

THE ELIZABETHANS TOPIC 1 – POWER – KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER

1. Elizabeth and her Court

Key Terms

Patronage – system of employment and favours based on knowing people personally.

Parliament – law making body made up of Commons and Lords

House of Commons – made up of gentry chosen by nobles

House of Lords – made up of nobles and Bishops

Government – group of people running the country

Divine Right – the monarch's power comes from God.

Nobles – people of aristocratic or high birth

Gentry – land owning people who generally didn't have titles.

Courtier – member of the court

Policies – a course of action

Privy Council – small group of advisors close to the Queen

Privy Chamber – Queen's personal rooms

Heir – next in line to the throne

Rebellion – attempt to remove the ruler/monarch

Proclamation – official announcement

Succession – arrangement of who takes the throne following the Queen's death

Foreign Policy – dealing with other nations

Monopolies – rights to import and sell certain goods

Propaganda – spreading a one sided message widely

Censorship – preventing people from saying or publishing whatever they like

Government through patronage

- Power came from the top down through patronage – God appointed the Queen and she chose nobles to help her rule. They appointed gentry to help them locally.
- Patronage meant that friendship and favour mattered more than talent. Personal relationships mattered.

The Court

- Nobles and higher gentry favoured by the Queen – met at Whitehall (the most) Windsor, Richmond, Greenwich and others.
- Most favoured courtiers got given accommodation at court and some built houses near Whitehall.
- Mary I had been criticised for isolating herself so Elizabeth liked to be seen in public and use her court.
- Court was a spectacle, it had; dances, plays, feasts, open-air sermons, jousting tournaments, hunting expeditions.
- The Queen relied on her nobles to keep the peace and let her know the mood of the people but they relied on her for power.
- Elizabeth offered patronage to a wide range of noble families in the form of titles, jobs, grants and pensions – this was to ensure no groups joined forces against each other or her, she learnt this lesson from her father.
- Although Elizabeth was a Protestant, she gave some power to Catholic noble families to keep their loyalty.

The Privy Chamber

- Elizabeth spent most of her day here – reading, talking, playing music or cards. Ladies in waiting looked after her, they came from noble families. They kept her informed of conversations at court. Only most trusted courtiers were allowed to discuss business in her rooms.

The Privy Council

- Met almost every day but didn't always all attend. Advised on finance, trade, law, defence. Enacted her policies.
- Privy Councillors were selected directly by the Queen, she learnt from her father that she needed to ensure they didn't gain too much individual power.
- She limited it to about 19 members, 7-8 at most meetings; she appointed councillors with different view points; she used her temper; she sometimes attended meetings; she dismissed those who offended her; she encouraged and rewarded flattery.

Secretaries of State

- **Sir Francis Walsingham (SoS 1572-90)**
- **Sir William Cecil, Lord Burghley (SoS 1558-72 and 1590-98)**

The rebellion of the Earl of Essex

- Robert Devereux was good friends with the Queen in the mid 1580s, he angered the Queen a number of times, once by marrying without her permission. He was on the Privy Council from 1593. Devereux clashed with William Cecil and his son Robert, culminating in a crisis when he led an expedition to put down a rebellion in Ireland in 1599 and awarded rewards without Elizabeth's permission. He lost his jobs so then he turned to James VI of Scotland to try to plot to help him as the heir. Essex arranged for a threatening production of Shakespeare about a king giving up his throne and rode through London with 300 supporters thinking he could rebel but it collapsed. He was executed in 1601.

Parliament had less power than now. In 45 years of Elizabeth's reign they met for only 35 months overall. Parliament had three elements;

1. The monarch (rarely at meetings) 2. The House of Lords – nobles and bishops 3. The House of Commons – gentry selected by other wealthy citizens

The Queen ruled mostly by Proclamations, but she needed Parliament's approval for big changes to the law or to raise new taxes.

Controlling Parliament – Elizabeth kept control in various ways;

- Elizabeth set strict limits on what they could discuss – they could not bring forward their own views on her marriage, religion, the succession or foreign policy.
- MPs were not really elected; they were selected by Lords; several Privy Councillors served as MPs in both the Commons and Lords; Privy Council organised daily business in Parliament.
- The Queen could reject laws by refusing to sign them or by closing parliament but she did often compromise.

Puritan Opposition – despite her control critics in Parliament who were Puritans did speak out;

- Puritans wanted more; for Elizabeth to marry a Protestant prince and have a Protestant successor; To allow local churches to choose their leaders; to give MPs freedom of speech.
- They also criticised her in writing; Nov 1579 John Stubbes wrote a pamphlet criticising her for considering marriage to a French Catholic. These were destroyed and Stubbes arrested; his hand was cut off in punishment and he was imprisoned. On his release in 1581 he carried on writing and became an MP in 1589 and continued to criticise the Queen in the House of Commons.

The business of Parliament – they were called more often 1580-1603 because of the Catholic threat but she faced opposition over;

Religion – Puritans demanded to do away with Bishops in 1584 and 1586. Elizabeth banned the discussion of this; three MPs did so outside of Parliament and she had them imprisoned for a month. When another Puritan encouraged her to name a Protestant heir she imprisoned him in the tower of London

Money – Elizabeth granted 'monopolies' which forced prices up so in 1601 after much criticism she cancelled some and made the 'Golden Speech' to flatter MPs.

2. Elizabeth and her Parliaments

3. Elizabeth and People

Local Government: Lord Lieutenant, Responsibility in each county. Queen chose

most powerful noblemen in each area for this role. He had to ensure his county could provide well trained part time soldiers in time of emergency.

Progress and Pageants

- Progresses in Summer – Elizabeth would leave London and tour the country, staying at houses of noblemen – called 'progresses'. Made sure she was seen by lots of people and often chatted to people she passed.
- Expected comfortable accommodation and entertainment. One Earl created artificial lakes, castles and a warship in 1591 for a visit. Few subjects attended these pageants though.
- Privy Council developed Accession Day Pageants on 17th Nov each year towns and villages celebrated the day Elizabeth took the throne with bonfires and bell-ringing

Publications and Plays

- Not more than 60 printing presses during Elizabeth's reign. Easy to censor publications.
- Privy Council published their own books to defend policies such as executions of Catholics.
- They also spread favourable views of the Queen such as the poem *The Faerie Queene*.
- Elizabeth's final speech to Parliament in 1601 was printed and spread in 2 days.
- Plays she liked would often be printed
- Briefly shut down London theatres in 1597 when a play criticizing the queen was on.

Portraits and pennies

- Coins were the main way most people saw the Queen
- 135 paintings of the Queen survive from her time but there must have been more.
- Privy Council and Elizabeth controlled her image; 1596 burnt paintings that offended her (ie where she looked old); considered giving two artists sole rights to her image but dropped it; 1596 new pattern of her face was issued to hide her age – all portraits had to conform to it.
- Most images were made by and for the wealthy – she expected all courtiers to have a miniature portrait of her at court. Portraits used symbols to get across messages.

Prayers and Preaching

- The law required everyone to attend church on Sunday and use the same Prayer Book. At every service they said a prayer for the Queen which reinforced her as God's chosen ruler.
- A service of thanksgiving was held every Accession Day and the Queen picked church leaders to write special sermons and prayers for these. They thanked God for providing a strong Protestant Queen and protecting her from Catholic threats.
- All preachers had to have a Governmental Licence