about the North American colony it is depicting?
 - b How far does this picture show the reasons for voyages of discovery?

Practice Question

Explain what was important about voyages of discovery in the reign of Elizabeth I.

8 marks

Study Tip

This type of question is asking you to explain consequences. Make sure you say how voyages had an impact on England. Think about wealth, trade and the country's reputation.

6.1

How did England's religion change under Elizabeth?

Before the arrival of the Tudors, little had changed in England's religious practices and beliefs for hundreds of years. However, the Tudors made huge changes to religion which had a dramatic impact. When Elizabeth became queen she had to make some very difficult decisions about which religious direction England should take.

Why was religion a big issue for Elizabeth?

The Reformation of Henry VIII's reign had officially made the country **Protestant** but in reality little had changed. Most **Catholic** practices were still followed. It was during Edward VI's reign (1547–53) that England became much more of a Protestant country. As Edward was only nine when he became king, the country was governed by groups of men, known as Regency Councils. During these six years there were drastic changes, including the introduction of the Book of Common Prayer which firmly established a more Protestant approach.

Edward's death brought his sister Mary to the throne. She spent the following five years returning the country to the Catholic faith. She made the Pope head of the Church once again, brought back the Latin Catholic mass and punished those who refused to return to the

▼ **SOURCE A** A painting from around 1575 showing Edward surrounded by his advisors, his dying father and the Pope



Objectives

- ▶ **Examine** the religion of the country that Elizabeth inherited.
- ▶ **Describe** the decisions that Elizabeth made about religion in England.
- ▶ **Analyse** why Elizabeth made her decisions.

old religion. Almost 300 Protestants were martyred by being burned alive on her orders. Mary was desperate to have a child who would succeed her and keep England Catholic but this did not happen. When she died in 1558, Mary left a scarred and religiously divided country to her younger sister, Elizabeth.

▼ **SOURCE B** An illustration from John Foxe's Book of Martyrs, published in 1663; it shows the burning of three Protestant bishops in 1556, including Thomas Cranmer.



Catholic beliefs and practices

The Pope is the head of the Church and has final say on all religious matters.
The Bible and Church services should be in Latin.
Priests should not marry. Churches should be decorated with paintings, statues and stained glass windows.
Priests are ordinary people's link with God. The bread and wine taken in services literally transforms into the body and blood of Jesus. This is called transubstantiation.

Protestant beliefs and practices

The monarch should be head of the Church and have final say on all religious matters.
The Bible and church services should be in the language of ordinary people – English.
Priests are allowed to marry. Churches should be kept plain and simple with little decoration.
Ordinary people can connect to God through personal prayer.
When the bread and wine is taken in services it represents the body and blood of Jesus.

Priests are ordinary people's link with God.
God created the world and everything in it.
Jesus was God's son.
Those who challenge the true faith must admit their error or be punished by the true believers.

Elizabeth's religious settlement

Elizabeth was a Protestant but she was also practical. She set about a compromise to bring aspects of both faiths together in a 'religious settlement'. Elizabeth allowed priests to marry, services were held in English and she brought back the Book of Common Prayer. However, she declared herself 'governor' rather than 'head' of the Church. Importantly, Elizabeth allowed Catholics to worship in their own way in private. Church services were designed to allow people of either faith to understand and participate in their own way. Elizabeth appointed a moderate Protestant, Matthew Parker, as Archbishop of Canterbury to oversee the English Church.

▼ **SOURCE C** From the statement read out in Parliament after Elizabeth's coronation in 1559:

[The Queen's aim is] to secure and unite the people of this realm in one uniform order to the glory of God and to general tranquillity

Work

- 1 a Explain three differences between the beliefs of Catholics and Protestants.
b Which difference between the two faiths do you think is more significant: the way in which they practise their religion or the beliefs that they hold?
c Which difference do you think would be the biggest barrier to compromise? Explain your answer.
- 2 Look at **Sources A** and **B**. Both were produced during Elizabeth's reign.
a What point do you think **Source A** is making about the reign of Edward VI?
b What point do you think is being made about Mary's reign by **Source B**?
c Why were these sources produced during Elizabeth's reign?

Key Words

Protestant Catholic

Extension

Elizabeth was Protestant yet she chose not to enforce her beliefs in the same way as her brother and sister had. Why do you think she did this?

▼ **INTERPRETATION D** Adapted from the Royal Museums Greenwich website describing Elizabeth's aims when she became queen. The 'statement' mentioned is the one in Source C:

The message was very clear: that they were all, including Elizabeth, members of the same team, working together for a common goal – that of a united, prosperous England. Extremes were to be avoided in order to unite, not divide. In this statement, Elizabeth very deliberately disassociated herself from the unpopularity of Mary's regime by signalling how hers would be different.

Practice Question

How convincing is **Interpretation D** about Elizabeth's approach to religion in the first ten years of her reign? **8 marks**

Study Tip

Does the interpretation fully explain the reasons for Elizabeth's approach? Do you agree with the writer's conclusions, and why?

Reactions to Elizabeth's religious changes: England

Elizabeth's church settlement was designed as a compromise to avoid more conflict between Catholics and Protestants, and for many it worked. However, not everyone was willing to come together in the name of unity and peace. A series of Catholic plots challenged Elizabeth throughout her reign and when, in 1570, the Pope excommunicated her from the Catholic Church, the situation grew more tense.

Objectives

- ▶ Describe the reaction to Elizabeth's church settlement.
- ▶ Explain the impact of Elizabeth's excommunication.
- ▶ Evaluate the success of Elizabeth's church settlement.

What was life like for most Catholics under Elizabeth?

When Elizabeth came to the throne, many Catholics feared Protestant retribution for the burnings and persecution of Mary I's reign. Instead they found that Elizabeth was determined to bring the country together. Elizabeth's religious settlement combined some Catholic practices with Protestant ones. England was Protestant but Catholics could attend church and see many of the traditions of their faith. The services were written to avoid anything that would cause direct conflict for Catholics, with the wording left open to some interpretation. **Recusancy** fines for Catholics who refused to attend Protestant services were also very low. Catholics kept their own beliefs private and in return the government would not seek out disobedience.

The papal bull

On 27 April 1570, Pope Pius V issued *Regnans in Excelsis* ('Reigning on high'). In this special message, or **papal bull**, the Pope **excommunicated** Elizabeth from the Catholic Church and called on Catholics to end her rule.

▼ **SOURCE A** From a public statement read by the Lord Keeper, Sir Nicholas Bacon, in summer 1570 outlining the queen's policy:

As long as people continue to openly follow her laws and do not wilfully and clearly break them, then her majesty will not enquire into their religious beliefs or conscience. She will treat them as her good and obedient subjects.

English Catholics were faced with a dilemma: should they be loyal to their queen or the Pope? Many chose to ignore the bull but some now saw it as their duty to rise up against Elizabeth, whom Pius had called the 'pretended queen of England'. Pius was well aware of the impact of his message.

Plots and rebellions

The excommunication was designed by the Pope to stir up rebellions and was originally planned to coincide with the Northern Rebellion of 1569, but was issued late. It did, however, inspire other rebellions.

A new policy from Elizabeth

Plots after the papal bull showed that Elizabeth could no longer rely on the loyalty of all her Catholic subjects. A new approach was needed to ensure that potential trouble makers were found and Catholics did not rebel. New laws were introduced to try to disrupt Catholic activities and show that challenges to the queen's rule would not be tolerated. Having allowed private Catholicism for the first 23 years of her reign, a law was passed in 1581 making it treason to attend a Catholic mass. Greater fines were introduced for those who failed to attend church services. These recusancy fines rose to around £20, a significant sum, even for the more wealthy.

A second Act was passed in 1585 making it treason to have a Catholic priest in your home. Priests were executed and noble Catholic families faced the loss of their lands and wealth if their loyalty to the queen was placed in doubt. A 1593 law said that Catholics could not travel more than five miles from their homes.

