

History Knowledge Organiser Elizabethan England c.1558 -1588 Elizabeth's court and Parliament

Who had the power?

Parliament

House of Lords – Lords, bishops and members of the nobility.

House of Commons – 'common' people but wealthy and educated

Less powerful than today but had an influence over tax and passed laws. The queen decided when to call them and how much to listen.

Lord Lieutenants

Appointed by the queen to be responsible for an area of the country. They solved disputes and collected taxes. If a militia was needed to fight for the queen it was their job to raise it. Many of them were also Lord Lieutenants. It could lead to great power and influence.

Who had the power in Elizabethan England?

The Royal Court

Around 1000 nobles, government officials, ladies-in-waiting, servants and advisors who surrounded Elizabeth. It was a centre of political power, trends and fashions. The Privy Council was a key part of the court. Elizabeth could ensure loyalty through patronage – giving titles, places, power and rewards.

Privy Council

Usually 12 men who took responsibility for the day-to-day running of the country and were her main advisers. Elizabeth chose who was a member so picked men of power and influence to avoid rebellion. They dealt with issues including religious, military, foreign affairs and the queen's security. They rarely agreed but if they did it was hard for Elizabeth to refuse. It was led by the Secretary of State.

Justices of the Peace

Also known as JPs. Each county had several to keep order. They were selected from local gentry and their job was to enforce the laws passed by Parliament. They could send a person to prison but more than one had to agree to a death penalty. They swore to treat rich and poor equally.

Elizabeth's problems

Mary Queen of Scots

Until Elizabeth had an heir Mary was the next heir to the throne of England. She was Elizabeth's cousin, catholic but exiled from Scotland in 1568. While she was alive she was a threat to Elizabeth and the subject of potential plots to replace Elizabeth.

Ireland

Elizabeth considered herself to be Queen of Ireland. Many os the Irish disagreed and in 1559 there was the first of several revolts in Northern Ireland. She spent thousands and sent many of her best soldiers to deal with this but without success.

Succession

A successful monarch produces heirs but for them to be legitimate Elizabeth would have to marry. In 1562 Elizabeth nearly died of smallpox. This drew attention to the marriage and succession question. Parliament were worried about what would happen if a Elizabeth died without an heir. Who should she marry?

Elizabeth's problems

Taxation

During Elizabeth's reign there was a time of great poverty. This made it difficult to collect the taxes she needed to run the county. New taxes would be unpopular and she had to consider how dangerous it could be for her as a new monarch.

Religion

Her father Henry had broken from Rome to get a divorce. Her brother Edward had been a strict Protestant. Her sister Mary (bloody) executed 300 Protestants for refusing to change their faith. She was a Protestant who wanted to settle the religious problems but had to deal with Catholics, Protestants and Puritans.

Foreign policy

France and Spain were both Catholic, had the support of the Pope and wanted influence over England. They saw Protestant England as a threat. King Philip of Spain had ruled England when he was married to Mary Tudor. The Netherlands was a Protestant population in conflict with Catholic Spain. Should she help them? These were issues she would have to deal with.

Key individuals



Queen
Elizabeth I single female
ruler at a time
when men had
ower. Was very

the power. Was very intelligent but had a difficult childhood.

William Cecil Secretary of State twice. Most trusted advisor. Key role in develo





Francis
Walsingham Secretary of
State and one
of her closest

advisors until his death in 1573. Elizabeth's spymaster with 'eyes and ears' everywhere. Played role in the execution of Mary, Queen of Scots.

Key dates

1533	Elizabeth born to Anne
	Boleyn
4550	

1558 Crowned Queen of England following the death of her sister Mary

1569	The Northern Rebellion
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1571	The	Ridolfi	Plot
1011		INGOIII	IUL

1300 The Dabington Fix	1586	The Babington Plot
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1587	Mary Queen of Scots
	executed

1588 The Spanish Armada

1603 Elizab	eth die	S
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KEY VOCABULARY/ TERMS

Inherit, treason, privy council, Secretary of State, patronage, succession, heir, rebellion, Catholic, Protestant, Puritan, Foreign policy, JPs, taxation, Lord Lieutenants, Royal Court.