



Elizabethan England 1568-1603

Crucial Knowledge



Factors

Social – relating to people and society

Religious- relating to businesses and wealth

Political- relating to the government or public affairs of a country

Elizabeth's Parliament

- The Elizabethan Era lasted from 1558 - 1603.
- The most powerful group of advisors in England was the Privy Council. It was responsible for the daily running of the country. They were part of the Royal Court, the centre of Elizabethan power and fashion trends.
- Elizabeth never married so that she could keep her authority and independence. But there were 3 main contenders to marry her; Robert Dudley (The Earl of Leicester), King Phillip II of Spain and Francis, Duke of Anjou.
- Elizabeth showed favouritism amongst her court by giving them land, titles or trade rights (monopolies). To keep power, you had to stay in favour. This helped Elizabeth control powerful nobles.
- The Earl of Essex tried to sieze power for himself when he fell out of favour with Elizabeth in 1601. This was easily stopped by the her spy network.

Life in Elizabethan England

- The Great Chain of Being set out the structure of society with Elizabeth at the top followed by Nobles who inherited their titles and then the Gentry who paid for their titles.
- Elizabeth's reign was seen as a 'Golden Age' because of religious stability, exploration where new lands and people were discovered and education was seen as more important. (BATSLEEP).
- The theatre's importance grew for all classes in society during Elizabeth's reign due to the works of people like Shakespeare.
- There had always been poverty in Tudor England. A population increase and growing unemployment for farm workers made poverty a big issue for Elizabeth to deal with. Her solution was the Poor Laws of 1601.
- Elizabeth's reign was known as an age of discovery due to voyages setting sail from England and discovering new lands. This helped increase England's wealth and power. The most famous sailors were Hawkins, Drake and Raleigh.

Troubles at Home and Abroad

- From the start of her reign Elizabeth had a Religious Compromise between Protestants and Catholics (The Middle Way). However, Catholic rebellions forced Elizabeth to crack down on them and treat them more severely.
- Puritans were extreme Protestants. Elizabeth saw them as dangerous as they would have meetings called prophesyings to criticise her religious policies.
- Mary, Queen of Scots was Elizabeth's cousin and next in line to the throne. She was Catholic so many in England saw her as the rightful Queen. Mary inspired Catholic plots but was only involved in the Babington Plot (1586) for which she was executed.
- Elizabeth had supported Protestant rebellions against Spanish rule in the Netherlands by sending money, weapons and eventually troops.
- Spain tried to invade England with the Spanish Armada of 1588. This failed.