Catholic plots and rebellions

The plot	What happened
The Northern Rebellion, 1569	Elizabeth refused to allow the Duke of Norfolk to marry the Catholic Mary, Queen of Scots. This act inspired two northern Catholic nobles to lead a rebellion against Elizabeth to replace her with the Catholic Mary. Westmorland and Northumberland took control of Durham Cathedral and held an illegal Catholic mass. They then began to march south with around 4600 men. The loyal Earl of Sussex raised an army and the rebels disbanded. Northumberland was captured and executed, Norfolk was imprisoned and Westmorland escaped to France.
The Ridolfi Plot, 1571	This plot was led by an Italian named Ridolfi and also involved Norfolk. The plan was that an invasion from the Netherlands would coincide with another northern rebellion. Elizabeth would be murdered and replaced by Mary, Queen of Scots, who would then marry Norfolk. The plot was exposed before it could be completed.
The Throckmorton Plot, 1583	Led by Sir Francis Throckmorton, the plan was to assassinate Elizabeth and replace her with Mary, Queen of Scots. Once Elizabeth had been killed, there would be an invasion by the French Catholic, Henry, Duke of Guise, and an uprising of English Catholics. The plot also involved the Spanish ambassador. When the plot was discovered, Throckmorton was executed and Mary, Queen of Scots, was placed under even closer guard.
The Babington Plot, 1586	This was another attempt to murder Elizabeth and place Mary, Queen of Scots, on the throne. Led by Anthony Babington, it was the discovery of this plot that led to Mary's trial and execution when it was found that she had known about and agreed with the plot all along.

▼ **SOURCE B** From a letter by Sir William Cecil, December 1580:

There can be no good government where opposition is allowed. The government can never be safe where there is toleration of two religions. There is no greater hatred between men than that caused by religious differences. People who disagree about God can never agree how to serve their country.

Fact

Elizabeth's long reign saw no fewer than nine Popes at the head of the Catholic Church: Paul IV, Pius IV, Pius V, Gregory XIII, Sixtus V, Urban VII, Gregory XIV, Innocent IX and Clement VIII.

Key Words

recusancy papal bull excommunicate

Work

- 1 Explain what is meant by the term:
 - a religious settlement
 - b excommunicate.
- 2 How did most Catholics respond to Elizabeth's religious settlement?
- 3 Create a poster to show the major Catholic plots that Elizabeth faced. Try to show what happened by using up to ten words per plot.
- 4 What was the impact of the *Regnans in Excelsis* on Elizabeth's policies in England?
- 5 Look at **Sources A** and **B**. How do the sources show a change in policy for Elizabeth? Use the sources and your own knowledge to explain your answer.

Reactions to Elizabeth's religious changes: abroad

It was not just in England that Elizabeth faced opposition from Catholics. Powerful Catholics around the world also saw Elizabeth as a problem and her Protestant rule as something that should be challenged. Would Catholic countries like Spain and France see it as their duty to attack Elizabeth?

Objectives

- ▶ **Describe** the opposition Elizabeth faced from outside England.
- ▶ **Explain** how other European countries reacted to Elizabeth's religious policies.
- ▶ **Evaluate** the effect of religion on relations between England and other countries.

▼ **SOURCE A** Adapted from the papal bull issued in 1570 by Pope Pius V:

Elizabeth, the pretended queen of England and the servant of crime, has followed and embraced the errors of the heretics. We declare her to be deprived of her pretended title to the crown. We charge and command all the nobles, subjects, peoples that they do not dare obey her orders, mandates and laws.

The college at Douai

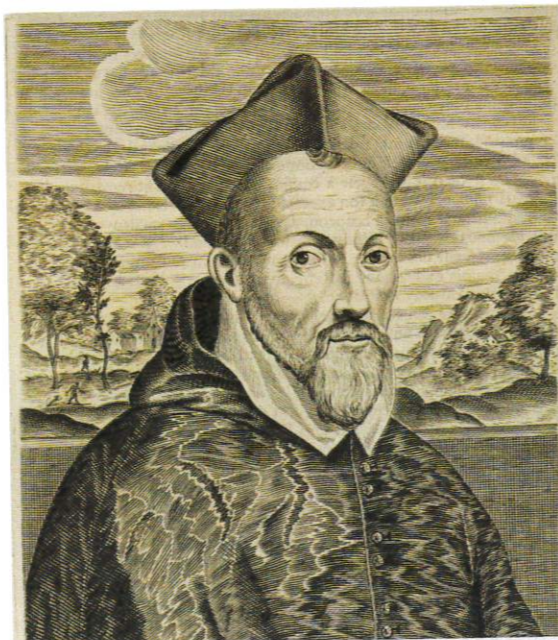
In 1568, an English Catholic cardinal named **William Allen** established a **seminary** at Douai in the Spanish Netherlands to train priests. Allen, who had the full backing of the Pope, aimed to educate priests who would then travel to England as **missionaries** to convert the English back to the Catholic faith. The first priests arrived in England in 1574, just as Elizabeth's fear of Catholic rebellion was growing.

The Jesuits

The Society of Jesus was created in 1540. It was part of what is known as the **Counter-Reformation** and hoped to bring people back to the Catholic religion. The Jesuits, as its members were known, first arrived in England in 1580. Their aim was to convert the Protestant population to the Catholic faith. Jesuit priests were seen by Elizabeth as a threat to her rule and those who were caught were treated harshly. The 1585 Act against Jesuits and Seminary Priests called for all Jesuits to be driven out of England and many were executed. Those who sheltered them could be arrested.

Key Biography

Cardinal William Allen (1532–94)



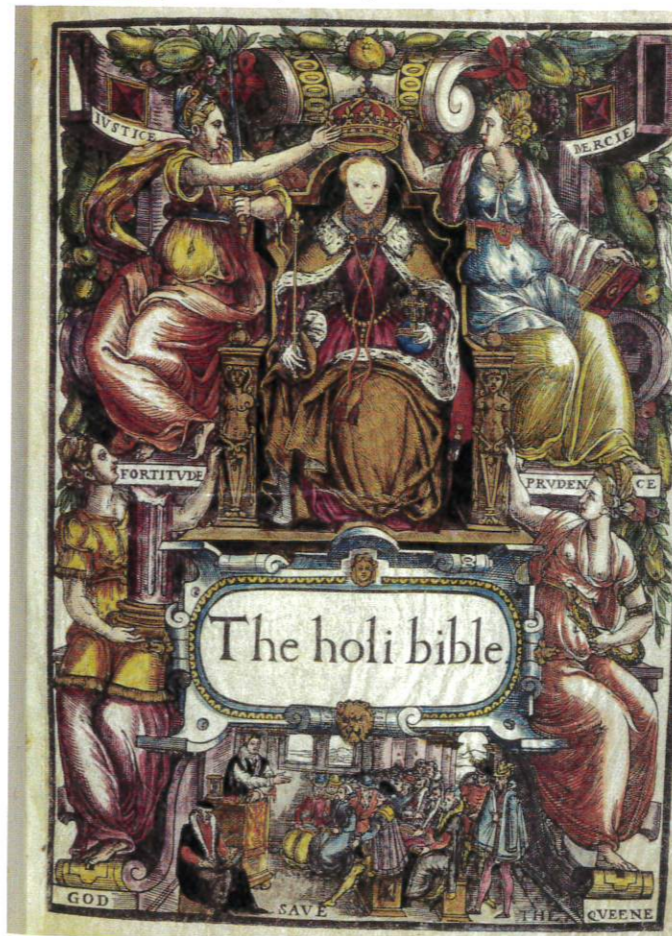
- An English Catholic who was made a Cardinal on the recommendation of King Philip II of Spain in 1587.
- A key figure in the Pope's plan for England to return to Catholicism.
- Involved in the Throckmorton Plot and the Spanish Armada.
- It is likely that had England become Catholic he would have been Archbishop of Canterbury and responsible for re-establishing the religion in the country.

