

Chapter 11 Elizabethan England, c1568–1603

11.1 Elizabeth's character and Court life

REVISED

Elizabeth's early experiences shaped her time as Queen. The difficulties she faced made her stronger

- Elizabeth's mother, Anne Boleyn, was executed by her father, Henry VIII.
- Elizabeth herself came close to being executed for **treason** on two occasions. She was accused of being involved in plots against her brother Edward and sister Mary.
- Her traumatic experiences helped mould her character. She was self-reliant, determined, yet cautious. She was also very well educated. These qualities helped make her a successful queen.
- Her right to rule (**legitimacy**) was questioned by some. Others questioned her ability to rule because she was a woman in what many thought should be a man's role – ruling England.
- Despite this, she ruled for nearly 45 years from 1558 to 1603 and is widely regarded as a very successful monarch.

The Queen's Court was the centre of political life and courtiers competed to get access to Elizabeth

- The Court was not a place but a collection of people. It was made up of the Queen, her advisers and servants together. It existed wherever the Queen was.
- She had about 500 **courtiers** who lived with her and competed for power and influence. In an age when the monarch was so powerful, access to the Queen was crucial to any politician.
- Elizabeth encouraged loyalty by giving loyal courtiers duties at Court (**patronage**).
- To prevent a courtier becoming too powerful, Elizabeth sometimes used a 'divide and rule' tactic (giving competing courtiers equally powerful jobs). This caused rivalry but kept people loyal.
- Life at Court was not all work! There were lavish banquets, masques, plays and tournaments to entertain the Queen and courtiers.

The Privy Council included Elizabeth's most powerful advisers. They met almost every day

- The **Privy Council** was a group of trusted ministers who helped Elizabeth govern England. The most important ministers are shown in the panels.
- Elizabeth's Privy Council had only nineteen members (much smaller than her sister's, Queen Mary, had been). Elizabeth believed that a small group would be more efficient
- Elizabeth's first Council showed her skill as a politician. It was a clever compromise including some of Mary's men but also her own loyal advisers.
- Over time, the Council became a group of full-time politicians including skilled members of the gentry.
- The most important ministers were:

Key point

Elizabeth's troubled early life prepared her well for the task of ruling England. As Queen she was at the heart of the whole political system. She had to be a strong ruler and choose and use her advisers carefully.

William Cecil (Lord Burghley) – Elizabeth's chief minister

Member of the gentry and former MP. Secretary of State – the most powerful minister. All correspondence passed through him

Intelligent and hard working  
Loyal but knew how to manage the Queen  
Moderate and cautious.  
A stabiliser

Robert Dudley (Earl of Leicester) – Elizabeth's favourite

A member of the nobility  
'Master of the Horse' – responsible for the Queen's safety

Committed **Puritan**  
Often disagreed with Cecil about religion and foreign affairs  
Ambitious and a radical.  
Liked stirring things up

Sir Francis Walsingham – Elizabeth's spy master

A member of the gentry and an MP  
Keen **Puritan**  
Secretary of State for foreign affairs. Also in charge of Elizabeth's 'secret service' controlling spies and informers  
Often clashed with Cecil

The Queen used progresses and portraits as propaganda to maintain her image

- A **progress** was when the Queen and her Court went to stay with powerful nobles.
- It was very expensive to entertain the Queen and her Court but rich nobles liked it because it gave them access to the Queen. Some built big houses just so they could attract the Queen to stay with them.
- The progress was also a **propaganda** opportunity for the Queen. It allowed her to impress her leading nobles with her power. They in turn laid on sumptuous banquets and masques to impress her.
- Another way to show your loyalty to the Queen was to have a portrait of her. Many courtiers commissioned one for their house or as miniature to carry with them.
- The Queen's image was strictly controlled. There were approved portraits which artists had to copy.

Spot the mistakes

For all your answers you need accurate and precise knowledge. This paragraph has five factual errors. Find them and correct them.

The Privy Council were trusted ministers who helped Elizabeth govern England. They were all members of the gentry. Walsingham handled her correspondence. William Cecil controlled Elizabeth's spy network. Dudley was her most powerful minister and personal favourite who liked to stir things up. One thing her Privy Councillors all agreed about was religion.

Develop the explanation

Question 2 in your exam will ask you to explain importance. The mistake people commonly make is to describe features rather than explaining their importance.

The statements below describe some features of Elizabethan politics. For each one, add one or two more sentences to turn it from a description into an explanation of its importance. The first one has been done for you.

Description	Explain why it was important in Elizabethan politics
Elizabeth was surrounded by 500 courtiers	Individuals competed with each other to influence the Queen. This allowed Elizabeth to control them by 'divide and rule' tactics
The Queen travelled around the country on progress	
Elizabeth's chief minister was William Cecil	
Elizabeth used patronage	
Portraits of the Queen were controlled	
As a young woman Elizabeth faced many dangers	

Test yourself

- When did Elizabeth become Queen?
- How long did she rule?
- List three important features of Elizabeth's Court which begin with the letter P.
- What was William Cecil's job?

Practice question

Explain what was important about the Privy Council in Elizabethan England. (8 marks)

TIP

To help make sure you turn your writing from description into explanation use phrases like:

- this meant that ...
- this was important because ...
- this allowed Elizabeth to ...



## 11.2 Elizabeth and Parliament

REVISED

### Elizabeth had a difficult relationship with Parliament

- The Queen had the power to call, dissolve, and **prorogue** (postpone) Parliament.
- Elizabeth saw Parliament as a 'necessary evil' (necessary because she had to get its permission to raise money, evil because she thought some MPs were troublesome). It met only thirteen times in 44 years.
- Parliament's role was to pass laws and approve **subsidies** (grants of money to the Queen). They only twice refused her money. She usually got what she asked for.
- Over time, the MPs (Members of Parliament) grew in confidence and tried to influence her decisions.

### Elizabeth controlled MPs through various tactics including flattery and bullying

- She reminded MPs of her **prerogative** (that she had the final say) on religion, whether to get married, who should be her heir, going to war and the treatment of Mary, Queen of Scots.
- In 1576, Peter Wentworth demanded that MPs should be able to talk freely in the House of Commons on all subjects including religion. Elizabeth was outraged. Wentworth was imprisoned.
- Her leading Councillors were also MPs. They planned Parliamentary business in advance in order to control it.
- In 1601 she granted **concessions** to MPs on the issue of **monopolies**. She did this to appease Parliament in order to raise taxes to fund activities in Ireland.

