

## Paper 2 Knowledge Toolkit

### England in 1558

#### Elizabeth's government

**The court:** Noblemen, Elizabeth's advisers and friends

**The Privy Council:** Nobility, helped govern the country

**Justices of the Peace:** Large landowners who kept law and order locally

**Parliament:** House of Lords and House of Commons, advised Elizabeth's government

**Lord Lieutenants:** Noblemen, appointed by the government, governed English counties

There was a strict **hierarchy** in towns and the countryside. People must obey and respect those above them, and had a duty of care to those below them in this hierarchy.

#### Problems Elizabeth faced when she became Queen

**Age:** Elizabeth was young and lacked experience

**Money:** The country was in £300,000 of debt

**Legitimacy:** The Pope refused to recognise her mother's marriage to Henry VIII

**Religion:** Catholics refused to recognise Elizabeth's right to rule England. Elizabeth was Protestant, her predecessor Mary I was Catholic

**Marriage:** Elizabeth was unmarried, many people disapproved of a woman ruling alone

**Power:** To pass laws, Elizabeth needed the support of parliament

#### Elizabeth's character and strengths:

Good understanding of politics

Reinvented the role

Confident and charismatic

Resilient

Well-educated



Spoke Latin, Greek, French and Italian

Protestant—and the number of Protestants in England was growing

### England in 1558: Challenges at home

**Financial weaknesses in 1558:** There was a need to improve England's finances. How did Elizabeth solve this problem?

- ⇒ She did not raise taxes (which would be unpopular) but instead hoarded her income and cut her household expenses by half
- ⇒ Sold Crown lands (raised £120,000)
- ⇒ By 1574 the Crown was out of debt

### England in 1558: Challenges abroad

**Elizabeth faced challenges from France, Scotland and Spain**

- ⇒ France was wealthier than England. Elizabeth's cousin, Mary Queen of Scots, was married to the French King. Catholic Mary had a strong claim to the English throne and English Catholics might want her to be Queen.
- ⇒ The Auld Alliance: France's alliance with Scotland threatened England. This was strengthened by the marriage of the French King (Francis II) to Mary Queen of Scots.
- ⇒ France had ended its war with Spain, making war with England more likely. France and Spain (both Catholic) could unite against England.
- ⇒ War would be expensive and dangerous—this would lead to more debts.

#### Religious divisions in England in 1558

**Religion was central to life in England, guiding people's morals and behaviour.**

<u>Catholics</u>	<u>Protestants</u>	<u>Puritans</u>
Pope is head of the Church	No Pope	No Pope
Church can forgive sins	Only God can forgive sins	Only God can forgive sins
During Mass the bread and wine become the actual body and blood of Christ	The bread and wine simply represent the body and blood of Christ. There is no miracle	The bread and wine simply represent the body and blood of Christ. There is no miracle
Priests can not marry	Priests can marry	Priests can marry
Services in Latin	Services in English	Services in English
Priests wear vestments	Priests wear simple vestments	Priests wear simple vestments
Churches highly decorated	Churches plain and simple	Churches plain and simple

### Elizabeth's Religious Settlement 1559

*This was inclusive and designed to be accepted by as many people as possible.*

**The Act of Uniformity:** Established the appearance of churches and religious services. Required everyone to attend church.

**The Act of Supremacy:** Elizabeth became Supreme Governor (Head) of the Church. All clergy had to swear an oath of allegiance to her.

**The Royal Injunctions:** A set of instructions to the clergy. Included instructions on how people should worship God and how religious services were to be conducted.

**Book of Common Prayer:** Introduced a set church service in all churches. the clergy had to follow the Prayer Book wording during services or be punished.