The Catholic powers in Europe

Although the Protestant faith was now widespread across Europe, the two most powerful countries remained firmly Catholic. Taking their lead from the Pope, the kings of France and Spain began to support challenges to Elizabeth's rule. To begin, it was hoped that a Catholic prince or perhaps Philip II himself might marry Elizabeth, but as it became clear that this would not happen, relations between the countries came under strain. Although he felt a duty to respond to the Pope's excommunication of Elizabeth, Philip was not yet in a position to launch a full-scale attack on England so he used other methods to try and undermine the English queen.

Although war was avoided, France and Spain supported the Jesuit missionaries and also gave financial support to those who wanted to get rid of the queen. Philip II even helped set up the seminary at Douai in the Netherlands, an area that was a source of conflict between the two countries. Elizabeth always showed her strength and determination when faced with threats from powerful Catholic countries, but the threats never went away. However, the death of Mary, Queen of Scots, and the failure of the Spanish Armada represented significant blows to Spanish, and papal, hopes of removing Elizabeth from power.

▼ **SOURCE B** The 'Bishops' Bible published in 1568



Key Words

seminary missionary Counter-Reformation

Work

- 1 Who is the Pope and why was he so important in the 1500s?
- 2 Look at **Source A**.
 - a What does the Pope mean by 'her pretended title'?
 - b Working with a partner, rewrite the Pope's message in your own words.
- 3 Look at **Source B**. What does it suggest about religion in England in 1568?
- 4 Why did Elizabeth see the Jesuits as a threat?
- 5 Create a guide to England for a Jesuit priest. What does he need to know to stay safe? Which part of the country should he head to? How could he blend in?

▼ **INTERPRETATION C** From a school History textbook, published in 2015:

Elizabeth was also concerned about the reaction from abroad. Both France and Spain were Catholic powers and could pose a threat to the settlement. In the event neither showed much inclination to be critical. Philip of Spain was prepared to give Elizabeth the benefit of the doubt. Neither he nor the Pope saw the changes in England as permanent and hoped that England could be persuaded to return the Church to Rome.

Practice Question

Write an account of Elizabeth's changing policy towards Catholics. **8 marks**

Study Tip

Remember to include plenty of specific detail about how and why Elizabeth's policies changed.

Elizabeth and the 'Catholic threat'

For the first twenty years of her reign, Elizabeth's policy towards Catholics was one of tolerance. The country was Protestant and, as long as they kept their personal practices private, Catholics would be left alone. In the 1580s this policy changed drastically. New laws made life extremely difficult for Catholics, forcing them to conform to Protestantism or face torture and even death. Catholic life was severely restricted and penalties were brutal. Why did Elizabeth's attitude to Catholics change so dramatically at this time? What laws did Elizabeth introduce and what was their effect on England's Catholics?

Objectives

- ▶ **Recall** the change in Elizabeth's policy towards Catholics.
- ▶ **Explain** how and why the change came about.
- ▶ **Evaluate** how far Campion's mission was responsible for the change in policy.

Why did Elizabeth's policy change?

In the 1580s, tolerance of Catholics declined sharply. Elizabeth and her government felt increasingly under threat at home and abroad. In England, there were a number of important Catholic families who still held a lot of power, particularly in the north. With the Catholic Church in Europe determined that England should return to Catholicism it is easy to see why Elizabeth felt vulnerable.

▼ **INTERPRETATION A** *An engraving of Saint Edmund Campion from 1819*



Key Biography

Edmund Campion (1540–81)

- He became a scholar at Oxford University during the reign of Mary I.
- As his Catholic views became known and less acceptable, Campion left England.
- He travelled alone and by foot to Rome to join the Jesuits in 1573.

Campion's mission

The Jesuits had spent the years since 1540 sending missionaries all over Europe, often at risk to their lives, spreading their religious message. In 1580, they began a mission to England. The men chosen to lead the mission were two exiled Englishmen: Robert Parsons and the charismatic **Edmund Campion**. On arrival in England on the 24 June, Campion, disguised as a jewel merchant, began to preach to the ordinary English people. He travelled the country spreading his message. News of his presence reached the authorities and Campion became a wanted man. Parsons kept a much lower profile. The authorities were certain that Campion's aim was to encourage a rebellion.

Campion is caught

Campion was arrested on 14 July in Berkshire and taken to the Tower of London. Under questioning by three members of Elizabeth's privy council, Campion maintained that he had no wish to overthrow the queen. He was held for four months and tortured several times on the **rack**. He was found guilty of treason on 20 November 1581. On 1 December, Campion was dragged through London before being hanged, drawn and quartered. Parsons escaped from England, never to return.

Elizabeth's new laws

Elizabeth's stance on Catholics became tougher after 1580. The table below shows four of the important laws that were passed during her reign.

Date	Key points of law
1571	Recusancy fines for Catholics who did not take part in Protestant services. They could be fined or have property taken from them. However, the rich could afford to pay and Elizabeth did not enforce the law too harshly; when Parliament tried to increase the fines, Elizabeth resisted. It became illegal to own any Catholic items such as rosary beads .
1581	Recusancy fines were increased to £20 – more than most could afford; this law was strictly enforced. It became high treason to convert to Catholicism.
1585	Any Catholic priest who had been ordained (made a priest) after 1559 was considered a traitor and both he and anyone protecting him faced death. It became legal to kill anyone who attempted to assassinate the queen.
1593	The 'statute of confinement' – Catholics could not travel more than five miles from their home without permission from the authorities.

Work

- 1 Explain how Elizabeth's policy towards Catholics changed in the 1580s.
- 2 Look at **Source B**. Explain what Campion means in your own words.
- 3 Look at **Interpretation A**.
 - a What do you notice sticking out of Campion's chest?
 - b Why do you think this has been included?
 - c What does it suggest about the person who created this image?
- 4 What does **Interpretation C** suggest caused Elizabeth's change in policy? How far do you agree?
- 5 Which of the two statements below do you think is more accurate and why?
 - 'Campion's mission was the reason for Elizabeth's change in policy towards Catholics.'
 - 'The way Campion was treated shows that Elizabeth's attitude towards Catholics had already changed drastically.'

Key Words

rack rosary beads

▼ **SOURCE B** *Campion's reaction to being sentenced to execution, according to contemporary reports. The 'see of Peter' refers to the Roman Catholic Church (Saint Peter is believed to have been the first Pope):*

In condemning us, you condemn all your own ancestors, all our ancient bishops and kings, all that was once the glory of England — the island of saints, and the most devoted child of the See of Peter.

▼ **INTERPRETATION C** *From the blog 'An Historian Goes to the Movies' written by Andrew Larsen. This entry is from October 2015:*

Elizabeth did persecute Catholics in the later part of her reign, but she did so largely in response to Pius V's excommunication of her, which had the unfortunate effect of meaning that a devout Catholic could not be trusted to support Elizabeth as monarch (which is not to say that all Catholics opposed her, only that they almost automatically came under suspicion).

3.5 Puritans and their beliefs

The aim of Elizabeth's religious settlement was to offer a compromise that both Protestants and Catholics could accept. While most people accepted it, a small group of extreme Protestants known as Puritans were angered. Who were they and why could they not accept Elizabeth's church settlement?

Objectives

- ▶ Describe the ideas of the Puritans.
- ▶ Explain Elizabeth's policy towards Puritans.
- ▶ Assess the threat that Puritans posed to Elizabeth's religious settlement.

Who were the Puritans?

The Puritans were Protestants who were unwilling to compromise in how their faith was practised. They had been influenced by more extreme Protestants in Europe, like John Calvin in Geneva, and argued for the removal of all Catholic elements from the English Church. Puritans hoped that Elizabeth would bring about the England they had dreamed of. Elizabeth's Church settlement was a huge disappointment to them.

Early in her reign Elizabeth appointed a number of bishops who had similar views to the Puritans. A big area of contention was what they wore. Puritans preferred ordinary, plain clothing but bishops of the Church of England were required to wear a white gown, or **surplice**, during services. Despite initial arguments most bishops ultimately accepted the clothing, especially after 1566 when it was made clear that refusal would cost them their jobs. By 1568, most Puritans accepted Elizabeth's changes and reluctantly conformed. A small dedicated group, known as **Presbyterians**, refused to give in and continued to argue against what they saw as a **popish** Church. They didn't like the idea of bishops at all and wanted them removed completely as had been done in Geneva.