### Elizabeth's early reign was dominated by the 'marriage question'

- Elizabeth was an unmarried woman in a male-dominated world. Both MPs and her councillors expected Elizabeth to marry because:
  - They questioned a woman's ability to rule England alone.
  - They wanted her to use her marriage to make a good **alliance** with a foreign power.
  - They wanted her to produce an heir to rule after her.
- There were many **suitors** (possible husbands) from England and abroad. The main ones were:

From England: Robert Dudley, the Earl of Leicester	From Spain: King Philip of Spain	From France: Francis Duke of Alencon and Anjou
Dudley was the Queen's favourite adviser. They had been close friends since childhood and he wanted to marry her. His wife died in 1560 and so marriage might then have been possible.  However, his wife died in suspicious circumstances – possibly murdered – so it would have been scandalous for the Queen to marry him.	Philip had been married to Elizabeth's sister Mary. Spain was the most powerful country in Europe so marriage to Philip might have been useful.  However, Elizabeth rejected him because he was a Catholic and she had completely different religious beliefs.	Her last serious suitor, Francis, was younger brother to the King of France. Marriage might have been good for England's relationships with Catholic France.  However, after the massacre of French Protestants in 1572, there was strong anti-French feeling in England and negotiations were called off.

#### Key point

Parliament tried to influence Elizabeth and she used various tactics to keep control. The last years of her reign were difficult and one of her top ministers rebelled.

#### TIP

All the key terms in **purple** are defined in the glossary at the end of each chapter.

Make sure that you can spell the key terms, know what they mean and aim to use them in your written work.

- We don't know if Elizabeth was truly interested in her foreign suitors but she strung them along and made them think marriage was possible in order to keep good relationships with those countries.
- Elizabeth never married. Instead she used her single status to her advantage. Propaganda portrayed her as 'Gloriana – The Virgin Queen' who was married to her people and country.

### The 1590s were a very difficult decade for Elizabeth

- A series of bad harvests led to food shortages, rising prices and increased poverty.
- England was fighting an expensive war with Spain.
- All Elizabeth's closest advisers died: Dudley in 1588, Walsingham in 1590 and Cecil in 1598.
- A power struggle followed with the two most powerful people being Dudley's stepson, the Earl of Essex, and Cecil's son Robert.
- Elizabeth had no children and refused to name a successor until she was on her death bed. This created political insecurity.

### In 1601 the Earl of Essex failed in his attempt to seize power

- Essex was an unpredictable person but Elizabeth gave him an important mission – to defeat a rebellion in Ireland. Instead of crushing it, Essex made a truce.
- Elizabeth was furious that he had done this without her permission. Elizabeth banned him from Court and removed his 'sweet wine' monopoly which ruined him financially.
- Essex mounted a poorly thought-out rebellion. With other disgruntled courtiers, he marched to London to take Elizabeth prisoner.
- He underestimated support for Elizabeth. His route was blocked. He was soon arrested and executed for treason in February 1601.
- The failed rebellion showed that despite Elizabeth's problems, loyalty to the Queen remained firm.

#### Test yourself

- 1 How often did Parliament meet in Elizabeth's reign?
- 2 What was Parliament's role?
- 3 List four issues which were part of the Queen's prerogative.
- 4 Why did Elizabeth reject each of her three main suitors?

#### Support or challenge?

Below are five knowledge statements. Decide whether each supports or challenges this overall interpretation of Elizabeth's power:

'Despite being queen, Elizabeth's actual power was quite limited throughout her reign.'

Add at least one more statement of your own that supports or challenges this view.

Statement	Support	Challenge
Elizabeth called Parliament when she wanted to		X
Elizabeth chose and dismissed her Privy Councillors		
Elizabeth had to ask Parliament's permission to raise taxes		
Elizabeth was a woman in a man's world		
Elizabeth controlled Parliament through flattery and bullying		



## 11.3 The Elizabethan 'Golden Age'

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### Elizabethan England was influenced by new Renaissance ideas from Europe

- **Humanist** scholars stressed the power of the human mind.
- Science flourished. Scholars observed the planets and the workings of the human body. More rational explanations were put forward.
- The printing presses meant such ideas could spread more quickly.
- New schools were set up offering a broader curriculum. English people became better educated.

### The gentry were becoming richer and more powerful

- In previous centuries the **nobility** (large landowners) had been the most powerful people in England.
- The gentry were a step below them. They owned land but did not have titles (Lord *this* or Earl of *that*). They helped the monarch keep control in their local area but did not usually have national influence.
- The Tudors deliberately overlooked old nobility. They feared they were too powerful. Instead, they promoted talented members of the gentry.
- Under Elizabeth, the influence of the gentry grew further. Many also grew richer from trade, exploration, rising population and rising prices.

### The 'Great Rebuilding' saw magnificent new houses like Hardwick Hall built by the gentry

- The wealthy gentry wanted to show off their wealth and status.
- They built grand and impressive new houses (as at Hardwick Hall) or renovated their existing ones (as at Little Moreton Hall).
- **Renaissance** ideas (particularly the use of symmetry) influenced design.
- They had fashionable features such as intricate chimneys, oak panelling, plasterwork ceilings and a lot of glass which was very expensive.
- Some houses were built on old monastery land bought by the gentry.

### Elizabeth's advisers used culture as propaganda

- Portraits of Elizabeth were used for propaganda. They showed a young and commanding Queen. They were full of symbols. For example, in the Rainbow Portrait painted when Elizabeth was old:
  - she is shown as a much younger woman
  - her dress has angel's wings and she is holding a rainbow in her hand symbolising her god-like status.
- The government licensed printing presses to control what was published. The bestseller was *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*. It supported the idea that Elizabeth had rescued England from Catholic threats.

### Theatre was transformed partly thanks to the greatest English playwright, Shakespeare

- Travelling players had been popular in England since medieval times. Wandering bands of actors performed in market squares or inns.
- The government feared these wandering actors were a threat to law and order, so from 1572 actors had to be licensed. This led to actors forming companies to perform in purpose-built theatres.

#### Key point

Elizabeth's reign is often seen as a 'Golden Age' of cultural achievement, when new ideas flourished. The gentry built grand new homes and spent their money on impressive new clothes, art and theatre going.

