

The Elizabethans 1580-1603 Revision Booklet



The Elizabethans Topic 1: How did Elizabeth use her power?

Key Dates and Events

1558 William Cecil, a skilful and knowledgeable politician, joins the Queen's Privy Council

1559 Elizabeth takes over the English Church- She reached a settlement that kept England Protestant but let some elements of Catholic religion stay.

1583 John Whitgift, the Archbishop of Canterbury (leader of the church in England) suspends 300 Puritan priests after the refuse to follow the Church rules.

1584-1585 Peter Turner, a Puritan (strict Protestant) campaigned to make England's prayer book more Protestant.

1587 Anthony Cope tries to continue Turner's campaign. He is imprisoned.

1593 Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex is appointed to the Privy Council. He and William and Robert Cecil compete for influence with Elizabeth.

1599 Elizabeth I sends the Earl of Essex to Ireland to defeat rebels. He makes a deal with them without permission. When he returns he is put under house arrest.

1601 The Earl of Essex launches a rebellion against the Queen. He hoped to seize the Queen and force her to give him his power back. He fails and is executed.

Key concepts / People

Elizabeth's character - Nobody expected Elizabeth to be Queen, as she was the third child of Henry VIII. She was very careful, and only trusted a few individuals. She was very well educated.

Propaganda - Portraits were drawn showing how powerful and pure the queen was, she also journeyed to parts of England so that people could see her. This built public support for Elizabeth.

Patronage - Elizabeth gave people titles, or roles, that came with money. This made these people loyal to her. Others stayed loyal hoping to be rewarded.

Royal Court - The group of people surrounding the Queen. The main political power was the Queen, those who got close to her had influence and power.

Privy Council - A group of around 20 men who were the Queen's most trusted advisors. They helped Elizabeth control parliament and get her laws passed.

Lord Lieutenant - Appointed by the Queen to run areas of the country. They were in charge of the Justices of the Peace & organised defences in emergencies.

Justice of the Peace - The person in charge of collecting tax and enforcing law and order in an area. They also looked after local issues like bridges, roads and sewers.

Parliament - The Queen decided when Parliament met. It's main role was to grant Elizabeth taxes and to pass laws. Elizabeth could ignore parliament.

Disagreement with parliament - MPs tried to get Elizabeth to marry, some wanted to make England more Protestant and others wanted her to take action against Catholics.

Weakening of Elizabeth's authority - Towards the end of her reign Elizabeth was not able to balance the powerful people in her court. The constant competition and in-fighting made it harder to make decisions

The Elizabethans Topic 2: Why were so few Catholics in Elizabeth's kingdom by 1603?

Key Dates and Events

1567 Mary I flees from Scotland to England. Elizabeth imprisons her.

1581 Elizabeth increases fines for not attending Protestant Church and made it treason (punishable by death) to convert to Catholicism.

1583 The Throckmorton Plot- A plan to kill Elizabeth and replace her with Mary Queen of Scots, financed by the King of Spain and the Pope, is stopped by Walsingham.

1585 All Priests who trained abroad had to leave the country unless they swore an oath to Elizabeth. This limited the power of Jesuit and seminary Catholic priests.

1586 The Babington Plot- France and Spain planned to invade England, kill Elizabeth and put Mary Queen of Scots on the throne. Walsingham knew all about the plot and eventually arrested and executed Anthony Babington and other conspirators.

1587 Execution of Mary Queen of Scots for treason. This stops Catholic opposition in England, but increases the threat of invasion by Spain.

1588 The Spanish Armada- Spain tries to invade England with 130 ships and 18,000 soldiers. However due to the weather and English tactics the invasion fails.

1604 After years of expensive fighting between England and Spain they sign a peace treaty.

Key concepts / People

Mary Queen of Scots - Mary had a strong claim to be Queen of England. She was a Catholic, and many Catholics therefore supported her claim to the throne.

Francis Walsingham - Elizabeth's spy master. He had a network of spies who watched Catholics, intercepted their messages and prevent plots against the Queen.

Catholics in England Some Catholics remained in England. Some refused to attend Protestant Churches, others attended but held secret Catholic services at home.

Treaty of Non such - In 1585 Elizabeth decides to support rebels in the Netherlands who are trying to free themselves from Spanish rule. This annoys the Spanish

Spanish support for France Catholics - France had a Protestant King called Henry of Navarre. King Phillip of Spain supported French Catholics who were trying to remove him from the throne and replace him with a Catholic. Elizabeth sent 20,000 English troops to help support Navarre. The Spanish left France in 1598.

The Nine Years War - Ireland was ruled by England at this time, but most of its people were Catholic. An Irish noble, the Earl of Tyrone began a rebellion in 1594 demanding that Ireland be Catholic. The Spanish sent 4000 troops to support the rebellion. Elizabeth defeated them.