▼ **SOURCE A** A depiction of a sixteenth-century English Puritan family learning to sing hymns together; Puritans believed in the sombre and strict upbringing of children with much time spent on religious instruction and Bible study



How much of a threat were the Puritans?

In the 1570s, meetings known as **prophesyings** became popular. Prophesyings involved members of the **clergy** meeting for prayer and discussion and would often include strong criticism of Elizabeth's Church. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Edmund Grindal, encouraged these meetings but the queen saw them as very dangerous.

Grindal was suspended as Archbishop by the queen when he refused to ban prophesyings. More and more Puritans separated themselves totally from the mainstream Church and there were a number of attempts to establish new churches. In 1580, a new **separatist** church was established in Norwich. Its leader, Robert Browne, was arrested but later released. A second church was set up in London in 1592 and again the leaders, Henry Barrow and John Greenwood, were arrested. Unlike Browne, however, they were hanged.

Powerful Puritans

Parliament included a number of Puritan MPs, including Sir Peter Wentworth and Anthony Cope, who tried to introduce new laws that would change the Church but failed to gain enough support. The queen's childhood friend and potential husband Robert Dudley was a Puritan, but the most prominent Puritan in government was Sir Francis Walsingham. He was well aware that Puritanism had little support

among the majority of Protestants and so never made a serious effort to support the cause. He did, however, offer some protection to Puritans by limiting the extent to which Elizabeth cracked down on them.

How did Elizabeth and her government deal with Puritans?

With the deaths of Dudley and Walsingham in 1588 and 1590, Puritanism lost powerful supporters at court, and Elizabeth took a harsher approach towards Puritans. Their refusal to accept her religious settlement was a challenge to her authority and something she was not prepared to allow. In 1583, with the queen's support, the new Archbishop of Canterbury, John Whitgift, had introduced rules to crack down on Puritanism. Among other things, the rules banned unlicensed preaching and enforced attendance at church by imposing recusancy fines. A new High Commission was given the power to fine and imprison Puritans who did not conform. Hundreds were dismissed or imprisoned, including Thomas Cartwright (in 1590). Dudley and Walsingham both urged more tolerance but Elizabeth backed her Archbishop completely. Puritans were producing increasingly extreme publications calling for the reorganisation of the Church and the persecution of those they saw as having Catholic sympathies, which lost them a lot of support. Elizabeth had Puritan printers punished, such as John Stubbs who had his right hand chopped off for criticising official marriage talks with a French Catholic prince. Whitgift's campaign broke the organisation of the Puritans.

Key Biography

John Field (1545–88)

- He was a priest who became an important leader of the most extreme branch of Puritan thought in London.
- His outspoken criticism of the Church of England saw him banned from preaching for 8 years.
- In 1572 he wrote *A View of Popish Abuses yet remaining in the English Church* which was published with Thomas Wilcox's equally controversial *Admonition to Parliament*. Following the publication he was sent to prison for a year.
- After his release he attempted to bring more structure and organisation to the Puritan movement but he gained little support.
- He was later banned from preaching once again but escaped harsher punishment, perhaps as a result of the protection of powerful Puritans in Elizabeth's inner circle.

▼ **INTERPRETATION B** A seventeenth-century engraving of Thomas Cartwright



Key Words

- surplice
- Presbyterian
- popish
- prophesying
- clergy
- separatist

Work

- 1 What is meant by the term 'Puritan'?
- 2 Why were Puritans so unhappy about the Elizabethan Church settlement?
- 3 Look at **Source A**. What does this source suggest about Puritans?
- 4 To what extent were Protestants a threat to Elizabeth's new Church?
- 5 How effective were Elizabeth and the mainstream Church in dealing with Puritanism?

Extension

Many of the ideas of English Puritans were based on the teachings of John Calvin. Calvin established his ideas in the city of Geneva (now in Switzerland). Understanding what happened in Geneva will help you understand what Puritans were aiming for in England. Research and prepare a project or presentation on John Calvin's actions in Geneva in the sixteenth century.

Practice Question

Write an account of Puritanism during the reign of Elizabeth I.

8 marks

Study Tip

Remember to include who the Puritans were, what they did and how Elizabeth responded. Try to explain how life changed for them during Elizabeth's reign.

Why was Mary, Queen of Scots, seen as such a threat?

A name that has come up many times when looking at threats to Elizabeth is that of Mary, Queen of Scots. Mary was Elizabeth's cousin and her closest living relative, so as long as Elizabeth remained childless, she was the heir to the throne. She was also a Catholic. How much of a threat was Mary, Queen of Scots?

Cousin Mary

Mary was Queen Elizabeth's cousin, her grandmother being Henry VIII's sister, Margaret, who married the King of Scotland. Mary had become Queen of Scotland in 1542 when she was just eight days old. She married the heir to the throne of France in 1558 and was briefly queen of two countries, Scotland and France, and the heir to the throne of a third – England. In fact, she maintained that she was the rightful Queen of England too!

The French king's death in 1560, however, was a turning point in Mary's life. The Catholic queen returned to Scotland to find that the Protestant faith had become more and more popular. Mary became increasingly unpopular, and after it was suggested that she had been involved in the murder of her second husband, Lord Darnley, she was forced to flee and seek safety in England. Her and Darnley's infant son James was crowned King of Scotland in 1567. Mary was now at Elizabeth's mercy.

INTERPRETATION A A nineteenth-century painting of Mary with her newborn son James



Objectives

- ▶ Examine the story of Mary, Queen of Scots.
- ▶ Explain why Elizabeth saw her as a threat.
- ▶ Assess why Elizabeth waited 19 years before having Mary executed.

SOURCE B Mary, Queen of Scots



A threat to peace in England

Many English Protestants reacted to Mary's arrival in England with shock and fear. They saw a potential Catholic queen and a possible return to the horrors of Mary I's reign, which had seen the burning alive of nearly 300 Protestants. The opinion in Parliament was clear: Mary was a threat to the security of the Protestant country. A number of Elizabeth's advisors in the Privy Council immediately called for Mary's execution but Elizabeth was hesitant. Executing a queen might give her enemies ideas! Instead, Mary was moved around the country as Elizabeth's prisoner for 19 years, although she was treated well.

For most of the 19 years there is not much evidence to suggest that Mary was directly involved in many plots to overthrow Elizabeth but it is clear that she was an inspiration to Catholic plotters and rebels. As you know,

there were numerous attempts to overthrow Elizabeth and replace her with Mary, a number of which involved marriage to the Duke of Norfolk. In any case, Mary believed that she was the rightful Queen of England.

SOURCE C From a letter to Queen Elizabeth making charges against Mary, Queen of Scots, sent from Parliament in 1572:

Mary has plotted against Your Majesty. She has tried to persuade the Duke of Norfolk to commit treason and against your clear orders decided to marry him. She has stirred up the Earls of Northumberland and Westmorland to rebel against Your Majesty. She has tried to bring rebellion to the country and gain the help of the Pope and others from abroad. We, the members of the House of Lords and House of Commons, beg Your Majesty to punish her.

The final plot

In 1586, there was one final plot to make Mary Queen of England. A rich, young, devoted Catholic named Anthony Babington came up with a plan to kill Elizabeth. He and five other men would kill her, rescue Mary from prison and place her on the throne. However, Babington needed to know if Mary supported his plan so he tried to contact her.

