

## Early Elizabethan England 1558-88 Essential Learning

### 1. Queen, Government and Religion 1558-1569

| Key concept  | What is it?<br>Give 1-2 facts to explain this concept   |
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| Elizabethan Society  | Hierarchy: Queen, nobles, gentry, merchants, yeomen, labourers  |
| Elizabethan Government   | Parliament – made up of House of Lords (the nobles) and House of Commons. Important decisions taken by Elizabeth and the Privy Council.   |
| Problems of Elizabeth's legitimacy   | Catholics saw Elizabeth as illegitimate - they thought Henry's decision to divorce Katherine of Aragon and marry Anne Boleyn was illegal.   |
| Problems of Elizabeth's marriage   | Needed to marry to produce an heir. But marriage would mean that she was subordinate to (less important than) her husband.  |
| Problems of Elizabeth's gender   | Most people thought that women were less intelligent than men and therefore unfit to rule. Women could not lead an army into battle.  |
| Elizabeth's character and strengths  | Very well educated. Spoke Greek, Latin, French and Italian. Brave and a survivor – her sister Mary had accused her of treason and had threatened to kill her.   |
| The Privy Council  | She needed to choose advisors to help her run the government. She selected 20 people, a mix of old and new advisors, not Dudley   |
| Challenges at home in 1558: Financial weakness                                       | War with France was expensive. England had debts of £300,000  |
| Challenges from abroad in 1558: The Threat from France                               | War with France was going badly. England had lost Calais to France. Threat of invasion from Scotland.   |
| Challenges at home in 1558: Religious division                                       | The country was divided between Catholics and Protestants. There were more Catholics, but Elizabeth had been brought up Protestant.   |
| Catholic beliefs in 1558   | Pope was head of the Church, he appointed bishops, colourful churches, music, priests wore colourful robes, priests could not marry, Latin Mass.  |
| Moderate Protestant beliefs in 1558  | Monarch = head of the Church, s/he appointed bishops, plain churches, less music, priests wore plain clothes, could marry, English Holy Communion.  |
| Puritan beliefs in 1558  | No head of Church, only God, elected elders, no bishops, v simple churches, no music, ministers wore black gowns, could marry, Bible reading in English.  |
| Elizabeth's Religious settlement, 1559   | Church – Elizabeth was now head of the Church, called Supreme Governor<br>Churches – some ornaments, decoration and singing were allowed<br>Services – English Holy Communion. English Bible in every church<br>Clergy – wore a plain surplice, could marry, had to have a licence. |
| The Church of England and its role in society  | Elizabeth used the church to gain loyalty and obedience. People had to attend every Sunday. Those who did not were fined 1 shilling.  |
| The nature/extent of the Catholic challenge: The nobility, papacy and foreign powers | Nobility: 1/3 of nobles were Catholic, held secret masses, kept priests in priest holes. Papacy (the pope): said Catholics should not obey Eliz, excommunicated her (1570). Foreign powers: Spain and France.   |
| The nature and extent of the Puritan challenge.                                      | Puritan bishops and MPs tried to persuade Elizabeth to remove music and decorations and to introduce black gowns for priests. No direct threat.   |
| Mary, Queen of Scots: her claim to the English throne                                | Elizabeth's second cousin and heir to the English throne. Queen of Scotland and also France until her husband died in 1561.   |
| Mary's arrival in England in 1568.   | Mary angered Scottish lords because she was Catholic, and she had 2 further failed marriages. They wanted to arrest her. She fled to England.   |

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| Relations between Elizabeth and Mary, 1568–69. | Mary asked Elizabeth for help. Elizabeth saw her as a threat and imprisoned her. Elizabeth never met Mary in person. |

