

History: Unit 2

Lesson 6 of 30

Enquiry Lesson: What was the biggest challenge Elizabeth faced in her early reign?



Overview: What were the key challenges Elizabeth faced in the early part of her reign?



What were the key challenges Elizabeth faced?



Challenge one: How should Elizabeth govern England?



How should Elizabeth govern England?

- English society was very structured and hierarchical in the 16th century, but it had been difficult for previous monarchs to maintain order.
- English society in the sixteenth century was often a dangerous and violent place, and open rebellion could break out very easily.
- There was no police force or permanent army. Therefore, the unequal structure of society was important for maintaining law and order.



How should Elizabeth govern England?

There were several methods that Elizabeth could use to control England through **central** and **local government**.

- Elizabeth needed to ensure she selected her **Privy Council** wisely to ensure that they remained loyal to her. She used **factionalism** to ensure that her Privy Councillors competed for her attention and **patronage**.
- Elizabeth also relied on local government to control different regions in England. There was one **Lord Lieutenant** who needed to be a loyal member of the nobility so that he would raise an army for Elizabeth if she needed one. **Justices of the Peace** were also responsible for maintaining law and order, although they were unpaid.



How should Elizabeth govern England?

Another aspect of central government that Elizabeth needed to be careful of was **Parliament**.

- Elizabeth relied on the Parliament to pass **Acts** (laws) in the early parts of her reign
- She also relied on them for **parliamentary subsidies**
- Elizabeth needed Parliament but also wanted to use them as little as possible so that they did not feel as though they were gaining too much power



Challenge two: How could Elizabeth deal with her financial issues?



How could Elizabeth deal with her financial problems?

- When Elizabeth came to the throne, she inherited the **Marian Debt** of £300,000. This was because **Mary I** had spent lots of money paying for a war against France.
- There were several methods that Elizabeth could use to create revenue. However, some of them could be unpopular.
- For example, **parliamentary subsidies** involved Parliament raising taxes for ordinary people, and then granting the money to Elizabeth. This was a problem because Elizabeth could lose popularity with ordinary members of society. She also did not want to rely too heavily on Parliament for money, as this gave them more power.
- Elizabeth therefore had to spend very carefully during the early years of her reign.



Challenge three: What challenges did Elizabeth face from European powers?



What challenges did Elizabeth face from European powers?

- England was not a very powerful country compared to **Spain** and **France** in the mid-Sixteenth Century
- England was not particularly popular
- **Mary** had been at war with France and lost England the port of **Calais**
- **Scotland** and **France** had the **Auld Alliance** - defensive Treaty against Elizabeth
- **Spain** had control and influence between 1553-1558 over **England** due to the marriage of **Mary** and **Philip II of Spain**
- The relationship with the **Papal States** had been strained under by the break with Rome in the 1530s
- Elizabeth wanted to establish **Protestantism** as the official religion, but most powerful countries were **Catholic**



Glossary

Privy Council - The small group of advisors chosen by the monarch to support her in the running of government on a day-to-day basis

Factions - groups of courtiers who would side with each other against other rival factions and compete for the attention of the monarch

Patronage - A system of rewarding loyal members of the nobility with land and titles in different parts of England

Parliament - Made up of the House of Commons and Lords and containing about 450 MPs, they passed Acts of Parliament (Laws) and raised taxes

Parliamentary subsidies - taxes that were raised and collected by the Parliament that could be granted to the monarch for extra finance

Marian debt - the £300,000 debt that Mary I left the Crown in by 1558



Written task

We have looked at several challenges that Elizabeth faced in the early years of her reign. These included:

- Issues with governance
- Issues with finance
- Issues with foreign powers

Question to answer: What was the biggest challenge Elizabeth faced in the early years of her reign?

Write an extended response to this question using the guidance on the next slide. You should aim to write 1-2 paragraphs (half a page of A4).

Remember to use specific factual details such as key words, people and, dates.



Question to answer: What was the biggest challenge Elizabeth faced in the early years of her reign?

Suggested structure

Point: Signpost what you are going to say or argue in the paragraph

Evidence: Giving specific factual detail to support your argument

Explain: Say why the evidence you have selected supports your argument

Link: Link back to the question OR to other ideas to explain why your factor is more important than other factors

Sentence stems

Elizabeth faced several issues at the beginning of her reign. These included...

The biggest of these challenges was... this was when...

This posed the greatest challenge for Elizabeth because...

This was more significant than the other challenges because...

