

Elizabethan High Society (Nobility & Elite Gentry)



The Royal Court (or "COURT")

The Queen attracted her own society around her at all times from those in positions of power, nobles, her personal attendants, hangers-on who wanted more power or favours, and ambitious wannabes. Her rewards were known as PATRONAGE. E.g. **Francis Drake** went to Court to get financial support for his round the world trip (Main Patron was **Privy Councillor - Sir Christopher Hatton**)

The PRIVY COUNCIL

The COUNCIL were the men who helped the Queen run the country. Her senior ministers would give her advice, protect her and provide her with armies. She used the idea of 'Divide & Rule' to keep her council divided and her in control.

Principal Secretary - Sir William Cecil (Like a PM, most powerful man)

Secretary of State - Sir Francis Walsingham (spymaster, security)

The Privy Chamber

Initially this group were the Queen's personal attendants/ servants. They looked after her wardrobe, food, toilet etc. Over time they became her closest advisers as they spent all with the Queen.

e.g. **Bess of Hardwick** was one of Elizabeth's Lady of the Chamber and most trusted friends. Would be given role of Mary, Queen of Scots' jailor.

Rise of the Gentry

The New Middle Class of Elizabethan Society

New class of society rose to power and wealth during the Tudor Age.

Factors to their rise:

1. Education
2. Landowners - sheep / wool industry
3. International Merchant Trade (MERCHANT GENTRY)
4. New professional jobs (lawyers, accountants, teachers)
5. Political rise (Justice of the Peace, MP, Privy Council) e.g. Sir William Cecil



The Elizabethan Poor (Peasantry)

Why were the poor so desperate in Tudor England?

There was a growing problem of extreme poverty and homelessness (vagrancy) in Tudor England - causes :

1. Enclosures (Sheep Farming)
2. Loss of Common farming land (to expanding sheep farms)
3. Rising Population
4. Inflation (rising price of food)
5. Lack of help for poor (Henry VIII closed monasteries)

Tudor Poor Laws & ELIZABETHAN POOR LAW (1601)

Before 1601

Vagrants (Unemployed and homeless) were treated very harshly.

- a) Whipped and sent home. (first offence)
- b) Branding and slavery for repeat offenders.
- c) Hanging for 3rd offence.

ELIZABETHAN POOR LAW (1601)

Mix of support for "deserving poor" and punishment for "lazy poor"/ criminal.

- a) Workhouses (provided work and support for poor)
- b) Alms houses (cheap charity houses)
- c) Poor Law tax to pay for resources
- d) Houses of Correction (to punish lazy poor)
- e) Apprenticeships for orphan children.



Elizabethan Theatre



RENAISSANCE Culture

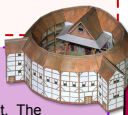
Increasing education & literacy, saw demand in more cultural entertainment. The growing popularity in travelling theatres and mobile religious morality and miracle plays led to Government bans (feared they were travelling criminals/ spread of diseases). Shakespeare inspired by ITALIAN RENAISSANCE. (13 Plays set in Italy: Romeo & Juliet, Othello, Merchant of Venice, Tempest etc.)

Theatres & Society

The Structure of the Theatre represented the 3 ranks of society (GREAT CHAIN OF BEING). Standing on the ground floor were the poor (1p ticket), known as the PENNY STINKERS. Galleries above were for the middle class GENTRY and richer NOBILITY. Puritans challenged the theatre and forced them out of London city centre and onto the previously empty South Bank. Shakespeare built his new GLOBE THEATRE there. Theatres were a centre for 3P's (Pubs, Pick pockets, & Prostitutes). Puritans hated them even more.

Sponsored by Elizabeth & her PRIVY COUNCIL.

The Government patronised (sponsored) theatres in London to control the messages of the plays and censor anything Elizabeth disliked.



Elizabethan England (1558 - 1603)

You will study the challenges faced by Queen Elizabeth; from being the wrong gender; wrong religion; wrong daughter. You will also study what life was like for those who lived in Elizabethan England; Rich and Poor.



Elizabeth's Political Challenges

The Problem of a Female Monarch - Public fear of weakness. **Struggled with Parliament. Banned Parliament from debating marriage & religion.** Arrested MP Thomas Wentworth.

The Marriage Question - Elizabeth refused to marry and share her power, left no heir.

The Power Struggle at the end of her reign - The battle for power of the 2 sons, Robert Cecil (son of William Cecil) v. Earl of Essex (step son of Earl of Leicester).

The Essex Rebellion (1601)

Essex's failed attempt to take power from Elizabeth. Her former favourite would be executed but he showed the weakness at the top. Elizabeth would die in 1603.



Elizabeth & her problems with the CATHOLICS

The Religious Settlement (Via Media) 1559

Elizabeth (a Protestant) created a religious compromise to keep both Protestants & Catholics happy.

The Protestants wanted a Church that focused on prayer and the Bible. They were scared of the Catholics after Bloody Mary. The Catholics wanted to return to the Pope and the old religious ways of Churches being "heaven on earth" with colour.

Elizabeth's compromise gave most people on both sides enough to be happy. **It seemed to work for the first 10 years! No rebellions or arguments. Then...**

Mary, Queen of Scots in England (1568-1587)

After being forced out of Scotland, Mary QoS, came to England looking for help. But she was immediately arrested as she posed the biggest threat to Elizabeth's throne. She had a better claim to the throne, had already given birth to a male heir, was taller and more beautiful and CATHOLIC!