#### **Impact of the religious settlement:**

- ⇒ 8000 out of 10,000 clergy accepted it
- ⇒ Many Marian Bishops (Catholic Bishops appointed by Mary I) opposed the settlement and had to be replaced
- ⇒ The majority of ordinary people accepted the religious settlement and attended church services, even though many of them held on to Catholic beliefs

#### The Royal Injunctions

All clergy were required to:

- teach the Royal Supremacy
- report those refusing to attend church to the Privy Council to be fined
- keep a copy of the Bible in English
- have a government license to preach
- prevent pilgrimages, religious shrines and monuments to 'fake' miracles
- wear special clothes (vestments)

## The Puritan Challenge

*Many radical Protestants (Puritans) challenged Elizabeth's religious settlement.*

**Crucifixes:** Elizabeth demanded that a crucifix be placed in each Church, to not upset Catholics. Puritans opposed this. When some Puritan bishops threatened to resign, Elizabeth backed down as she could not replace them with educated Protestant clergy of similar ability.

**Vestments:** Elizabeth wanted the clergy to wear special vestments, as described in the Royal Injunctions. Puritans resisted this, leading to the **resignation of 37 Puritan priests**, who refused to attend church and to wear the new vestments.

Puritans were a vocal group, active in London, Cambridge and Oxford. Puritanism had less of an impact in northern England, where most people remained Catholic in outlook. Support was limited.

## The Catholic Challenge At Home

*The Catholic Church became increasingly hostile to Protestantism and Elizabeth's rule.*

**Counter Reformation:** The Catholic Church's attempt to reverse the Protestant Reformation in Europe and stop its spread. Protestants in Europe were charged with **heresy** (people who deny the teachings of the Catholic Church). In 1566, the pope issued an instruction to English Catholics to not attend Church of England services.

- 1/3 of the English nobility and a large part of the gentry were **recusants** (practised the Catholic religion in secret).
- Catholic nobility were from traditional and powerful families that had prospered (done well) under Mary I. They resented their loss of power under Elizabeth. They were influential in the north, and were well-placed to start a rebellion against Elizabeth. This threat was increased by the pope's instruction that Catholics were not allowed to attend Church of England services. Catholics had a powerful religious reason to rebel!

## The Catholic Challenge Abroad

*Many of Europe's powerful rulers were Catholic and were a real threat to Elizabeth.*

**France:** When religious war began in 1562 in France, Elizabeth backed French Protestants. Elizabeth could not afford to upset both France and Spain.

**The papacy:** The pope was prepared to end Protestant rule in England. The pope excommunicated (formally excluded from the Catholic Church) Elizabeth in 1570, which would encourage other Catholic countries to attack England.

**Spain:** In 1566 the Dutch rebelled against Spanish occupation. Elizabeth sheltered the Dutch rebels (Sea Beggars) who attacked Spanish ships in the Channel. Spain was made more angry by England's seizure of the Genoese loan in 1568 (Elizabeth seized money meant for the Spanish government). By 1570 Spanish rule of the Netherlands was secure. The Privy Council now feared Spanish invasion, as the Spanish Netherlands were close to England. The presence of Mary Queen of Scots as an alternative Catholic monarch encouraged the Spanish government to plot against Elizabeth.

## Mary Queen of Scots

Mary had a **legitimate** claim to the English throne and was at the centre of many plots to overthrow Elizabeth. Mary was **Catholic**, so many Catholics supported her claim to the throne. Mary returned to Scotland in 1560. She was accused of murdering her next husband Lord Darnley, and was imprisoned. She escaped and fled to England to seek her cousin Elizabeth's help.

Mary was imprisoned in England while Elizabeth decided what to do with her.

**The Casket Letters Affair:** Scottish lords brought love letters with them to a meeting in York in October 1568 to hear the case against Mary. Mary said she could not be tried because she was an anointed monarch, and would not offer a plea unless Elizabeth guaranteed a verdict of innocence. Elizabeth refused, but did not hand over Mary for trial. The conference did not reach any conclusions, therefore Mary stayed in prison in England. She remained a threat to Elizabeth because the Catholic plots aimed to replace Elizabeth with Mary.