- The first, called simply 'The Theatre', opened in 1576. Others followed including 'The Globe' in 1599 where Shakespeare made his name.
- Theatre became very popular. Prices varied so everyone could afford to go. The rich sat in the tiered galleries which had roofs. In the centre was an unroofed pit where the poor (the groundlings) stood.
- Themes reflected Elizabethan interests, for example, romance, magic and history.
- The Queen never went to a theatre. Actors performed for her at Court.

### London theatres faced local opposition from London authorities and from Puritans

London authorities	Puritans
London's theatres were outside the city walls – particularly on the Bankside area of the Thames which was an area well-known for bear-baiting, drinking and prostitution	Puritans were extreme Protestants. Puritanism was strong in London
There was concern that theatres encouraged crime and the spread of plague and that plays took apprentices away from their work	They associated theatres with paganism (non-Christian religion)
The authorities wrote to the Privy Council asking for closure of theatres	Theatres also reminded Puritans of Catholic miracle plays
	Puritans thought theatres and plays encouraged sinful behaviour, particularly sex outside of marriage

### Write an account

Question 3 in your exam asks you to write an account. For example:

**Write an account of the reasons for opposition to the theatre in Elizabethan England. (8 marks)**

What the examiners look for is

- relevant, detailed and accurate knowledge
- well organised into an orderly account which answers the question.

The question will always have a focus on causation or change. So 'write an account' is not 'everything you know about ...'. It should be carefully structured so that every paragraph connects to the focus of the question.

Here is a good paragraph taken from a longer answer. Connect these comments to the highlighted parts of the answer.

When Elizabeth became Queen there were no purpose-built theatres in England. Groups of actors toured around performing in market squares and inn yards. The government were suspicious of them. It was not a respectable profession and actors were considered to be lowly troublemakers rather like beggars and a threat to law and order. There had been a rebellion in the north in 1569 and a plot to murder Elizabeth was uncovered in 1571 so the government continued to be worried.

- A** Focus on second-order concept of change, continuity, cause or consequence
- B** Links back to the focus of the question
- C** Relevant and detailed knowledge
- D** Accurate use of subject specific key terms

### Practice question

Explain why the gentry class grew in importance in Elizabeth's reign. (8 marks)

### Test yourself

- 1 What was humanism?
- 2 List three reasons for the Great Rebuilding.
- 3 When did the first theatre open in London and what was it called?
- 4 Which religious group opposed the theatre and why?



## 11.4 Poverty: attitudes and responses

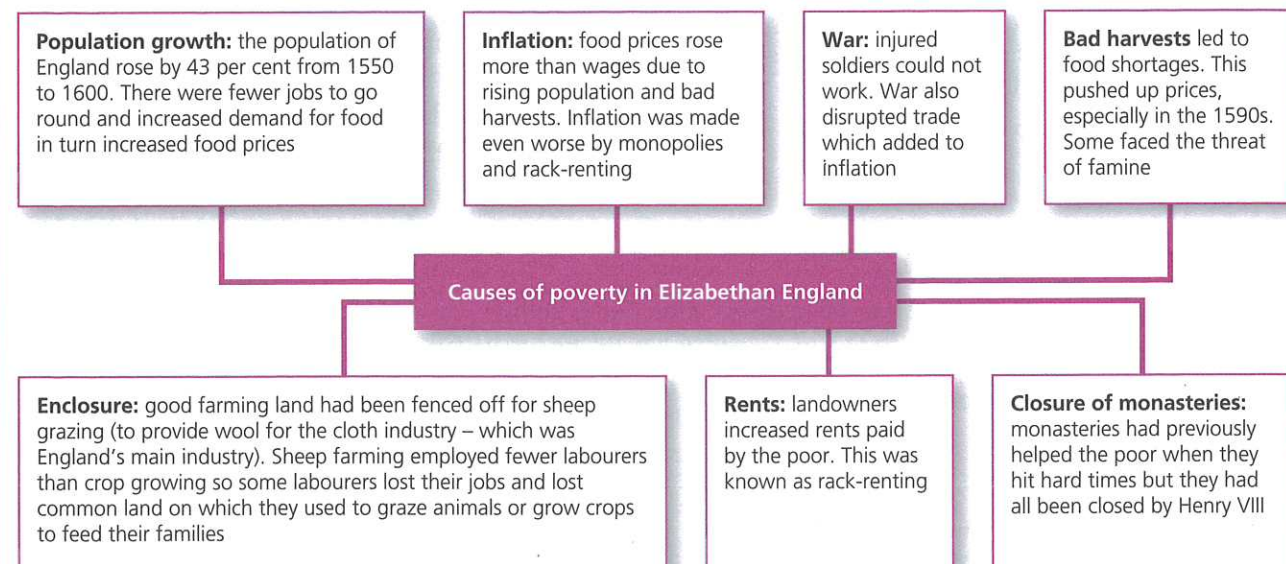
REVISED

### Poor people faced major problems in Elizabethan England – particularly in the 1590s

- Half the people in Elizabethan England were **labouring poor**. They did not own land or have a trade or a business.
- The labouring poor worked for wages. They did not grow their own food so spent 80 per cent of their income on food and drink.
- If they were unemployed or faced disease or disability they could not earn money to buy food.
- During Elizabeth's reign, these people faced real problems for a range of connected reasons summed up in the diagram below. Added to all these there were regular outbreaks of plague.
- North-west England was the poorest part of the country but poverty affected all areas and eventually became a national crisis.

#### Key point

During Elizabeth's reign there was a poverty crisis. The Elizabethan government had to get involved. In 1601, the Elizabethan Poor Law was passed. This provided help for the poor and was a turning point in attitudes.



### The problem of 'sturdy beggars' particularly scared the authorities

- The Elizabethans classified the poor into two groups:

Impotent or deserving poor	Idle or undeserving poor
They were too young, old, ill or disabled to help themselves. They should be helped	They were also referred to as 'sturdy beggars' or <b>vagrants</b> . They were considered dishonest. They could help themselves if they wanted to. They should be punished

- Many of the poor headed for nearby towns to look for work or to beg. Large groups of unemployed people roaming the country scared the authorities.
- To start with they were more worried about keeping law and order than they were about helping the poor. Many did not think it was the government's job to sort out such problems.
- Vagrants were seen as a threat to social order and were also blamed for spreading plague.

