

History: Unit 2

Lesson 15 of 30

# How significant a threat did the Revolt of the Northern Earls pose to Elizabeth?



# What were the events of the Revolt?



# What were the key events of the Revolt?

In September 1549, **Robert Dudley** informed **Elizabeth** about the planned revolt by the Catholic **Northern Earls**. He had planned to marry **Mary, Queen of Scots** and support the Earls to overthrow Elizabeth. The **Duke of Norfolk** was arrested and sent to the Tower of London for his involvement in the plot.

The **Northern Earls, Westmorland** and **Northumberland**, decided to go ahead with the revolt anyway, even though **Norfolk** had promised to raise troops to help them march on London.



# What were the key events of the Revolt?

- **9th November:** **Northumberland** and **Westmorland's** soldiers assemble.
- **14th November:** The Earls' forces capture **Durham Cathedral** (an important religious building) which was run by **James Pilkington**, the archbishop of Durham. **Pilkington** escapes to the south of England. They celebrate a **Catholic Mass**.
- **16th November:** The **Earl of Sussex** attempts to raise an army against the rebels, but writes to the Privy Council to say that he can't raise a big enough army.
- **14th December:** The Earls capture Barnard Castle in Durham.
- **16th December:** 14,000 soldiers fighting for Elizabeth march north and reach the River Tees. The 5,000 rebel soldiers flee to the north.
- **19th December:** The revolt is defeated as Northumberland and Westmorland flee to Scotland.



# Why did the Revolt fail?

The revolt failed due to the following factors:

- The **Duke of Norfolk** was arrested and imprisoned before it began, so could not send troops to support..
- **Philip II** failed to send the soldiers that the Earls were hoping for.
- **Mary, Queen of Scots** was moved further south and heavily guarded so she could not escape and join the rebellion.



# What was the aftermath of the revolt?



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After the revolt, 450 rebel soldiers were executed in order for Elizabeth to make an example of what would happen should people choose to rebel against her.

**Westmorland** escaped, but **Northumberland** was captured and executed in 1572 - Elizabeth asked that his head be put on a spike above the city gates of York to again show an example of what happened to traitors. The **Duke of Norfolk** was pardoned and released, probably because he swore his allegiance (loyalty) to Elizabeth.

Elizabeth hesitated in her decision about what to do with **Mary, Queen of Scots**. She had only been in the country for a year and already a conspiracy had occurred with her involvement. She chose to keep her imprisoned.

Elizabeth also sent a the **Earl of Huntingdon** to lead the **Council of the North**. He was a loyal Protestant and was tasked with suppressing Catholicism in the north, this marked the end of Elizabeth's toleration towards Catholicism.



# What was the excommunication of Elizabeth?

In 1570, the **Pope** issued a **Bull of Excommunication**. This was an order that Elizabeth be exiled from the Catholic church. Crucially, it also gave permission for Catholics to now overthrow Elizabeth, because the Pope said she was no longer recognised by God as the rightful Queen. The Pope hoped that this would encourage a successful rebellion.

**Elizabeth** reacted by passing a new **Treason Act in 1571**, which stated that anyone who spread the **Papal Bull** could be tried for **treason** (a crime of betraying one's country). This again showed the ending of her tolerance towards Catholics.