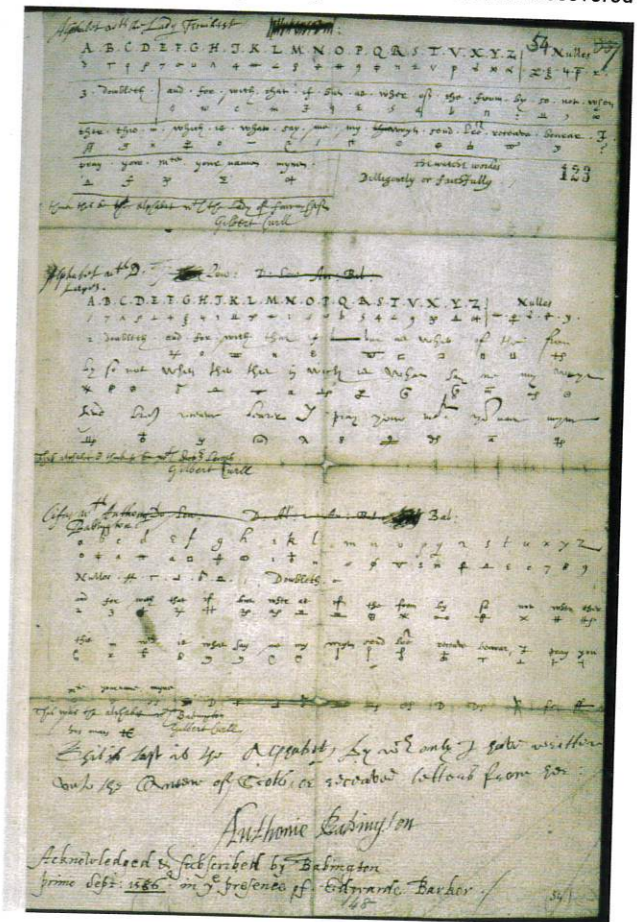
He managed to get Mary's servants to hide coded letters in beer barrels that were taken to her room. Mary replied saying she agreed to the plan. But in fact, Mary's servants didn't work for her at all, they worked for Elizabeth's chief spy, Sir Francis Walsingham, who took the letters straight to his queen.

When the code was broken, the message was clear: Mary was supporting a plot to kill the Queen of England. A group representing Parliament met with Elizabeth and called for Mary's arrest. Although Elizabeth remained hesitant, she had little choice but to act in the face of so much evidence. Mary, Queen of Scots, was about to go on trial for her life.

Work

- 1 Why did many see Mary as a threat to security in England?
- 2 Look at **Source C**. What does Parliament think should be done about Mary? Why?
- 3 Elizabeth kept Mary alive for 19 years. Why do you think the queen did not have her executed immediately? Include as many reasons as you can.
- 4 Working in a small group, write a script that tells the story of Mary's life up to her arrest in 1586. Perhaps you could perform it as a play.

SOURCE D One of Babington's letters that was discovered



Extension

Many historians agree that there was more to the Babington Plot than the official account suggests. It is thought that Walsingham was aware of the correspondence between Mary and Babington from the beginning. It is possible he allowed it to continue so that Mary would incriminate herself. Some even suggest that he had the letters planted! What does this suggest about the government's approach to opposition? Research Walsingham's involvement and include as much detail as you can in your answer.

Elizabeth's treatment of Mary, Queen of Scots

After the discovery of Mary's involvement in the Babington Plot, Elizabeth was left with little choice but to execute her. A trial was organised but its conclusion seemed inevitable. Elizabeth had resisted calls from Parliament for the execution of Mary. What might be the consequences of killing a queen?

Objectives

- ▶ **Describe** the trial and execution of Mary, Queen of Scots.
- ▶ **Explain** why Elizabeth was hesitant to sign Mary's death warrant.
- ▶ **Assess** whether Mary's execution meant that she was no longer a threat.

A queen on trial

In October 1586, Mary was put on trial before a court of 36 noblemen including Sir Francis Walsingham, the man who had found the evidence against her, and the queen's close advisor, Sir William Cecil. Mary argued her case strongly. She criticised the fact that she had not been allowed to look at the evidence against her and said that as a foreign queen, and not an Englishwoman, she could not be guilty of treason. But her protests made little impact and she was sentenced to death on 25 October.

Despite all the evidence, Elizabeth was reluctant to have her cousin executed. She even told the French ambassador that she had been in tears over the 'unfortunate affair'. She was worried that if a rightful monarch killed another then there might be terrible consequences. She was concerned that Mary's son, King James VI of Scotland, or even the Catholic Spanish might seek revenge. Eventually, though, she put these fears aside and signed the death warrant on 1 February.

▼ **INTERPRETATION A** An illustration from Cassell's History of England, a book published in 1901, showing the trial of Mary, Queen of Scots, at Fotheringhay Castle



The death of a queen

Mary was executed at Fotheringhay Castle on the morning of 8 February. The execution was not held in public but was officially witnessed by the Earls of Shrewsbury and Kent. Elizabeth was said to have been angry about the execution and had the privy councillor who delivered the death warrant briefly imprisoned.

Fact

Accounts of the execution suggest that it may have taken three blows with the axe: the first hitting the back of her head, the second almost cutting it clean off and the third finally severing it from her neck. The executioner supposedly held up Mary's head by the hair only to have her wig come off in his hands and her head fall to the floor! After the execution, her dog was found hiding beneath her skirts, covered in blood and terrified.

▼ **SOURCE B** An illustration of the execution of Mary, Queen of Scots, from *Theatrum crudelitatum haereticorum nostri temporis* [Theatre of the Cruelties of the Heretics of our Time], published in 1588



▼ **INTERPRETATION C** From *History of the Life of Mary Queen of Scots*, published in 1681 from the papers of a secretary of Sir Francis Walsingham:

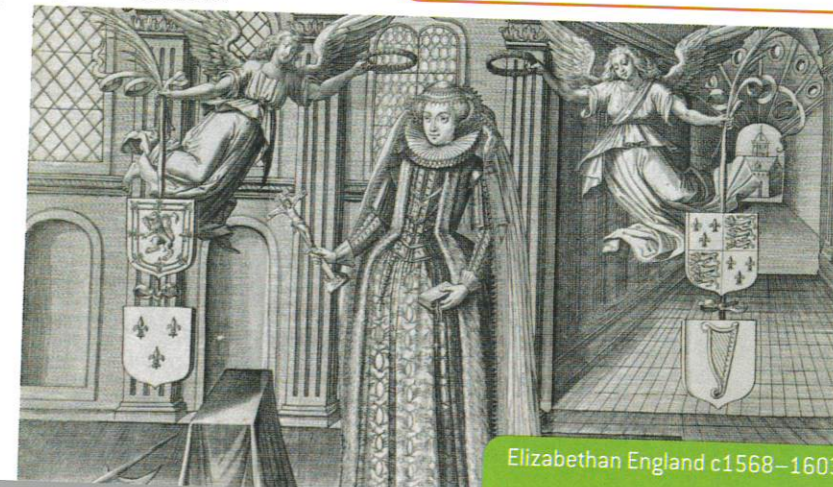
Then lay she down and stretched out her body and her neck upon the block. She cried: 'Lord, into thy hands', and so she received two strokes. The people cried: God save the queen, and so perish all papists and Her Majesty's enemies.

Did Mary's death solve Elizabeth's problems?

Parliament had spent years trying to convince Elizabeth to have Mary executed as a way to end the Catholic threat. Without Mary, Catholics had no obvious alternative monarch to replace Elizabeth. Should Elizabeth die or be killed her successor would be Mary's son, James, the Protestant King of Scotland. Yet it could be argued that in death, Mary remained a threat. Catholics had a **martyr** (someone who had died for their faith) and could now see that Elizabeth was the wicked heretic that they believed she was. Secondly, in killing Mary, Elizabeth had tried and executed a queen, a dangerous idea to give some of her less loyal subjects.

The French and the Scottish kings expressed outrage but took no action. Elizabeth wrote a letter apologising to James VI of Scotland for his mother's death.

▼ **SOURCE D** A drawing from a book published in Germany in 1588; the book was written by Robert Turner who taught at the University of Ingolstadt, a centre of Jesuit activity; the first line of the caption said: 'Mary was Queen of Scotland and France and by law Queen of England and Ireland.'