### The problem became a national crisis leading to important legislation, the Elizabethan Poor Law

- To start with, Elizabeth was reluctant to accept that poverty was a national problem for her government.
- Local measures were taken in Norwich where money was collected (known as **alms**) and numbers of poor people recorded in a census. Work was provided for the unemployed in a **workhouse**.
- Gradually, the government became more and more involved, passing laws to reduce the problem.
- In 1601, these were brought together as the Elizabethan Poor Law:
  - Justices of the Peace had to appoint four Overseers of the Poor in each parish.
  - Almshouses were provided for the old or sick to work in.
  - Beggars had to be returned to their place of birth or put into the House of Correction. This was a prison for those who refused to work.
  - A poor rate was charged to pay for these measures.

### Evaluate the interpretation

How convincing is Interpretation A about the lives of the poor in Elizabethan England? Explain your answer using Interpretation A and your contextual knowledge. (8 marks)

Sometimes interpretation questions ask you to focus on provenance (authorship). This one is different. It is all about using your knowledge of the period to say how convincing it is.

Look at Interpretation A. Opposite it are some inferences you can draw from it.

- Link each inference to a specific detail in the interpretation.
- For each inference, add a specific piece of your own knowledge that supports or challenges this interpretation of the life of the poor in Elizabethan times.
- Use your notes to write your answer.

**Interpretation A** *From Family Life in Shakespeare's Time, an online resource for American schools by Joseph Papp and Elizabeth Kirkland, 2003.*

If you woke up one morning and suddenly found yourself in a sixteenth-century family, you might be surprised at how familiar everything seemed. Although you would be getting off a lumpy straw mattress and planting your feet on a floor covered with rushes instead of rugs, when you went downstairs you would find a very modern-looking nuclear family – mother, father, and a few sisters and brothers – sitting on stools around the breakfast table drinking their morning beer (that might be different!) and eating their bread and butter before getting on with the day's work.

- A The family live in a two-storey house
- B They are well fed
- C They are much like a modern family
- D Life was pleasant

### Test yourself

- 1 List five reasons why poverty increased during Elizabeth's reign.
- 2 List two reasons why wandering beggars were feared by the Elizabethan authorities.
- 3 Name a law (with date) that the Elizabethans passed to deal with the problem of poverty.

### Practice question

Explain what was important about the problems of poverty in Elizabethan England. (8 marks)



## 11.5 English sailors: Hawkins, Drake and Raleigh

REVISED

### Elizabethan privateers and traders challenged Spanish power in the New World

- Before Elizabeth's reign, Spain and Portugal dominated European exploration. This made them rich and gave them large empires in North, South and Central America (called the 'New World').
- Elizabeth and her government wanted England to join in this exploration and expand English trade.
- Catholic Spain was very hostile to England and would not grant the English sailors a licence to trade with its colonies.
- The English response was **privateering**. Privateers were licensed by the government to attack Spanish ships which were carrying precious cargos back to Europe.
- Privateers were really pirates but they were funded by rich Elizabethans including Elizabeth herself who took a share of their profits.

#### Key point

The achievements of the Elizabethan 'Sea Dogs' were celebrated and made England richer. But England made enemies and mistakes along the way.

### Drake became the most celebrated English explorer and the first to sail round the world

- In the 1560s, John Hawkins made three voyages to the Caribbean, trading slaves that he had captured in west Africa. On his last trip he was attacked by the Spanish.
- Francis Drake was John Hawkins' cousin. He accompanied Hawkins on his final voyage. He was driven by patriotism and an anti-Catholic desire to seek revenge for the attack on Hawkins.
- Drake attacked Spanish treasure ships travelling from Mexico and Peru. He also attacked the Spanish port of Nombre del Dios in Panama.
- Drake then became the first Englishman to **circumnavigate** (sail right around) the globe in 1577–80.
- He attacked Spanish ships on his way and returned with treasure worth £200 million in today's money. He was knighted by the Queen on the deck of his flagship, *The Golden Hind*.
- Drake became vice-admiral of the navy and later played a key role in the defeat of the Spanish Armada.
- John Hawkins designed improved ships for the navy based on his experience of fighting the Spanish.

### Raleigh failed in his attempts to set up the first English colonies in America

- Spain and Portugal had successful colonies in the New World. Elizabethans wanted something similar.
- It was hoped an American colony would provide wine, oil, sugar and **flax**. It was also thought that poor people from England could go to live there and so help reduce poverty problems in England.
- Sir Walter Raleigh was one of Elizabeth's favourite courtiers. She granted him a **patent** (a licence) to set up a **colony** in America.
- He claimed an area of north America and named it Virginia to honour Elizabeth, the 'Virgin Queen'. He never visited North America himself.
- Both his attempts to found a colony failed. In 1585, the first settlers faced so many problems that they left after a year; the second group disappeared without trace.

- In 1595, Raleigh led another unsuccessful expedition to search for a supposed 'city of gold' named El Dorado in South America. He hoped to achieve fame and fortune. He failed again.
- People learned from Raleigh's mistakes. Just four years after Elizabeth died the first successful English colony was established at Jamestown.

### English traders set up important new trading links with the Far East

- It was not all about America. English explorers also joined in the search for new routes to China and the Far East.
- England's trade was over-reliant on the cloth industry and on Antwerp. This was disrupted by war with Spain and Elizabeth's government wanted to find new trading partners and markets.
- New companies were set up such as the East India Company in 1601 bringing silk, spices, cotton and tea from the Far East.

#### Test yourself

- Why did Elizabethan explorers undertake voyages of discovery?
- Name three explorers and what they were famed for.
- What collective name was given to these Elizabethan adventurers?
- What was the name of the first successfully established English colony?

#### Develop the explanation

Question 2 in your exam will ask you to explain importance. For example:

**Explain what was important about exploration in Elizabeth's reign. (8 marks)**

The statements below identify some features of Elizabethan exploration. For each one, write some notes to explain its importance. The first one has been done for you.

Feature	Explanation – why this was important in Elizabethan England
Hawkins' early voyages	Hawkins began the slave trade operating between West Africa and the West Indies. His cousin, Francis Drake went with him on his last voyage. They were attacked by Spaniards. This fired up Drake to seek revenge and encouraged Hawkins to design improved ships which helped defeat the Spanish Armada
Privateering	
Drake's round the world voyage	
Raleigh's North American colonies	

#### Practice question

How convincing is Interpretation B about the motives for Raleigh's colonisation plans? Explain your answer using Interpretation B and your contextual knowledge. (8 marks)

**INTERPRETATION B** From Elizabeth: The Forgotten Years by John Guy, 2016.

... in July 1584 Raleigh began building a team of experts skilled in ... astronomy, geometry, cartography and arithmetic. He was intent on merging his plans for colonization and conquest in the New World with a daringly global solution to the problem of King Philip and the Netherlands.