## 2. Challenges to Elizabeth at home and abroad 1569-1588

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| The reasons for the Revolt of the Northern Earls, 1569–70.                    | Political – Elizabeth had reduced powers of Northern Earls, had appointed Lord Sussex as President of the Council of the North.<br>Religious – they wanted to re-establish Catholicism<br>Economic – Northumberland had lost copper mines and was in debt<br>Succession – Plan for Mary to marry the duke of Norfolk and become Elizabeth's heir. Elizabeth discovered the plan, called the Earls to court. |
| The significance of the Revolt of the Northern Earls                          | Sussex came North with a large army. The plotters panicked and fled. Little support for the revolt. Spanish help did not arrive.  |
| The features + significance of the Ridolfi Plot, 1571                         | Ridolfi took messages from Mary to Phillip II and the Pope to arrange an invasion of England. Mary planned become queen and marry Norfolk.<br>Plan failed. Norfolk was arrested and executed.   |
| The features + significance of the Throckmorton Plot, 1583                    | Throckmorton took messages from Mary to the French + Spanish ambassadors, plan for the Duke of Guise to invade and make Mary queen.<br>Throckmorton was executed. Lords Howard and Percy were imprisoned.   |
| The features + significance of the Babington Plot, 1586                       | Babington wrote to Mary with a 6-stage plan to invade England, make Mary queen and get rid of Elizabeth. Babington was tortured and then hanged, drawn and quartered. Mary was now put on trial.  |
| Walsingham and the use of spies.  | Coded letters, informers, interrogation and torture, capturing Catholic priests, using spies and secret agents.   |
| The reasons for Mary Queen of Scots' execution, 1587                          | Mary was a continued focus for Catholic plots and rebels.<br>Babington plot provided definite proof of her guilt – the last straw.  |
| The significance of Mary Queen of Scots' execution                            | Ended risk of a Catholic plot.<br>But angered Catholic monarchs in Europe, including Phillip II   |
| Political and religious rivalry with Spain                                    | Political – Spain had large Empire in New World; England wanted own Empire. Religious – Catholic Spain vs Protestant England.   |
| Commercial rivalry with Spain   | Spanish barred English wool exports from going through Netherlands or being sold in their Empire. This caused unemployment and poverty.   |
| English involvement in the Netherlands 1585-88                                | 1572 Dutch Protestants rebelled against Catholic Spanish control.<br>1584 Dutch leader William of Orange was assassinated.<br>1585 Treaty of Nonsuch was signed between England and the Netherlands.  |
| The role of Robert Dudley in the Netherlands 1585-88                          | Elizabeth sent Dudley (aka Earl of Leicester) to help the Dutch, but she feared angering Phillip II and did not support him fully.<br>Leicester accepted the title of "Governor General" of the Netherlands.<br>Elizabeth was angry and called him back home. This ended the campaign.  |
| Reasons why Phillip launched the Armada                                       | Commercial rivalry – Pirates raided Spanish treasure ships, colonists traded illegally with Spanish colonies.<br>Religious rivalry–Pope excommunicated Elizabeth in 1570, England increased penalties against Catholics<br>Political rivalry–anger of England's involvement in the Netherlands.<br>Drake–launched a raid on Spanish colonies in 1585 and captured £30,000                                   |
| Drake and the Raid on Cadiz – the Singeing of the King of Spain's beard, 1587 | Phillip II started to prepare the Armada<br>Drake sailed to Cadiz and damaged Spanish ships. Then raided islands and stole treasure worth £114,000. Slowed down Armada but angered Spain.   |

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| Phillip's invasion plan                       | To sail up the English Channel, land in Calais, pick up Duke of Parma's army, sail over to England, invade, kill Elizabeth, make Phillip King.  |
| Reasons for England's victory over the Armada | Bad planning – Spanish failed to pick up the Duke of Parma<br>Tactics – English got behind the Spanish and chased them, fireships caused Spanish to panic when in harbour at Calais, England won at Grave lines. Wind/weather–storms and wind pushed Spanish north around Scotland. Resources – English ships were smaller, faster and more agile |