## The Catholic Plots Against Elizabeth

### The Revolt of the Northern Earls 1569-70:

**Why did they rebel?** The Earls and their followers wanted to make England Catholic again. The Earls had lost much of their influence under Elizabeth, as men like William Cecil had gained more power. Elizabeth's lack of an heir created uncertainty.

**What was the plan?** Mary Queen of Scots would marry the Duke of Norfolk, remove Elizabeth and become queen. Robert Dudley told Elizabeth of the plot, leading to Norfolk's arrest and imprisonment.

**What happened?** The Earls of Northumberland and Westmorland continued with the revolt. They took control of Durham Cathedral, celebrating mass there, and began to move south. Elizabeth moved Mary to Coventry, to stop her escaping and joining the rebels. Although the rebels captured the port of Hartlepool, Spanish support never arrived.

**Why did the revolt fail?** Support from Spain never arrived; many northern landowners remained loyal to Elizabeth.

**What were the consequences?** Showed MQOS could not be trusted; the Pope excommunicated Elizabeth and called on loyal Catholics to depose her. This encouraged further Catholic plots against her. The loyalty of English Catholics was now in doubt!

### The Ridolfi Plot 1571

Ridolfi plotted to murder Elizabeth, start a Spanish invasion and put MQOS on the throne. She would then marry the Duke of Norfolk.

The Duke of Alba got an army of 10,000 men ready. Philip II supported the plot.

William Cecil discovered the plot. Norfolk was executed June 1572.

Elizabeth was reluctant to punish Mary.

**Impact:**

- Shows MQOS is still a threat
- Shows Philip II (Spain) is willing to support plots, so England needs to improve relations with France
- Government monitors Catholics more severely
- 1581 laws: sheltering Catholic priests = fine or converting people is treason

French Duke of Guise plotted to overthrow Elizabeth, free MQOS and make England Catholic again. Philip II would pay, Pope approved.

Throckmorton would pass letters between plotters and MQOS

Walsingham discovered the plot

Throckmorton arrested, tortured and executed

**Impact:**

- Shows MQOS is still a threat
- Catholic foreign powers and English Catholics are a threat
- Papers confirmed the 'enemy within'
- Government treated Catholics with greater suspicion - 11000 imprisoned / under surveillance
- 1585 Act of Parliament - helping Catholic Priests punishable by death

### The Babington Plot 1586

French Duke of Guise plotted to invade England, murder Elizabeth and put MQOS on the throne. Philip II and the Pope approved.

Babington (Catholic) wrote to Mary about it.

Walsingham intercepted the letters, which demonstrated her support for the plot.

Babington and plotters hanged, drawn and quartered.

**Impact:**

- England and Spain were virtually at war - Elizabeth's situation more difficult
- Government became more determined to crush the Catholic threat - the persecution of Catholics intensified
- MQOS executed

### Walsingham's Spies

- Sir Francis Walsingham was Elizabeth's Secretary of State. He developed a network of spies and informers to uncover plots against Elizabeth.
- Walsingham used ciphers (codes) for all letters. He had spies in every town and in many countries.
- He used torture and execution.

### The execution of Mary Queen of Scots. Why was she executed?

- Walsingham's spies found evidence she was involved in the Catholic plots against Elizabeth.
- By 1587 there were rumours of Spanish invasion, therefore Mary was a real threat.
- Mary was a rallying point for angry Catholics, especially after the pope excommunicated Elizabeth in 1570, making Mary an alternative Catholic monarch.

### Why was the execution significant?

Mary was an anointed monarch, so executing her set a dangerous example. The execution angered Philip II of Spain and gave him more reason to attack England. Elizabeth was left without an heir, increasing the chances of a civil war on her death. The execution removed an important threat to Elizabeth, as there was now no alternative to replace her.

## Catholic Plots (continued)