## 11.6 Religion: plots, threats and government responses

REVISED

### Elizabeth's religious settlement is known as the 'Middle Way' because it was a compromise

- Under Edward and Mary, England had seesawed between Protestant and Catholic ways.
- Elizabeth was a Protestant. She rejected Catholic beliefs such as **transubstantiation**.
- But she was not a religious **radical** like a Puritan. She still liked church decoration, music and ceremonies.
- Elizabeth passed two important laws in May 1559 to establish what her Church should be like:

Act of Supremacy	Act of Uniformity
Re-established that the Church of England was independent – not ruled by the Pope in Rome	Attendance at Anglican services made compulsory
Made Elizabeth Supreme Governor of this independent Church of England	Bible and services should be in English
	Clergy could marry
	Catholic practices such as pilgrimages and saints days banned
	Altars replaced with Communion tables
	But as a compromise to Catholics, candles, clothes and colourful robes ( <b>vestments</b> ) were allowed

#### Key point

In Elizabethan England, religion was a major issue and Catholics were seen as a threat. Some plotted against Elizabeth which led to further repression. However, most people accepted Elizabeth's 'Middle Way' in the end.

### Some Puritans opposed the Middle Way

- Some senior people at Court were Puritans who wanted to get rid of all Catholic features.
- Some MPs spoke in favour of Puritan ideas in Parliament. Elizabeth forbade them to debate religion. Peter Wentworth was imprisoned for challenging her right to decide on religious issues.
- Even the Archbishop of Canterbury, Edmund Grindal, lost his job because he refused to close down Puritan meetings called **prophesyings**. Elizabeth thought these meetings encouraged people away from the religious doctrine she had settled.
- John Stubbs wrote a Puritan pamphlet criticising Elizabeth's religious settlement. He had his right hand cut off as punishment.

### The Middle Way also faced Catholic opposition. Leading Catholics plotted against Elizabeth

- Some Catholics refused to attend Anglican services. They were known as **recusants**. They were fined.
- Some Catholics went further and plotted against Elizabeth.
- This threat increased in 1568 when Mary, Queen of Scots came to England. She was kept in prison by Elizabeth but became the focus of Catholic plots.
- Catholics in England got support from Europe. For example, in 1568 a **seminary** was set up in the Netherlands to train **missionary** priests to come to England to keep Catholicism alive.

### The Northern Earls rebelled in 1569

- Causes:** The Catholic Earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland were unhappy with the religious settlement. They planned to free Mary, marry her to the Duke of Norfolk who would overthrow Elizabeth, and return the country to Catholicism.
- Events:** 5000 rebels heard an illegal Catholic mass at Durham Cathedral then captured Barnard Castle and Hartlepool. They hoped for help from Catholic leaders in Europe. This never came. When Elizabeth's army moved north, the rebels retreated.
- Consequences:** Elizabeth reorganised the Council of the North (which had failed to crush the rebellion). She confiscated rebel lands. Northumberland was executed along with 500 rebels.

### After the rebellion fear of Catholic plots and repression of Catholics increased

- In 1570, the Pope **excommunicated** Elizabeth. His **Papal Bull** ordered Catholics to disobey the Queen's laws. This encouraged other rebels. All recusants were seen as potential plotters.

1571	From 1580	1581	1585	1603
The Treason Act made distributing the Papal Bull or denying the Queen's supremacy punishable by death  To prevent Catholics going on missionary activity, any land left unoccupied for six months could be confiscated	<b>Jesuit</b> missionaries posed a new threat. They travelled secretly around the county, hiding in 'safe houses' owned by wealthy Catholics. They conducted Catholic services to keep Catholic beliefs alive in England	Recusancy fines were raised from 12 pence to £20. Few people were rich enough to pay	A law stated that if you were <b>ordained</b> (made into a Catholic priest) that was treason. All existing priests had to leave the country within 40 days	By the end of the reign there were still Catholic sympathisers, but only two per cent were actual recusants

### Improve the paragraphs

These paragraphs attempt to answer the question:

**Write an account of the ways in which the Northern Rebellion affected England. (8 marks)**

It has some good points but it also includes some unsubstantiated points and does not connect back to the question. Highlight the weaknesses and then rewrite it to improve it.

The Northern Rebellion was the first rebellion faced by Elizabeth. It was triggered by Mary, Queen of Scots. It was led by some earls. They were unhappy with Elizabeth but also wanted power.

Thousands marched to Durham and illegally heard mass. Then they marched to Hartlepool for Spanish help. When they heard Elizabeth's army was marching north the rebels fled to Scotland. They were rounded up and killed.

The rebellion showed how weak Elizabeth was in northern England and it made her change things. It also increased anti-Catholic suspicion.

### Practice question

What was important about the problem of recusancy in Elizabethan England?

(8 marks)

### Test yourself

- What two laws established Elizabeth's religious settlement?
- What was a recusant?
- Why did the Northern Earls rebel?
- What was the Papal Bull of 1570?



## 11.7 Mary, Queen of Scots: threat, plots, execution and impact

REVISED

### Mary's arrival in England posed a big problem for Elizabeth

- Mary was Elizabeth's cousin. Some saw her as the rightful heir to the throne of England.
- She was a Catholic who had been married briefly to the King of France. When he died she returned to Scotland and married Lord Darnley.
- They had a son, James (who would later become James VI of Scotland and James I of England).
- Darnley was a violent drunk. He was murdered. Mary then married the Earl of Bothwell who was chief suspect in Darnley's murder.
- Gossip was that Mary was involved in the crime. She was forced to **abdicate** (give up her throne) in favour of her son.
- In May 1568, Mary fled to Cumberland in the hope that her cousin Elizabeth would help her.
- Elizabeth feared Mary would become the focus of Catholic plots. She never met Mary but kept her under house arrest in isolated locations.

#### Key point

Mary was a constant threat to Elizabeth. Elizabeth continually refused to execute Mary despite her involvement in plots and pressure from key advisers. Discovery of her involvement in the Babington Plot finally led to her trial and execution in 1587.