CATHOLIC PLOTS

NORTHERN REBELLION (1569) launched one year after Mary QoS arrived.

RIDLIF Plot; THROCKMORTON Plot; PARRY Plot.

BABINGTON Plot (1586) - final plot led to Mary's execution. After 19 years of house arrest, Mary QoS, was caught sending letters to Catholic extremist plotters. She was executed in 1587.

King Philip of Spain ordered The Armada (1588) to avenge the Catholic Queen.

Elizabeth & her problems with the PURITANS

The Religious Settlement (Via Media) 1559

Elizabeth (a Protestant) turned the country back to Protestant after her Catholic sister, Mary Tudor had died in 1558. The Puritans were extreme Protestants so were happy to see a Protestant Queen but wanted a pure Protestant country.

The Puritans accepted the Settlement at first, hoping it was the start of more Protestant Reforms but they hated all the Catholic compromises she made.

1. Puritans in Power

Queen's favourite and Privy Councillor: Earl of Leicester (Robert Dudley)
Queen's spymaster: Sir Francis Walsingham

Archbishop of Canterbury (1576-83): Edmund Grindal

Queen kept Puritans happy by increasing **RECUSANT FINES** (anti-Catholic laws for Catholics refusing to go to her Church of England £10 to £20)

2. ARRESTED Puritans who wanted more PURITAN REFORM/ debate

Elizabeth banned Puritan MPs from talking about religion in Parliament- arrested MP Thomas Wentworth for discussing religion. Arrested Archbishop Grindal for refusing to ban Puritan Prophesying Meetings.

3. PUNISHED Puritans who challenged her authority/ power over the Church

Puritan writers who criticised her Religious Settlement had their Printing Presses destroyed and new Presses had to be licensed by the Queen e.g. Marprelate Tracts. John Stubbs had his hands chopped off for criticising the Queen.

4. EXECUTED Puritans who wanted a SEPARATE Puritan Church

John Penry executed for challenging the Queen's authority to be Governor of the Church. Further criticisms from the BROWNISTS (SEPARATISTS) - executed if caught! Queen felt more threatened by BROWNIST / SEPARATIST Puritans attacking her authority to control Church than Catholic extremists trying to assassinate her.



- KEYWORDS
Royal Court
Privy Council
Privy Chamber
Nobility
Gentry
Peasantry
Merchant Gentry
Vagrant
Poor Law
Renaissance
Circumnavigation
American Colony
Roanoke
Armada
Catholic Plots
Puritans
Separatists or Brownists

Exploration & War with Spain

Rise of MERCHANT GENTRY

Elizabeth encouraged overseas trade as it offered more economic opportunities for her merchants, trade and the start of EMPIRE. To increase overseas trade she created:

- a) **Royal Exchange 1571** - a central place to swap goods, ideas and attract finance/ investments
- b) **Muscovy Company & Whaling 1577** - trade in Baltic
- c) **Levant Company 1592** - trade in Mediterranean
- d) **East Indies Company 1600** - trade in spices in Asia

John Hawkins & Francis Drake (The original Pirates of the Caribbean)

Started trading in the Caribbean by selling Enslaved Africans to Spanish Caribbean towns. Hawkins & Drake were ambushed by Spanish ships in 1568. Hawkins & Drake began their personal Anti-Spanish War in revenge. They targeted Spanish treasure ships (galleons) coming back from S. America filled with silver. One captured ship was worth £122 Million alone.

Drake's CIRCUMNAVIGATION of the Globe 1577-1580

Attacked Spanish towns from the Caribbean to S.America (Atlantic & Pacific Coast). Captured treasure ship worth £480M. Cut across Pacific to East Indies spice island. Despite losing treasure after running aground, Drake returned to England in 1580 with over £500M in spices and treasure. Knighted on board the *Golden Hind* (named in honour of Privy Councillor patron Sir Christopher Hatton). King Philip of Spain placed a £4M bounty on Drake's head.

Walter Raleigh & AMERICAN COLONY of ROANOKE 1585 - 1st attempt at English colony, failed but set the example for further English exploration in N. America for the next century.



The Spanish ARMADA (1588)

The Singeing of the King's Beard - Drake launched a surprise attack on the Armada fleet as it was being built in Cadiz in 1587. He destroyed c.30 ships and stole another 4 new ships and all their supplies. Most important, it gave the English another 12 months to prepare.

Spanish Mistakes leading to the Armada's defeat

1. Wrong Leader - Duke of Medina Sidonia (most senior noble but no experience of sea).
2. Poorly prepared - no maps apart from the Channel, delayed by storms, ships were no match for English Racing Galleons.
3. Caught out by English fire-ships when they anchored off Calais - it broke up their "Crescent Formation".
4. Forced North after the Battle of Gravelines - no maps of Scotland and Ireland = loss of 60 ships in storms and rocks v 5 destroyed in battle.

English Factors that led to their victory

1. Surprise attack on Cadiz - Singeing the King's Beard, delayed Spanish for 12 months.
2. Beacon warning system, English tracked Armada at all stages
3. English Fire-ships broke up the Spanish strong defensive Crescent Formation (Drake's tactic 1st used in Cadiz)
4. Superior English Ships - used their advantage of extra speed, fire power and agility at the Battle of Gravelines (after fire-ships broke the crescent formation).
5. Forced the Armada north (away from the Spanish Army in Netherlands) and sending them to Scottish storms.