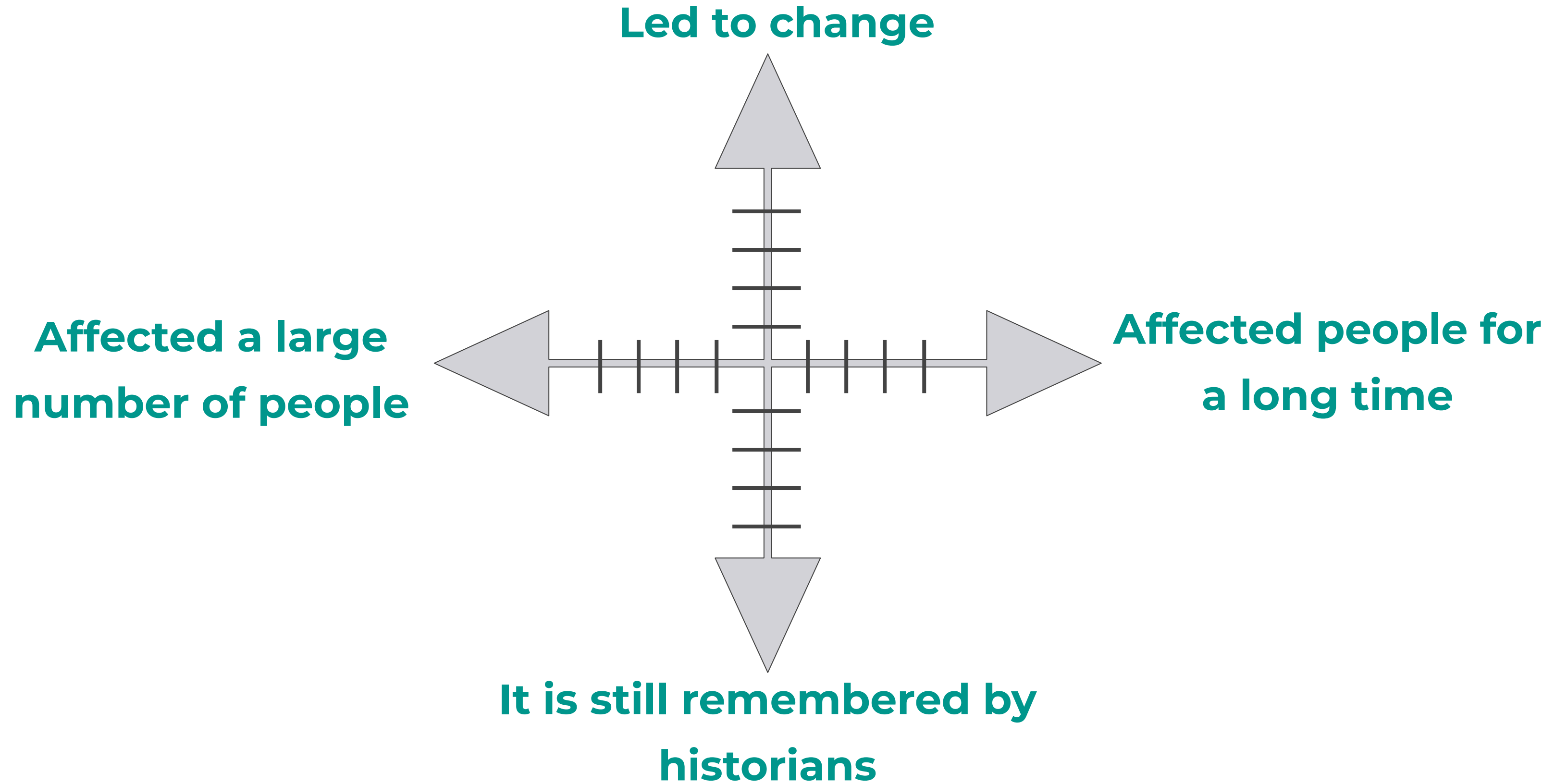




# How significant was the revolt?



# Significance criteria: What makes an event significant?



# How significant was the revolt?

## Did it lead to change?

It led to Elizabeth's **excommunication** in 1570 by the **Pope** which meant that Catholics began to plot against her in the future

## Did it affect a large number of people?

At least 20,000 soldiers on both sides were involved and 450 rebels executed

## Did it affect people for a long time?

It marked the end of Elizabeth's religious tolerance towards Catholics

## It is still remembered by historians?

Historians see it as the first and most serious rebellion by English Catholics against Elizabeth I



# Glossary

**Northern Earls** - The Earls of Westmorland and Northumberland who were part of the Catholic nobility and led a revolt against Elizabeth in 1569

**Durham Cathedral** - An important religious building that was captured during the revolt and a Catholic Mass was held there

**Bull of Excommunication** - An order given by the Pope to demand that Elizabeth I was exiled from the Catholic church and encouraged loyal Catholics to rebel

**Council of the North** - A form of local government in the North of England that had emergency powers to act on Elizabeth's behalf and enforce law and order

**Papal Bull** - An order given by the Pope



# Questions - let's test your understanding!

1. When Elizabeth uncovered the plot, she imprisoned the Duke of Norfolk straight away. Why was this important?
2. Why was the rebel's seizing of Durham Cathedral and Barnard Castle a cause for concern for Elizabeth?
3. Why did the revolt fail?
4. What was the outcome of the revolt?
5. Why do historians see the revolt as significant?

Challenge yourself: How significant do you think the revolt really was? Write a two-sided response. This means you need to consider why the revolt was not significant and why it was. Come to an overall conclusion.