### Mary became the focus for Catholic plots but they all failed

- The first major plot led to the Northern Rebellion of 1569 (described on page 245).
- The Pope then excommunicated Elizabeth, which encouraged Catholics to rebel against her because if she did not have the Pope's blessing she could not be the rightful ruler.
- Two more plots soon followed although they never got as far as being actual rebellions:

The Ridolfi Plot, 1571	The Throckmorton Plot, 1583
Ridolfi was an Italian banker living in London. He plotted that Elizabeth would be killed. Mary would marry the Duke of Norfolk and become Queen.	This plot had Spanish and Papal backing. Mary would be Queen. The rebellion would be supported by French soldiers and Jesuit priests as well as English Catholics.
Ridolfi calculated that half the English nobles were Catholic and could raise 40,000 supporters and he expected 6000 Spanish troops to come to support the rebellion.	Once again Elizabeth's spies uncovered the plot. Throckmorton was tortured and confessed.
Elizabeth's spies uncovered the plot before anything happened. Norfolk was executed in 1572 but, despite pleas from Parliament and the Privy Council, Mary was spared.	The Spanish ambassador was expelled. No more Spanish ambassadors were allowed in England under Elizabeth.
	Once again lack of evidence meant Mary remained untouchable.

- Following this, a **Bond of Association** was established that anyone associated with a plot against Elizabeth could not benefit from her death in any way.

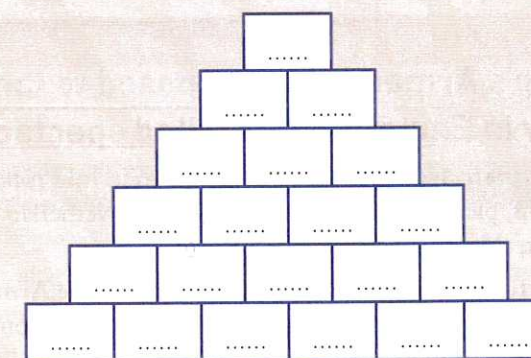
### The Babington Plot finally led to Mary's execution. Mary became a martyr

- Mary had been the focus of the Catholic plots but there had been not enough evidence of her involvement for a conviction. Spymaster Walsingham was determined to find hard evidence. The Babington Plot gave him the opportunity to prove Mary was involved.
- In 1585, Mary was a 'prisoner' at Chartley Hall. She was losing hope and became resentful. She corresponded in code with the French ambassador and Anthony Babington, a recusant. They hatched a plot (just like the other plots) to kill Elizabeth and put Mary on the throne helped by a Spanish invasion force.
- Mary's letters were intercepted by a double agent and decoded. Walsingham found out about the plot but let them carry on their correspondence.
- Once Walsingham had proof of Mary's guilt, she was put on trial. She was executed in February 1587.
- Elizabeth was wracked with guilt over this **regicide** (killing of a monarch). She had signed Mary's death warrant but claimed that had only been a precaution so the Council had acted without her consent in executing her.
- The execution made Mary a **martyr** (someone who dies for their religious beliefs). Despite this, English Catholics mostly remained loyal to Elizabeth. However, Catholics abroad were shocked. Mary's execution led King Philip of Spain to declare war and launch the Armada invasion force in 1588.

### Topic summary

Complete the diagram below in your own words or phrases to sum up this topic.

- **One** phrase to sum up the topic
- **Two** words to describe Mary
- **Three** plots to make Mary queen
- **Four** words to sum up why Mary's presence in England was a problem for Elizabeth
- **Five** words describing how Elizabeth managed the tricky situation
- **Six** words describing Mary's execution and its consequences



Use your completed pyramid to tackle the practice question.

### Practice question

Write an account of the impact of Mary, Queen of Scots on England after 1568. (8 marks)

### Test yourself

- 1 Why did Mary come to England?
- 2 List three plots linked to Mary (with dates)
- 3 How did the Babington Plot help Walsingham?
- 4 Why did Elizabeth feel guilty over Mary's death?



## 11.8 Conflict with Spain and the defeat of the Spanish Armada

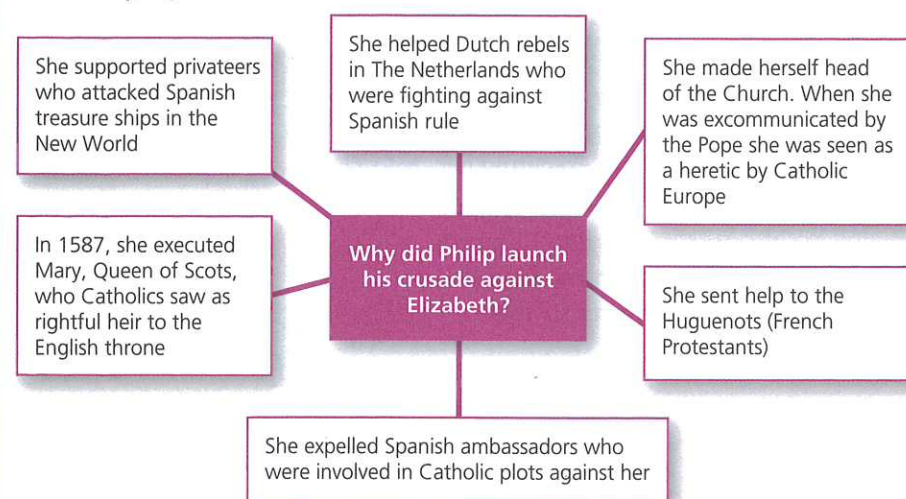
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### The execution of Mary, Queen of Scots led Philip of Spain to launch his Catholic crusade against Elizabeth

- Philip II was the most powerful man in the world. He had been married to Queen Mary (Elizabeth's sister).
- He hoped to marry Elizabeth to control England, but Elizabeth turned him down because she did not want to marry and because he was a Catholic.
- Over the coming years Elizabeth's actions antagonised Philip. The execution of Mary, Queen of Scots was the final straw.

#### Key point

After years of hostility, Philip launched his 'Enterprise of England'. Against the odds, England triumphed. This boosted national pride and Elizabeth used this propaganda opportunity to enhance her reputation.



