

GCSE Knowledge Organiser: Elizabethan England 1568-1603



Key Events

1	1559	Elizabeth's Religious Settlement is decided in 1559 which re-establishes the break with Rome and an independent Church of England. The Church created is Protestant and Elizabeth becomes the Supreme Governor.
2	1569-1586	Catholic Plots 1569-1586: various plots are attempted to overthrow Elizabeth and establish Mary Queen of Scots on the English throne eg Northern Rebellion 1569, Ridolfi Plot 1571, Throckmorton Plot 1583, Babington Plot 1586. These are justified by the signing of the Papal Bull in 1570 by the Pope, excommunicating Elizabeth from the Catholic Church and calling on Catholics to end her rule.
3		The idea of 'Gloriana' is developed, Elizabeth's reign is seen as a golden age where new ideas and advancements are made through plays, festivals, the printing of special pamphlets. Theatres are built, visual and literary propaganda creates a cult of personality around Elizabeth, her image is promoted through portraits and circulated widely.
4	1601	A more stable time exists in England, the gentry experience a growing prosperity, their country houses are built to reflect this. However, the problem of the poor remains in society. The Elizabethan Poor Law of 1601 is passed to deal with this, charging a poor rate to the wealthy to deal with the deserving and undeserving poor.
5		Voyages of Exploration take place and new lands are discovered. Sir Francis Drake circumnavigates the world between 1577-1580, Sir Walter Raleigh is given permission by Elizabeth in 1584 to 'explore, colonise and rule any land not ruled by a Christian'. Increased trade creates more wealth and power for Elizabeth.
6	1568-1587	Mary Queen of Scots arrives in England in 1568 and Elizabeth imprisons her for 19 years amidst rumours of plots by Catholics to assassinate Elizabeth and replace her with Mary as the new Catholic queen. Following the Babington Plot in 1586, Mary is executed in 1587.
7	1580s	Threats from abroad increase in the 1580s: 1585 Act calls for Jesuits to be driven out of England and many are executed. Eg Edmund Campion sends a mission to England and he is executed for it. Jesuit missionaries are supported by the Catholic Kings of France and Spain.
8	1588	The Spanish Armada is sent to England in 1588 to overthrow Elizabeth and establish Philip II of Spain on the English throne. The superiority of the English navy defeats the Spanish and the victory greatly enhances Elizabeth's reputation as a great leader both at home and abroad.
9	1601	Essex' Rebellion 1601: Robert Devereux, the Earl of Essex takes 4 of the queen's privy councillors hostage and with 200 followers marches to his London house to remove Robert Cecil from power following his fall from favour with Elizabeth. He is arrested and executed in February 1601, showing that, even though Elizabeth experiences threats up to the end of her reign, she deals swiftly and harshly with them.

Key Words/Key People

1.	Parliament	Made up of the House of Lords (lords, bishops and nobility) and the House of Commons ('common' people who were still wealthy and educated). Had influence over tax and responsible for passing laws . It was not Parliament's role to govern, but to simply turn Elizabeth's policies into laws .
2.	Privy Council	Elizabeth's main advisors, involved in the day-to-day running of the country. Led by the Secretary of State, it was rarely united over any issues so Elizabeth could retain dominance over it.
3.	Succession Crisis	Mary Queen of Scots was Elizabeth's heir. For many, marriage and to give birth to a son was a way to avoid this Catholic becoming queen. In 1568 Mary arrived in England. Catholics now had an alternative to Elizabeth's rule which created a succession crisis .
4.	Gentry	The landlords of the countryside, living off the rents of their tenants. Many were Justices of the Peace and served in Parliament. Many became wealthy in Elizabethan England and showed their wealth by building fine country houses,
5.	Monopolies	Royal licences giving individuals sole right to sell or make a product, leading to their profit and often leading to high prices
6.	Patronage	This involved giving titles, power or other rewards to ensure individual's support. It caused intense competition and rivalries between people which suited Elizabeth well as it made everyone totally loyal to her.
7.	Puritans	Strict Protestants. They were unhappy with Elizabeth's Religious Settlement and wanted the removal of all Catholic elements from worship eg vestments.
8.	William Cecil(Lord Burghley)	Elizabeth's most trusted advisor , served as Secretary of State twice and as an MP. She relied on him heavily.
9.	Francis Walsingham	Secretary of State and one of queen's closest advisors from 1573 until his death . Known as Elizabeth's ' spymaster ' having ' eyes and ears ' everywhere.
10.	Robert Dudley (Earl of Leicester)	A radical and a Puritan, frequently argued with Cecil about succession, religion. A childhood friend of Elizabeth, were many rumours of a romance with her. Highly ambitious, Privy Councillor in 1562

Homework for Elizabethan England

There are three types of homework set for the Elizabethan England unit:

1. Knowledge Organisers

These provide the basic knowledge for each topic. This may include a timeline, key words, key concepts and summaries. These are tested in weekly quizzes.

2. Read Watch Listen

A selection of clips, podcasts and websites about the content of the unit are available to supplement and enhance your learning. One should be accessed a fortnight to increase your understanding of topics studied.

3. Revision

Preparing for history assessments is an essential part of each topic as each assessment allows teachers and students to see their progress in history. It is crucial this revision is done so that our students can show what they know.

Read

Helen Castor, Elizabeth I: A study Insecurity
Ian Mortimer, The Time Traveller's Guide to Elizabethan England

Watch

**Elizabeth - From The Prison To The Palace - Part 1 of 4 [David Starkey] (Youtube)
**Elizabeth - The Virgin Queen - Part 2 of 4 [David Starkey] (Youtube)
**Elizabeth - Heart Of A King part 3 of 4 [David Starkey] (Youtube)
**Elizabeth – Gloriana part 4 of 4 [David Starkey] (Youtube)
**Elizabeth I's Secret Agents: BBC documentary. Google it.
A History of Britain, episode 7 (Google it)
*Her Majesty's Spymaster: Sir Francis Walsingham (Youtube) – Walsingham and MQS
Battlefield Britain, Spanish Armada (Youtube) – Spanish Armada
**Dan Snow 12 Days to Save England, Armada, YouTube
Elizabeth I Secret Agents (Youtube) – Walsingham and the plots against Elizabeth
Bloody Queens: Elizabeth and Mary (Youtube) – Relationship between MQS and Elizabeth
Mary Queen of Scots (released in 2019)
BBC - A History of Christianity episode 4: Reformation watch – context on Henry VIII and the Reformation for context of Elizabeth's religious settlement
Episode 4: The Spanish Armada, Battlefield Britain (youtube)

Listen

Podcasts

** 'Rex Factor' is a laid back podcast, chatting about English monarchs. The Elizabeth episode is a good introduction to her reign. <https://refactor.podbean.com/e/40-elizabeth-i> For good prior knowledge, it would be good for you to listen to the episodes on Henry VIII, Edward VI and Mary I too.
Historyextra.com: Inside the mind of Elizabeth I. Helen Castor explores the psychology of the Virgin Queen.
BBC In Our Time: The Spanish Armada. In-depth look at one of the key moments of Elizabeth's reign <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00v1qyb>
BBC In Our Time: The death of Elizabeth I. In-depth look at the end of Elizabeth's reign <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00n5nqr>