

Early Elizabethan England, 1558–88

A comprehensive cheat sheet covering the key aspects of Early Elizabethan England, from Queen Elizabeth's government and religious policies to the challenges she faced at home and abroad, and the vibrant Elizabethan society during the Age of Exploration.



Queen, Government, and Religion (1558–1569)

Elizabeth's Accession and Initial Policies

1558	Elizabeth I ascends the throne after Mary I's death. England is religiously divided and financially weak.
Act of Supremacy (1559)	Re-established the English monarch as the Supreme Governor of the Church of England.
Act of Uniformity (1559)	Established a common prayer book and made church attendance compulsory, aiming for religious compromise.
Royal Injunctions (1559)	A set of instructions to reinforce the Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity, including rules on preaching and religious imagery.
Religious Settlement	Elizabeth's attempt to create a moderate Protestant Church of England, acceptable to most of her subjects.
Key Figures	William Cecil (Lord Burghley): Elizabeth's chief advisor, instrumental in shaping policy. Matthew Parker: Archbishop of Canterbury, responsible for enforcing the religious settlement.

Government Structure

Monarch	Ultimate authority, makes final decisions, but relies on advisors.
Privy Council	A group of advisors who assisted Elizabeth in governing the country. Included leading nobles and officials.
Parliament	Advised the Queen and had the power to pass laws and raise taxes. Summoned and dismissed by the monarch.
Justices of the Peace (JPs)	Local officials responsible for maintaining order and enforcing laws in the counties.
Lord Lieutenant	Responsible for organizing the militia in each county.
Challenges	Managing factions within the Privy Council, balancing religious interests, and maintaining control over local government.

Challenges to Elizabeth (1569–1588)

Internal Threats

Northern Rebellion (1569)	A revolt by northern earls aimed at replacing Elizabeth with Mary, Queen of Scots and restoring Catholicism.
Ridolfi Plot (1571)	A conspiracy involving a plot to assassinate Elizabeth and replace her with Mary, Queen of Scots, with Spanish support.
Throckmorton Plot (1583)	Another plot to overthrow Elizabeth involving French and Spanish support for Mary, Queen of Scots.
Babington Plot (1586)	A plot to assassinate Elizabeth, leading to Mary, Queen of Scots' execution in 1587.
Puritan Challenge	Puritans sought further religious reforms, challenging Elizabeth's religious settlement.
Significance	These plots demonstrated the ongoing threat to Elizabeth's reign and the importance of her intelligence network.

External Threats

Spain	England's main rival, due to religious differences (Catholic vs. Protestant) and competition for trade and territory.
Spanish Armada (1588)	A Spanish fleet sent to invade England and overthrow Elizabeth, but was defeated by the English navy.
Netherlands	England supported the Dutch revolt against Spanish rule, leading to further tensions with Spain.
France	Although Catholic, France was often an ally against Spain, but posed its own threat at times.
Piracy	English pirates like Francis Drake attacked Spanish ships and settlements, disrupting Spanish trade.
Consequences	These external threats shaped England's foreign policy and led to military conflicts, solidifying England's Protestant identity.

Elizabethan Society and the Age of Exploration (1558–1588)

Social Structure

<p>Hierarchy: Elizabethan society was highly hierarchical, with clear divisions between social classes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monarch: At the top, with absolute authority.• Nobility: Wealthy landowners with political influence.• Gentry: Landowners below the nobility.• Merchants: Wealthy traders and businessmen.• Yeomen: Farmers who owned their land.• Laborers: Poor workers who relied on wage labor.
<p>Gender Roles: Men and women had distinct roles, with women expected to be subservient to men and focus on domestic duties.</p>
<p>Poverty: A significant problem, with many people living in poverty and relying on charity or begging.</p>

Exploration and Expansion

Motivations	Search for new trade routes, wealth, and resources; spreading Protestantism; expanding English power and influence.
Key Figures	Sir Francis Drake: Famous for circumnavigating the globe and raiding Spanish ships. Sir Walter Raleigh: Attempted to establish English colonies in North America (Roanoke).
Roanoke Colony	An early English attempt to establish a colony in North America, which mysteriously disappeared.
Impact	Increased English knowledge of the world, expanded trade networks, and laid the foundation for future colonization.

Culture and Arts

<p>Literature: A golden age of English literature, with writers like William Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe, and Edmund Spenser.</p> <p>Theatre: The rise of popular theatre, with playwrights like Shakespeare captivating audiences.</p> <p>Music: Flourishing of English music, with composers like William Byrd and John Dowland.</p> <p>Art: Portraiture became popular, reflecting the wealth and status of the elite.</p>
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PEEL Paragraph Templates & Key Events

PEEL Paragraph Template

<p>Point: State the main point or argument you are making.</p> <p>Evidence: Provide evidence from historical sources or events to support your point.</p> <p>Explanation: Explain how the evidence supports your point and its significance.</p> <p>Link: Link back to the question or the overall argument.</p>
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Key Events Timeline

<p>1558: Elizabeth I becomes Queen of England.</p> <p>1559: Act of Supremacy and Act of Uniformity establish the religious settlement.</p> <p>1569: Northern Rebellion challenges Elizabeth's rule.</p> <p>1571: Ridolfi Plot threatens Elizabeth's life.</p> <p>1587: Execution of Mary, Queen of Scots.</p> <p>1588: Spanish Armada attempts to invade England.</p>

Cause-Event-Consequence: Spanish Armada

<p>Cause: Religious differences, English support for Dutch rebels, English piracy against Spanish ships.</p> <p>Event: Spanish Armada sails to invade England but is defeated.</p> <p>Consequence: England's Protestant identity strengthened, English naval power increased, Spain's power declined.</p>
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