### Philip's Armada was supposed to land a Spanish army in England but it failed spectacularly

- The plan:** 130 ships set out from Spain in July 1588. The plan was to sail to Calais, pick up soldiers from the Spanish Netherlands, take them to land in Kent, then to attack London.
- Warning beacons:** Elizabeth knew about the Armada but didn't know where it would land so set up warning beacons along the coast of England.
- Tight formation:** English ships sighted the Armada off Cornwall and chased them up the English Channel. The Spanish kept their tight crescent formation which made it hard to attack.
- Waiting in Calais:** the Armada moored off Calais and waited for the Duke of Parma's soldiers who were delayed.
- Fireships:** the English sent eight fireships (unmanned ships filled with burning materials) towards the Spanish fleet. The Spanish boats scattered.
- Battle of Gravelines:** the English attacked the Spanish boats at the Battle of Gravelines on 8 August 1588. The English destroyed five Spanish ships. Two more ran aground. No English ships were damaged; 1000 Spaniards were killed and 800 wounded; 50 English had been killed.
- Wind:** strong winds blew the Spanish ships northwards and it was clear they could not get back to meet the Duke of Parma.
- Shipwreck:** the English chased them northwards. The Spanish tried to sail home round the north of Scotland. In the stormy weather many boats sank on the Scottish and Irish coasts. Only 60 ships made it back to Spain.

### The Armada failed for five main reasons

- Flawed plan:** communication between the Armada and the Spanish soldiers was impossible so the rendezvous never happened.
- Leadership:** Medina Sidonia, the Armada commander, was cautious and inexperienced whereas Lord Howard was decisive and made good use of 'hit and run' specialist Francis Drake.
- Ships:** Spanish ships called **galleons** were heavier and slower than the swifter, manoeuvrable English vessels that Hawkins had designed.
- Guns:** the Spanish used short-range guns and relied on getting close to the enemy. The English used accurate long-range guns, **culverins**. English guns could be quickly reloaded and they fired **broadside**s, where all the guns on one side of a ship are fired simultaneously.
- Weather:** strong winds blew the Spanish north and storms wrecked many ships.

### The defeat of the supposedly 'invincible' Armada was a propaganda victory for Elizabeth

- Elizabeth believed the victory showed that God was on her side. The storm which blew the Spanish north became known as the 'Protestant wind'.
- Victory was celebrated with a special medal and the 'Armada Portrait'.
- Elizabeth made a famous speech to troops at Tilbury: *'I have the body of a weak and feeble woman but I have the heart and stomach of a king.'*
- England's Protestantism and independence had been safeguarded. But it did not end the war with Spain which dragged on until 1604 when both Elizabeth and Philip were dead.

#### Test yourself

- List five reasons why Philip sent the Armada.
- List five reasons why the Armada failed.
- When was the war finally over?

#### Develop the explanation

The statements below identify some of the reasons why the Armada was important. For each one, add one or two more sentences to turn it from a description into an explanation. One has been done for you.

Description	Explanation
Mary, Queen of Scots' execution angered Philip	Philip felt that Elizabeth had murdered a legitimate Catholic and so a Catholic crusade may be needed to stop the spread of Protestantism. This meant that the 'enterprise of England' was more likely.
The Pope excommunicated Elizabeth	
Philip was angry about English privateers	
The Armada was going to pick up troops	
The Armada was large	

#### Practice question

Write an account of the events in the 1580s to show why Philip sent an Armada to England. (8 marks)



## Question 1: Evaluate the content of an interpretation

How convincing is Interpretation C about the reasons for the defeat of the Spanish Armada? (8 marks)

**INTERPRETATION C** From *The Spanish Armada* by F. Fernandez-Armesto (1989)

Good weather ... was essential for Spanish success ... They needed good weather to preserve their fragile Mediterranean shipping, calm seas to maximise the effectiveness of their galleasses [ships] ... a moderate swell to compensate for the inexperience of their gunners and ...

The interpretation is partially convincing. The weather was certainly a factor which harmed the Spanish Armada. The interpretation suggests that the Spanish were relying on calm conditions because their ships weren't robust and their gunners lacked experience at sea. This is a convincing view because we know the weather played a part during the fighting and after the Battle of Gravelines many of the ships didn't make it back to Spain. Elizabeth had victory medals struck afterwards with the words 'God blew and they were scattered'.

However, there was more to the defeat than just the weather. The Spanish were also unprepared. Sidonia was an inexperienced commander and the whole mission was poorly planned. Philip was relying on communication between Parma in the Netherlands and Sidonia at sea. This was almost impossible. If Parma had met up with the fleet, Philip's original scheme might have worked then the weather would have been less important. The interpretation makes no mention of this.

### Model answers

Here are model answers for each question type on the British depth study. The annotations highlight what makes it a good answer.

Clearly states an answer to the question and accurately sums up the view in the interpretation. At the end of each paragraph it links back to the interpretation

Uses specific contextual knowledge to challenge or support the interpretation

Uses clear paragraph starters to show the structure of the answer

## Question 2: Explain importance

What was important about the problem of recusancy in Elizabethan England? (8 marks)

The problem of recusancy was important because it meant that Elizabeth potentially had disloyal subjects in England. She had already seen people refuse to accept her religious settlement and directly challenge her authority during the Northern Rebellion in 1569. The rebels illegally held mass in Durham Cathedral. This early threat was swiftly and decisively dealt with.

The Papal Bull excommunicating Elizabeth in 1570 made the situation more serious because it encouraged recusancy. Catholics now were ordered to disobey the Queen and refuse to attend church. Recusants were now potential plotters and Mary, Queen of Scots became the focus of Catholic schemes to depose Elizabeth. As a result, Elizabeth was increasingly threatened by Catholic plots and assassination attempts. The authorities were so alarmed that a new Treason Act soon followed in 1571 which meant anyone denying Elizabeth's supremacy could be put to death. Some wealthy recusants harboured missionary priests who influenced wealthy families to stay loyal to the Pope.

The authorities were so concerned that in 1581 recusancy fines were raised to a crippling £20 from 12 pence. This meant that most English Catholics could not afford to continue to miss church and were forced to conform. Those who remained 'obstinate' were associated with England's enemies and so the idea was reinforced that recusants were dangerous, unpatriotic and disloyal. The government campaign against them had worked.

Directly addresses the question. This helps you to focus your answer

Uses relevant, precise and detailed knowledge to support the point

Clearly links each paragraph back to the question

Links the evidence back to the question by explaining why this was significant

## Question 3: Write an account

Write an account of the ways in which the Puritans posed a challenge to Elizabeth and her regime. (8 marks)

Puritans campaigned in the 1560s, 1570s and 1580s to persuade Elizabeth to further 'purify' the Elizabethan Church of all traces of the Catholic religion.