Key Words

martyr

Work

- 1 a What date was Mary sentenced to death?
b Where did her trial and execution take place?
- 2 Why was Elizabeth so reluctant to sign the death warrant?
- 3 Working with a partner, create a prosecution (three arguments for execution) and a defence (three arguments against execution) for Mary.
- 4 How accurate do you think **Interpretation C** is in its account of the execution?
- 5 Was Mary just as dangerous to Elizabeth dead as she was alive? Explain your answer.

Practice Question

Explain what was important about the execution of Mary, Queen of Scots for Elizabethan England. **8 marks**

Study Tip

Try to explain the impact of Mary's execution on England. You might consider the impact on Elizabeth's reign, the religious divisions within the country (particularly the threat of Catholic rebellion) and the possible effect on relations with Catholic countries like Spain and France.

Why was there conflict between England and Spain?

Tensions between Protestant England and Catholic Spain existed from the beginning of Elizabeth's reign. King Philip II of Spain was angry about England becoming a Protestant country. To make matters worse, Philip had been married to Elizabeth's Catholic elder sister Mary and had been at her side as she ruled England. Could the two countries ever find common ground? Would Elizabeth really consider marriage to Philip II? And how and why were the Netherlands involved in the conflict?

Objectives

- ▶ **Describe** the changing relationship between England and Spain.
- ▶ **Explain** the factors that led to conflict.
- ▶ **Evaluate** the reasons for conflict and consider their relative importance.

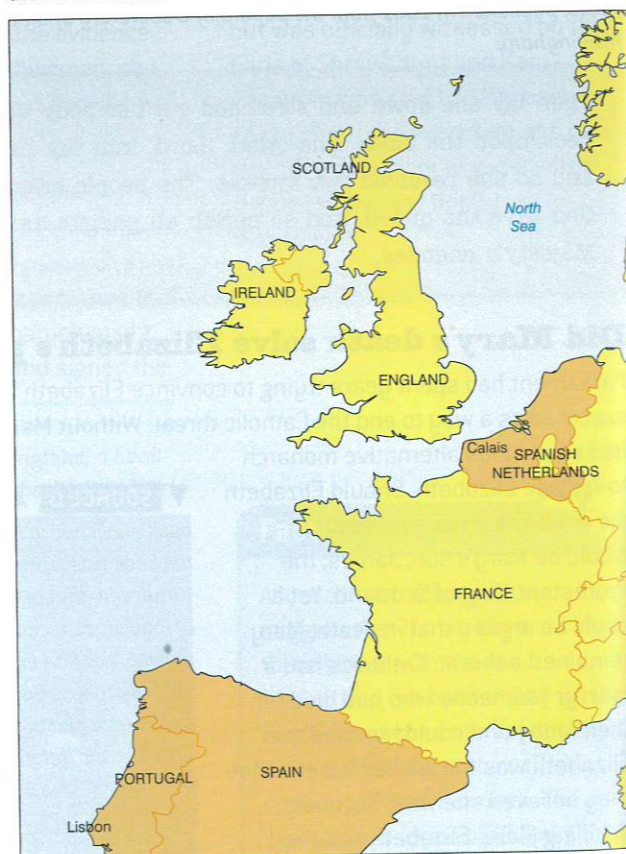
King, brother-in-law and potential husband

As King of Spain, Philip II was one of the wealthiest men in the world. Spanish explorers had returned from voyages to South America with vast treasures from Spain's new colonies. Philip II's conquests overseas had received the Pope's blessing so he saw it as his religious duty to expand his power and influence. In 1554, two years before he became king, Philip II married Queen Mary I of England. As long as they were married he would be joint monarch with her. The aim was to unite the Catholic world but Mary and Philip II had no children. Elizabeth became queen, Philip II did not waste time; he quickly issued a marriage proposal to Elizabeth. She did not refuse, but just kept him waiting. For a number of years England and Spain were at peace. But this was not going to last forever.

Problems in the Netherlands

As well as being King of Spain, Philip II also ruled the Netherlands. In August 1566, there was a Protestant uprising in several Dutch cities. Although the initial disagreement was about taxes, it soon took on a religious dimension. There was an outbreak of **iconoclasm** when Catholic icons (images and sculptures) were smashed, and rioting took place. Philip II was ruthless in his response. He sent Spanish soldiers in to restore order. This led to even more resistance among the Protestant Dutch rebels. Although she did not want an all out war with Spain, Elizabeth agreed to send money to the rebels and allowed English volunteers to go and help. She also offered protection to rebel ships known as the Gueux de Mer (sea beggars) which she allowed to stay in English ports up until 1572, greatly angering the King of Spain.

▼ **SOURCE A** A map showing the location of Spain and the Netherlands



Other priorities

Aiding the Protestant rebels in the Netherlands was not an easy decision for Elizabeth. In addition to the religious links, England had strong trade links with the Dutch, particularly the cloth trade. Conflict was bad for business. Philip II was also not keen to get involved

with the rebellion, as he had more pressing matters to deal with closer to home in Portugal. He sent a powerful army led by the Duke of Alba to crush the rebellion but it just made the situation worse.

A declaration of war

In 1584, the leader of the Dutch rebels, William of Orange, was assassinated by a Spanish Catholic. Things grew more chaotic in the Netherlands, and finally, in 1585, Elizabeth sent troops to support the Protestant rebels. She did not want Spain to get too powerful but she was also concerned about France becoming increasingly involved. She sent the trusted Robert Dudley and 7000 soldiers. Although Dudley achieved very little, this was a clear act of war against Spain.

Philip had been married to Elizabeth's sister and wished to marry Elizabeth but she would not agree.

England was Protestant and Spain was Catholic.

The Pope called for all Catholics to challenge Elizabeth in 1570.

Why was there conflict between Spain and England?

Sir Francis Drake and other English sailors had spent years raiding Spanish ports in the Americas and stealing treasures in the 1570s.

Elizabeth sent soldiers to help Protestants rebelling against the Spanish in the Netherlands.

Extension

The Dutch painting shown in **Source B** would be a challenging source for any historian. One of the most interesting figures is the Duke of Alençon and Anjou, who is at the back of the cow. Research Alençon's life. Why has the artist shown him in this unfortunate position?

Key Words

iconoclasm

▼ **SOURCE B** A Dutch painting from 1585; it is a comment on the situation in the Netherlands, which is represented by a cow; Elizabeth is feeding the cow which Philip II is attempting to ride; William of Orange is holding onto the cow's horns; the man at the back is the French king's brother (and one of Elizabeth's suitors), the Duke of Alençon and Anjou



Work

- 1 Who rebelled against Spanish rule in the Netherlands?
- 2 How did Philip II try to put down the rebellion?
- 3 Why do you think Elizabeth might not have been eager to send English troops to the Netherlands?
- 4 **a** Create a spider diagram to show the reasons for conflict with Spain.
b Colour-code your spider diagram to show reasons to do with:
 - religion
 - power
 - other factors.
- 5 Look at **Source B**.
 - a** Why is Philip II shown trying to ride the cow?
 - b** Why do you think Elizabeth is feeding the cow? What might this be suggesting about her involvement?
 - c** Why has the artist shown William of Orange holding the horns?

8.2 The importance of naval warfare

The sixteenth century saw great advances in naval warfare with new technology and stronger ships on the seas. It also saw the development of more effective tactics as countries sought to dominate the waves. The wealth of Spain, England and France relied upon the success of their ships. Whether raiding each other's supplies, exploring new worlds or at war with one another, the future was dependent on control of the sea. How did technology change sailing and battles at sea?

Objectives

- ▶ Consider the changes in naval warfare in the sixteenth century.
- ▶ Explain why these changes took place.
- ▶ Assess the impact of greater sea power.

Who ruled the sea?

Henry VIII had spent a fortune building a strong navy that could make England powerful at sea. As an island nation, England was vulnerable to attack by sea and so a strong navy had always been considered important. Before 1500, ships were seen as a way to get to a battle rather than as part of the fight itself.