The end of the conflict with Spain - England still attacks Spanish ships off the coast of Spain and in the Caribbean, over 300 raids that cost thousands of pounds. Spain launches two more failed armadas in 1596 and 1597. Eventually both countries agree peace in 1604.

The Elizabethans Topic 3&4: What mattered to the Elizabethans & Merry England

Key Dates and Events

1562 Witchcraft Act- A law that made all acts of witchcraft a crime. Witches who were found to have caused death would be hanged. Less serious crimes would lead to a prison sentence of 1 year. 263 people were accused of being witches but only 64 were executed.

1597 Poor Law Act-An 'overseer of the poor' was appointed in each parish. These people collected taxes to help the poor and provided them with jobs and food. Each town was supposed to build a prison to house beggars, criminals and vagabonds.

1601 Poor Law Act- This law made it much clearer what the 'overseer of the poor' was supposed to do and told parishes how much poor relief they were expected to provide.

Key concepts / People

The Gentry - The elite of society, just below the nobility. They owned land and lived off the money they gained from renting that land to farmers.

The 'middling' class - The group in society who had to work but were rich enough to pay taxes. This included merchants (people who traded items) and yeomen (wealthy farmers)

The helpless poor - People who couldn't support themselves e.g. the elderly or disabled

The deserving poor - People who wanted to work but couldn't find work in their area.

The underserving poor - People who could work but refused- beggars and other criminals

Vagabonds - People who moved around looking for work.

Increase in poverty - Poverty increased in Elizabethan England. One reason was that monasteries, that had previously provided support had been closed down. Changes to farming meant less workers were needed on the land. The population grew, causing wages to fall and prices to rise.

Family structure - The father was the head of a family, the wife assisted, children obeyed. Marriage Elizabethans married for wealth and status, but some did marry for love. **Childhood** - Childbirth was dangerous and many people died young. Children were often sent away to school, or to learn a trade as an apprentice.

Theatre - Many theatres were built during Elizabeth's reign and rich and poor attended plays. Many famous plays were written by Shakespeare in this period.

Opposition to theatre - Some religious people believed plays encouraged immoral behaviour like gambling and drinking.

Witches - Most people believed in witches, people who followed the devil's orders. Old single women were usually those accused of witchcraft.

Familiars - Small animals like cats, dogs or toads that followed the orders of witches.

The Elizabethans Topic 5: What did the Elizabethan adventurers achieve?

Key Dates and Events

1577-1580 Francis Drake became the first English sailor to sail around the world. He returned to England with a huge amount of wealth and was knighted.

1583 Two merchants, John Newberry and Ralph Fitch sailed through the Mediterranean and went overland to India. They reported back about India's huge wealth and prospects for trade.

1591 James Lancaster sailed to India around the Cape of Good Hope, the Southern tip of Africa. The East India Company was set up to trade with India and expeditions began.

1594 Richard Hawkins sails to raid Spanish colonies on the coast of South America. He was captured by the Spanish and the goods he stole never made it back.

Key concepts / People

Rivalry with Spain - As tension grew between England and Spain it became more difficult for English merchants to trade in Europe. Instead merchants began looking at more long distance trade with other parts of the world.

John Dee - An Elizabethan scientist and map expert. He helped many explorers plan their voyage.

John Davis - A sailor who led many expeditions to try to find a northern route to Asia via Canada. All of these missions failed as the route doesn't exist.

North American exploration - England began claiming parts of North America- New Albion in California & Newfoundland, an island off the coast of Canada.

Attempted settlement of Virginia - Elizabeth gave Sir Walter Raleigh permission to try to establish a new colony on the Atlantic coast of America. In 1585 Raleigh sent Sir Richard Grenville with 5 ships and 108 settlers to try to set up a permanent settlement in a place called Roanoke. Francis Drake visited the colony in 1586, they were running low on supplies and most of the settlers returned to England with Drake. A third expedition in 1587 found all the settlers had disappeared. Another 100 were left to try to re-establish the colony. When supply ships returned in 1590 all the settlers had disappeared and were never found.

The Muscovy Company - England found it difficult to trade with Europe as Spain and Portugal dominated the trade. The Muscovy company developed a trade route with Moscow in Russia, trading cloth, lead and tin. However the route was dangerous so it never expanded hugely.

The Levant Company - English traders began trading directly with the Ottoman Empire (modern day Egypt and Syria). They brought large cargoes of pepper and cloves to England.

Developing world trade - By 1603 fleets of ships were sailing from England to North and South America, and into the Mediterranean and were beginning to break into the Asian spice trade.