Their ideas were spreading, especially in London and the south-east. Influential Privy Counsellors such as the Earl of Leicester and Sir Francis Walsingham were Puritans, as were many MPs who put pressure on the Queen to make changes to the Church of England.

Puritans challenged Elizabeth in various ways, for instance, in Parliament in 1566 they argued priests should only wear plain black gowns. In 1571 Walter Strickland aimed to ban vestments and introduce a new prayer book. Elizabeth closed Parliament down before Strickland's ideas could be discussed. Anthony Cope tried in 1584 to establish a new prayer book and ban bishops. This threatened Elizabeth's Church structure, and she had Cope imprisoned.

Further challenges came outside Parliament when Puritans condemned the theatre. William Stubbs wrote in 1583 of the immoral behaviour encouraged by plays and criticised Elizabeth's marriage talks. This encroached on the Queen's prerogative. Elizabeth used theatre as a method of maintaining social control, so this was seen as an attack on her regime. She ordered Stubbs to have his right hand cut off.

Opens with a statement directly linked to the question

Relevant detailed knowledge shows grasp of the question

Clear paragraph starters give the answer structure

Analyses developments to assess the nature of the challenge and Elizabeth's rebuttal or the consequences

## Question 4: Historic environment essay

This question will mention one development or cause and you have to argue that this was (or was not) the main change or cause. For example:

'The main reason for the growing popularity of the theatre in Elizabethan England was the development of new purpose-built structures.'

How far does a study of Shakespeare's Globe support this statement? (16 marks)

This requires a balanced essay combining your general knowledge of Elizabethan England with specific knowledge from the site you have studied. A good answer will weigh up the point mentioned in the question against at least two others.

Going to the theatre was very popular in late Elizabethan England and this was partly the result of purpose-built theatres. Attending plays in the courtyards of inns had always been popular but in 1576 a purpose-built structure called 'The Theatre' was built by James Burbage in Shoreditch near London. It was probably the first ever purpose-built theatre. It allowed Burbage to put on more ambitious productions. Audiences grew as a result and more purpose-built theatres were built. In 1598 there was a dispute over the lease on The Theatre so Burbage's son dismantled it overnight and a team of carpenters led by Peter Street used the timber to build a new, bigger theatre on the south bank of the River Thames called The Globe. It was probably larger than any other London theatre with capacity for 2,000. People flocked there on wherries across the River Thames. The poor could pay 1p to stand in the area around the stage as groundlings or the rich could pay more to sit in the tiered seats. Because it was purpose-built, a stock of props could be stored in the tiring house, and the frons scenae could be elaborately painted or hung with tapestries to suit the play. These features made productions more exciting which boosted the popularity of the theatre. So there is plenty of evidence that the purpose-built theatres boosted the popularity of plays.

Here is an example paragraph combining general knowledge about Elizabeth theatre with specific site knowledge about The Globe.

The answer opens by directly addressing the factor which is given in the question. Later paragraphs would deal with other important reasons such as:

- patronage from the queen and rich courtiers
- propaganda – telling the Tudor version of English history
- profit – entrepreneurs such as Burbage
- playwrights and actors such as Shakespeare

General knowledge of the topic supports the argument of the paragraph

Detailed, site-specific knowledge supports the argument of the paragraph

Connects the evidence back to the point of the paragraph



## Glossary: Elizabethan England, c1568–1603

- Abdicate** Give up the throne
- Alliance** An agreement between countries to work together against a shared enemy
- Alms** Charity given to the poor. Almshouses are houses provided for poor people to live in
- Bond of Association** Anyone associated with a plot against Elizabeth could not benefit from her death in any way
- Broadside** Where all the guns on one side of a ship are fired simultaneously
- Circumnavigate** Sail around the world
- Colony** An area under the control of another country
- Concession** Something granted following demands for it
- Courtier** Member of the royal Court
- Culverin** Accurate long-range ship's cannon
- Enclosure** The division of land, including the village common land, into separate fields with hedges, allowing a change from arable to sheep farming
- Excommunicated** To be expelled from the Church
- Fireship** Unmanned ship filled with burning material
- Flax** A plant used to make linen
- Galleon** A large ship, especially used by Spain, either as a warship or for trading
- Humanism** Intellectual branch of the Renaissance, drawing on classical texts and stressing the dignity of mankind
- Jesuit** Roman Catholic missionary priest
- Labouring poor** Those who work with their hands
- Legitimacy** Right to rule
- Martyr** Someone who dies for his or her religious beliefs
- Missionary** Someone sent on a mission to spread his or her faith
- Monopoly** The exclusive right to sell a product. Elizabeth sold these monopolies to favourite courtiers as a way of keeping support
- Nobility** Large landowners
- Ordained** Made into a priest
- Parliament** The supreme legislative body. Responsible in the sixteenth century with the Queen for making laws and deciding about taxes
- Papal Bull** An official document issued by the Pope
- Patent** A licence
- Patronage** Duties at Court
- Prerogative** An exclusive right or privilege
- Privateering** The actions of pirates licensed by the government to attack and take enemy ships
- Privy Council** A group of trusted ministers who advise a monarch
- Progress** When the monarch and courtiers went to stay with powerful nobles
- Prorogue** Postpone
- Propaganda** Something that spreads a message in order to encourage people to think or behave in a particular way
- Propheysings** Prayer meetings where the Bible was discussed and sermons said
- Puritan** An extreme Protestant, strongly opposed to Catholic ideas and styles of worship
- Radical** Extreme. Usually used to describe views or someone holding views that are very different from what is commonly accepted
- Recusant** Someone, usually a Roman Catholic, who refused to go to Church services
- Regicide** Killing of a monarch
- Renaissance** An intellectual and cultural movement originating in Italy in the Middle Ages, heavily influenced by the Ancient Greeks and Romans
- Seminary** A place where priests are trained
- Subsidy** Grant of money to the Queen
- Suitors** Possible husbands
- Transubstantiation** Belief that at mass the bread and wine miraculously turn into Christ's body and blood
- Treason** Disloyalty to your country, monarch or government
- Vagrant** A homeless, unemployed person who wanders from place to place and begs
- Vestments** Clerical robes
- Workhouse** An umbrella term for the institutions set up by the Poor Law. Separate institutions were envisaged by the laws, but the distinctions between them became blurred over time. In theory, poorhouses were to provide shelter for the 'impotent poor', workhouses to provide work for the 'able-bodied poor', and 'Houses of Correction' were to detain the 'idle poor'