The Tudor period in England saw ships being built with both attack and defence in mind. The navy had grown during Henry's time but it

INTERPRETATION A *The Henry Grace, one of the great ships of Henry VIII's fleet*



was under Elizabeth, or, more specifically, John Hawkins who she put in charge of the project, that England's navy reached its high point. England was not alone in building up its fleet, however. King Philip II of Spain was determined to build the most powerful navy in the world and he spared no expense in trying to achieve this aim.

Piracy or good tactics?

The most common tactic of the sixteenth century was not to engage in all out sea battles but to raid and steal supplies. Sir

Francis Drake, Hawkins and others took control of many Spanish ships and raided ports, most notably Cadiz in 1587 when Drake destroyed dozens of Spanish ships in what became known as 'singeing the King of Spain's beard'. Engaging head on was a huge risk whereas surprise attacks, as well as damaging the enemy's ships, could also provide opportunities to seize great treasures and wealth for the country. Elizabeth gave licences to her sailors to act as privateers. This allowed them to attack, raid and steal Spanish

possessions whenever they liked. The Spanish accused the English sailors of piracy but the tactic was certainly effective.

Fireships were a common weapon. An old or captured ship would be set on fire and sent into the middle of a fleet or harbour causing chaos, terror and huge amounts of damage. When full scale battles were fought, the **line of battle** tactic was used where ships would create a single line, arranged end to end, and then fire together on the enemy with the aim of sinking their ships.

SOURCE B *A portrait of Elizabeth I, standing in front of paintings of the defeat of the Spanish Armada*



Advances at sea in the sixteenth century



Faster and more manoeuvrable ships A new type of triangular sail known as a lateen allowed for much faster travel and new ships focused on both speed and manoeuvrability. This allowed greater distances to be travelled but was also perfect for raids and battles.

More powerful weapons

Whereas previously sailors would have had to try and board enemy ships it was now possible to fire at them with cannons and try to sink them from a distance. Ships were built specifically for battle and for use in the 'line of battle' tactic. Stronger, sturdier ships allowed for heavier and more powerful weapons to be carried.



New technology



More accurate navigation New inventions like the astrolabe allowed for greater accuracy when planning voyages and working out location. This allowed explorers to embark on journeys with a much higher level of accuracy and to be more prepared for passing through hostile waters.

Key Words

fireship line of battle

Work

- 1 Who did Elizabeth put in charge of building her navy?
- 2 What was a 'fireship'?
- 3 Explain some of the tactics used by the English navy.
- 4 Discuss with a partner: 'Why did the English navy prefer raids over direct battles?'
- 5 Look at **Source B**.
 - a What references can you see to the sea and naval power in the picture?
 - b What does this portrait suggest about Elizabeth and her views on England's navy and power at sea?

Extension



The sixteenth century saw huge advances in naval technology. A historian would want to know exactly how these developments made the English navy more effective. Challenge yourself by researching the new technology and then answering the question: 'How did new technology lead to a more effective navy?'

Practice Question

Explain what was important about the navy for Elizabethan England.

8 marks

Study Tip

Try to explain how naval warfare worked in the Elizabethan period, how it was different from what went before and, most importantly, why success at sea was considered so important.

8.3A

Historic Environment: The Spanish Armada

For many years, there had been tension between England and Spain. English soldiers had been helping Protestants in the Netherlands to fight the Spanish, and English sailors had been raiding Spanish ships and stealing their gold. England was becoming a great *Protestant* naval power, too. It seemed inevitable that these two great powers would come into conflict on the seas. With the blessing of the Pope, Philip II decided to launch an attack on England. Does what happened to the Spanish navy – the Armada – show that a powerful and well organised navy was not enough – that it also needed luck?

Objectives

- ▶ Describe the Spanish attempt to invade England.
- ▶ Explain why the Armada failed.
- ▶ Analyse what the English victory tells us about Elizabethan sea battles.

King Philip's plan

Philip's plan was simple. He was going to send a great Armada (or fleet) of Spanish warships through the English Channel to anchor off the Dutch coast. Spanish soldiers in the Netherlands, under the command of the Duke of Parma, who had replaced the Duke of Alva in 1578, would then come aboard. The ships would land on the Kent coast and the soldiers would march on London. If things went as planned, victory would be assured.

The Great Armada

The Spanish Armada consisted of 151 ships, 7000 sailors and 34,000 soldiers, along with 180 priests and monks who delivered the Catholic mass every day. They had enough supplies for four weeks, longer than they intended to be at sea. The commander was the **Duke of Medina-Sidonia**, a man with no maritime experience, but each ship was commanded by an experienced captain.

Key Biography

The Duke of Medina-Sidonia (1560–1615)

- He was a Spanish noble from a powerful old family. He had a reputation for being well organised and loyal, and was a devout Catholic.
- He was appointed by Philip II as commander of the Armada after the death of the previous commander.
- Historians cannot agree as to why Philip II chose him but it is thought that he wanted someone whom he could influence.
- Despite his lack of experience, he worked hard to ensure the Armada was well prepared, and reorganised much of the fleet.
- English **propaganda** has suggested that he was a fool and a coward.

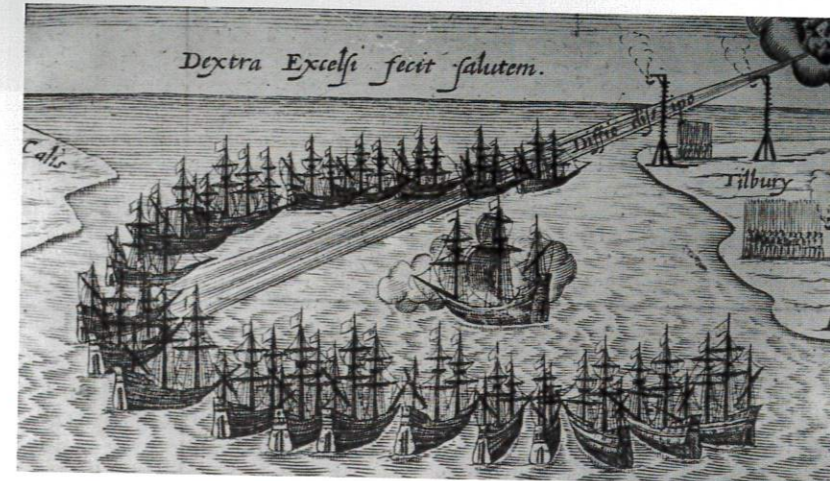


The assumption was that the Armada was not going to face much opposition from the English navy and so most of the weapons on board were for the final land attack.