### 3. Elizabethan Society in the Age of Exploration, 1558-88

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| Sport  | Gentlemen: Fencing, tennis, bowls, archery<br>Poorer people: Wrestling, running, football, poaching  |
| Pastimes   | Gentlemen: Smoking tobacco, hunting deer, horse-riding, playing music<br>Poorer people: Going to inns/taverns, gambling, bear-baiting, cock-fighting, cards, dice, singing songs, telling stories  |
| The theatre                                      | The Theatre, the Curtain, The Rose, The Globe<br>Richer people sat on seats and even on stage. Poor stood in the pit   |
| Education at home                                | Sons and daughters of the nobility were educated at home.<br>Sons of tradesmen would learn their trade from their fathers.   |
| Education in schools                             | Petty schools for ages 4-7, mostly boys <u>but also a few girls</u><br>Grammar schools for boys aged 7-15. Had to pay but some scholarships were available. They learnt Latin, Greek, Maths and Scriptures.<br>72 new grammar schools opened. By 1600, 30% of men could read or write.                                       |
| Education in universities                        | University degrees in grammar, rhetoric, logic, maths, music, theology.<br>1/3 of students were from nobility and gentry, rest from lower classes.   |
| Reasons for increasing poverty / vagabondage     | Enclosure of common land for sheep – led to farmers losing jobs<br>Decline in the wool trade due to Spanish control of the Netherlands<br>Increasing population put pressure on resources<br>Inflation linked to Henry VIII's debasement of the coinage<br>Closure of the monasteries meant poorest people had nowhere to go |
| Changing attitudes to the poor                   | Rich were expected to help the poor with jobs or charity, but increasing numbers meant that they could not cope. Fear of disease (plague), crime and disorder linked to the poor. Puritans believed that idleness was a sin and should be punished severely.   |
| Changing policies to the poor                    | Vagabonds Act 1572 - harsh, whipping, burning through ear, execution<br>Act for Relief of Poor 1592 – more lenient, towns had to find work for able-bodied poor, Houses of Correction.   |
| Factors which led to exploration                 | Rivalry with Spain in New World, new technology in ships, looking for new markets for wool trade, trade, spreading Protestant religion.  |
| New technology on ships                          | New sea charts showing parallels of latitude and longitude, astrolabe, improvements in compasses, new ships called galleons.   |
| Drive to expand trade                            | Collapse of wool trade due to Spanish control of the Netherlands<br>Desire for new/precious items, such as spices, silver, gold, silk, tobacco   |
| Drake's circumnavigation of the globe 1577-80    | Took 3 years, started with 5 ships, returned with only 1<br>England -> Brazil -> round S America to Nova Albion -> across Pacific -> Indonesia -> round Africa -> home   |
| Reasons for Drake's circumnavigation             | To capture Spanish gold, silver and treasure, to find new trade routes, to find new lands for England, to weaken power of Spain.   |
| Significance of Drake's circumnavigation         | He brought back treasure worth £140,000 which helped Elizabeth to pay off the national debt. Challenged Spain, claimed new lands (Nova Albion)   |
| Role of Raleigh in attempts to colonise Virginia | Planned, organised and raised finances for 2 attempts to colonise Virginia, but did not sail on the voyages himself.   |

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| Attempted colonisation of Virginia                      | <p>1585 voyage: 108 male settlers under Commander Ralph Lane. Settlers wanted to rule but not do daily work. Ran out of food, rescued by Drake.</p> <p>1587 voyage: farming families who were willing to work, Lost Colony</p>   |
| Reasons for the failure of the colonisation of Virginia | <p>Lack of food – seeds were destroyed, difficult to grow food in new place, colonists arrived at the wrong time.</p> <p>Native Americans – poor relations, colonists dependent on them for food</p> <p>Wrong mix of people – too many gentlemen, not enough labourers.</p> <p>Failure of supplies to arrive</p> |