

The Reign of Elizabeth I 1568-1603

GCSE History – Elizabethan England

Part three: Threats from home and abroad

Key people

Elizabeth's allies **Francis Walsingham** (1532-1590)
Elizabeth's spymaster. Walsingham was responsible for a network of spies across England, who's aim was to uncover plots against the Queen.

Threats to Elizabeth **Mary, Queen of Scots** (1542-1587)
Elizabeth's Catholic second cousin, has legitimate claim to the English throne. Seeks refuge in England after being driven out of Scotland. Has produced an heir (future King James I). At the centre of plots to depose Elizabeth. Executed for treason after Babington plot is uncovered.

Earls of Northumberland (1528-1572) **and Westmorland** (1542-1601)
Catholic northern earls who rebelled in 1569 at loss of power under Elizabeth.

Duke of Norfolk (1536-1573)
English Protestant noble with links to Catholics. Involved in plots to marry Mary and depose Elizabeth. Executed in 1572 after being involved in Ridolfi Plot.

Pope Pius V (1504-1572)
Pope responsible for excommunicating Elizabeth. In his Papal Bull published in 1570, he encouraged English Catholics to assassinate and depose Elizabeth.

Philip II of Spain (1527-1598)
Catholic King of Spain, also ruled over the Netherlands. From 1580, became king of Portugal. Was married to Elizabeth's sister, Mary. A staunch Catholic, Philip wanted to eradicate the Protestant faith from Europe.

Jesuit and Seminary Priests
Catholic priests who were smuggled into and around England with the aim of converting English Protestants to Catholicism.

Key terms

Clergy
Religious leaders such as priests and bishops.

Council of the North
Set up after the Papal Bull to enforce government authority and policies in the North of England.

Divine Right
The belief that a monarch's right to rule came from God.

Excommunication
A severe punishment, imposed by the Pope, where a person is expelled from the Catholic church.

Jesuits
Roman Catholic missionaries whose aim was to destroy heresy (Protestantism).

Papal Bull
A written order issued by the Pope.

'Protestant Wind'
Wind that blew the Spanish Armada off course. Some argued that God sent the wind to show he favoured Elizabeth and Protestants.

Recusants
Catholics who are unwilling to attend Protestant church services.

Religious Settlement
Set of laws passed by Elizabeth to try and unify the country and heal the religious divisions.

Seminary Priests
Priests trained in Roman Catholic Colleges.

Treason
The crime of betraying one's country, especially by attempting to kill or overthrow the monarch.

Key events

Religious Settlement

Catholics

Loyal to Pope
Bible and services in Latin
Belief in saints and pilgrimages
Clergy can't marry
Elaborate decoration

Protestants

Church headed by monarch
Bible and services in English
Fewer decorations
Clergy can marry

Puritans

Strict protestants
No head of the Church
No decorations
Live by the words in the Bible

Act of Supremacy – gives Elizabeth power of Church

- Elizabeth as Supreme Governor of Church; all clergy must swear loyalty to her

Act of Uniformity – establishes consistency in churches

- Book of Common Prayer used, in English
- Wording of prayer book deliberately unclear so it can be interpreted differently by Catholics and Protestants
- Everyone had to attend church on Sunday – fined 1 shilling for every absence

Plots against Elizabeth

- Elizabeth is initially very tolerant of Catholics, who she allows to worship in secret. This changes from 1580s because;
 - Jesuit Missions are sent to convert to Catholicism
 - Papal Bull in 1570 encourages Elizabeth's assassination
 - Mary, Queen of Scots arrives in England in 1568 and becomes a Catholic figurehead for plots
- Northern Rebellion (1569)** started when Elizabeth would not give permission for the Duke of Norfolk to marry Mary Queen of Scots. The Earl of Westmorland and the Earl of Northumberland took control of Durham Cathedral and celebrated Catholic mass. They attempted to march to London but were defeated. Northumberland was executed. Westmorland fled and Norfolk was sent to the tower.
- The Ridolfi Plot (1571)** was organised with the Duke of Norfolk. Ridolfi was a Catholic Italian banker living in England. He planned invasions from both the Netherlands and the North. It was stopped when spies captured a message. The Duke of Norfolk confessed and was executed.
- Throckmorton Plot (1583)** was backed by the Spanish and the Pope to invade England. Francis Throckmorton acted as a go between linking Mary Queen of Scots to the Spanish ambassador. Once again Walsingham's spies found out about the plot. Throckmorton was tortured and confessed.
- Babington Plot (1586)** to murder Elizabeth and put Mary on the throne, again with the help of the French Duke of Guise and the support of Philip II of Spain and the pope. Letters to Mary were intercepted by Walsingham and the evidence against her was so strong that Mary was finally tried for treason by the Privy Council and found guilty. She was executed in 1587.

- Following Mary's execution, Phillip II of Spain launched an armada of approximately 150 ships to dethrone Elizabeth.
- A series of beacons warned of the Armada's arrival and the English navy engaged them at Portsmouth. The Battle of Gravelines lost 1000 Spanish soldiers and 3 ships.
- The wind changed, meaning Spanish ships were blown off course towards Scotland where almost half of the Armada were destroyed. This "Protestant Wind" was a propaganda victory for Elizabeth and there was not another major foreign challenge to her reign.