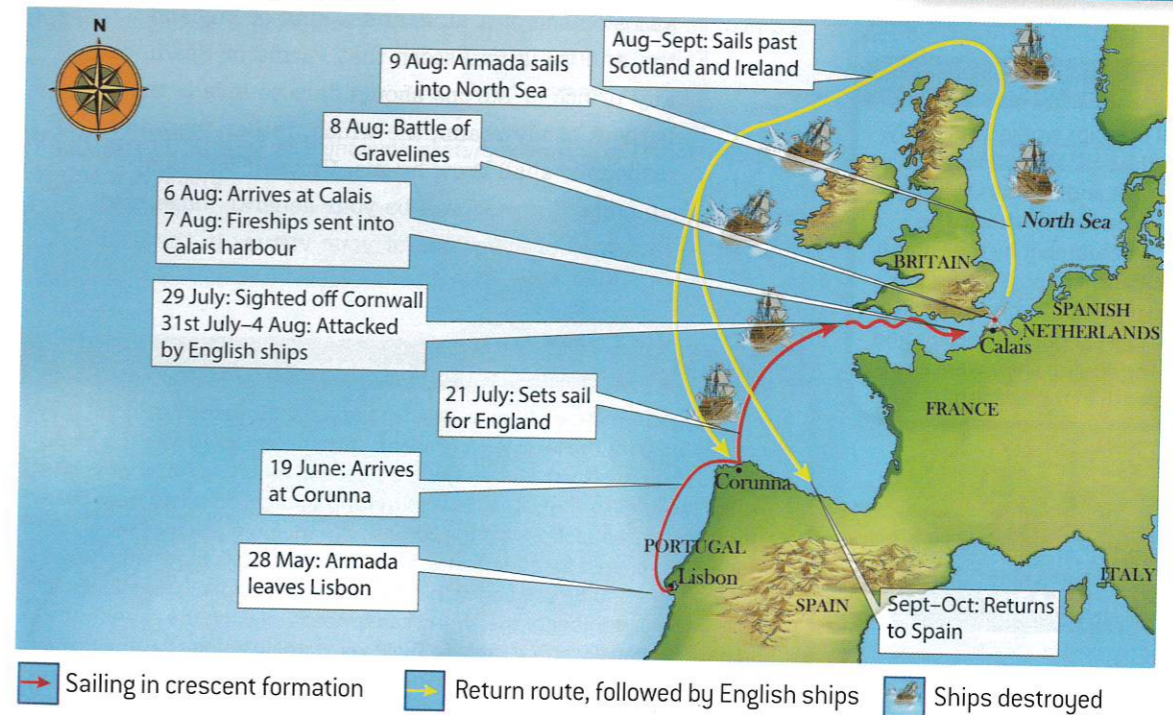
The English strike first

By 6 August 1588 the Armada had anchored off the Dutch coast as planned, ready to invade England. The first problem arose when the Duke of Parma was not there waiting with his troops. Tired of waiting for the Armada, he had sent his troops inland to mend canals and the Armada was then delayed by several days. The English chose this moment to strike first. Early on 7 August, in an attack led by Sir Francis Drake, eight fireships were sent into the Spanish fleet. The Spanish captains panicked and cut their anchor ropes to get away from the danger quickly. The well-disciplined fleet was now plunged into chaos and the Spanish crescent formation broken.

▼ **SOURCE A** A drawing showing the Armada's famous crescent formation that was designed to be invincible



▼ **B** The route taken by the Armada



A great battle

The day after the fireship attack, the Battle of Gravelines began. The English fired constantly from a distance of around 100m, causing huge amounts of damage but not sinking any ships. The Spanish, poorly prepared for a sea battle, could barely defend themselves. With the Armada scattered, Medina-Sidonia attempted to lead his battered fleet home. The English gave chase, and continued to pound the Spanish ships with cannon fire.

The end of the Armada

It was the weather that finally destroyed the Armada. The ships were battered by storms that blew them

completely off course. Their water was polluted, their food rotten and they had no maps of the waters around the north of Britain. Ultimately, many ships were wrecked and some of the survivors were slaughtered by the Scots, the Irish and groups of English soldiers stationed in Ireland. Of the 151 ships that set sail, just 65 returned safely to Spain.

Philip was humiliated and Elizabeth saw the encounter not only as a great victory but evidence that God was on the side of Protestantism. The English admirals even received medals with the inscription: '*Flavit Jehovah et Dissipati Sunt*' ('God blew with his wind and they were scattered').

Key Words

propaganda

Work

- 1 Explain Philip's plan in your own words. Refer to **Source A** in your answer.
- 2 Design a story board which shows the complete journey of the Armada.
- 3 Discuss with your partner: at which point do you think the Spanish Armada was defeated?

Historic Environment: the Spanish Armada

Why did the Spanish Armada fail?

The defeat of the Armada was hugely significant for Elizabeth and for England. It had a clear impact at the time but also affected England's global standing for many years. Spain was a superior naval power yet it had lost badly. Elizabeth had proved that a Protestant country, led by a woman, could defeat the most powerful and richest country in the world.

English tactics

The use of fireships worked brilliantly. It broke the tight formation of the Spanish fleet and made individual ships vulnerable to attack. The constant bombardment by the English cannons made it impossible for the Spanish to regroup. Commanders like Francis Drake were good tacticians and leaders. The English ships were also faster than the Spanish.

Why did the Armada fail?

The weather

The Spanish ships had largely survived the battle with the English but many could not survive the journey home. They were battered by storms off the Scottish and Irish coasts and many were wrecked. They ran out of food and water and many of the sailors became too sick to sail.

▼ **SOURCE C** Part of Elizabeth's speech to her soldiers at Tilbury, Essex, on 9 August 1588. By this point the Armada was on its way home but the message that the threat was over was only just getting through and the troops were still ready for action:

I am come amongst you, as you see, at this time, not for my recreation, but being resolved, in the midst and heat of the battle, to live or die amongst you all, to lay down my life for my God and for my kingdom and for my people, my honour, and my blood, even in the dust. I know I have the body of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a king, and a king of England too, and think foul scorn that Parma or Spain, or any prince of Europe should dare to invade the borders of my realm; the which, rather than any dishonour shall grow by me, I myself will take up arms, I myself will be your general, judge, and rewarder of every one of your virtues in the field.

Spanish mistakes

The Spanish had some of the most effective warships in the world but they were designed for the Mediterranean and struggled to cope with the English Channel and the North Sea. They were slow and much less manoeuvrable than the English ships. The delay in getting soldiers on board from the Netherlands was disastrous for the Spanish but their biggest mistake was not being fully prepared for a sea battle. Most of the cannons they had on board were designed to be used once they had landed in England and they had also brought a number of the wrong cannonballs, making the cannons they did have for naval warfare useless. They were largely helpless as their ships were hit with English cannon fire. The commander of the Spanish fleet was inexperienced, although many of the ships' captains were very experienced.

What made the defeat of the Armada so significant?

Having defeated the Armada, England was safe for the time being but it could not rest. The country had come very close to being invaded and it was important to ensure that did not happen again. Elizabeth continued to build up the navy for the rest of her reign. One significant consequence of the defeat of the Armada was that England had proved it could be a major naval power and it quickly set about making this the case.

Defeated but not yet ready to give up, Philip immediately began planning for a second Armada but there was little appetite for this in Spain. When Philip died ten years later he was no closer to achieving his aim of invading England.

The defeat of the Armada was significant because of the unity it brought to England. Most Catholics placed their loyalty with Elizabeth. She may have been a Protestant but they were English above all else and did not want the country to ruled by a Spaniard. Elizabeth showed herself to be a great leader and the victory added to the idea that her reign was a 'golden age'.

▼ **SOURCE E** The commander of the Spanish fleet, the Duke of Medina-Sedonia:

My health is not equal to this voyage. I know from my experiences at sea that I am always seasick and always catch a cold.

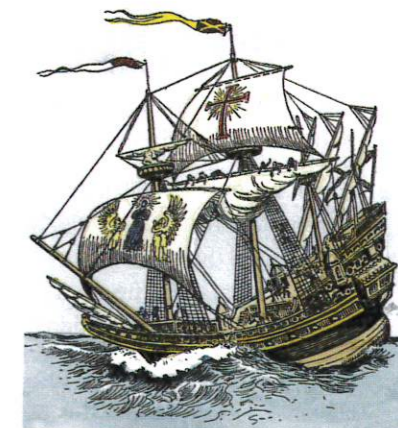
Work

- 1 What does **Source E** suggest was the reason for the Armada's defeat?
- 2 Create a mind-map of the reasons for the defeat of the Armada. Use the spider diagram opposite as a starting point but then use your contextual knowledge to explain the factors that fit into the three main categories.
- 3 Look at **Source C** and **Interpretation D**.
 - a Why do you think Elizabeth visited the troops and made this speech?
 - b How much of an impact do you think it made on the outcome of the battle?

▼ **INTERPRETATION D** An eighteenth-century engraving of Elizabeth addressing the troops at Tilbury



▼ **INTERPRETATION F** A Spanish galleon



Study Tip

What decided the outcome of battles at this time? When considering a sea battle like the Armada its unique location has a great impact. You should include the weather as a factor. Did a combination of factors lead to the English victory over the Spanish? How did the technology and equipment on each side compare? Were the two sides well matched? Who had the better

leadership? How reliable were the plans of Medina-Sidonia? Did the English have superior tactics? Think about the decisions they made at different points in the battle. Lastly consider about the element of luck. Was the battle decided by something neither side could have predicted or prevented?