

Knowledge Organiser: Elizabethan England, c1568-1603

(4) Elizabeth's religious settlement and the Puritan threat



Key terms	
Puritan	An extreme Protestant who believed that churches should be plain and that prayer and Bible readings should be a solemn activity undertaken every day.
Surplice	A white gown worn by priests in the Church of England.
Presbyterian	A Protestant Church that believes bishops should be replaced by elders.
Clergy	Members of a religious order, e.g. priests.
Prophecying	A meeting of Protestant clergy which usually involves criticism of the English Church under Elizabeth.
Separatist	Someone who wants to break away from the mainstream.

Catholic and Protestant beliefs and practices	
Catholic beliefs and practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Pope is head of the Church. Bible and church services are in Latin. Priests should not marry. High decorated churches. Bread and wine transform into body and blood of Jesus (transubstantiation). Priests are ordinary people's link with God.
Protestant beliefs and practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The monarch is the head of the Church. Bible and church services are in English. Priests can marry. Plain churches Bread and wine represent the body and blood. Ordinary people connect to God through
Both	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> God created the world. Jesus was God's son. Those who challenge the true faith must be punished.

Key Puritan figures	
Sir Francis Walsingham	The queen's senior minister and spymaster. He largely kept his religious views to himself, aware they might make him unpopular.
Robert Dudley	A privy councillor and seen as a potential husband for Elizabeth. He was unwilling to put his position at risk by openly challenging the Church.
Peter Wentworth and Anthony Cope	Presbyterian MPs who tried to bring change to the Church by introducing bills to Parliament, however, they did not gain much support from other MPs.

Key questions: Elizabeth's religious settlement

Why was religion a big issue for Elizabeth?

- The Reformation during Henry VIII's reign had officially made the country Protestant but very little changed until Edward VI's reign. During these six years there were drastic changes, including the introduction of the Book of Common Prayer which firmly established a more Protestant approach.
- Mary I spent five years returning the country to the Catholic faith. Almost 300 Protestants were burned alive.
- Elizabeth was a Protestant but she was also practical. She set about a compromise to bring aspects of both faiths together in a 'religious settlement'.

What was Elizabeth's religious settlement?

- Priests were allowed to marry.
- Services were all in English and followed the Protestant Book of Common Prayer.
- She declared herself 'governor' rather than 'head' of the Church.
- Catholics could worship in their own way in private.
- A moderate Protestant, Matthew Parker, was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury.

Exam questions:

- Explain what was important about Elizabeth's religious settlement. (8 marks)
- Write an account of Puritanism during the reign of Elizabeth I. (8 marks)

Key questions: Puritan threat

Who were the Puritans?

- Puritans were Protestants who were unwilling to compromise in how their faith was practiced. They argued for the removal of all Catholic elements from the English Church.
- Some Puritans were appointed as bishops by Elizabeth, though some argued over their robes. By 1568, most of them had agreed to wear the white gown or surplice required by the Church of England during services.
- A small group, known as Presbyterians, questioned Elizabeth's religious settlement and the need for bishops.

How much of a threat were the Puritans?

- In the 1570s, they held popular meetings, called prophesyings, to discuss the Bible. There was often criticism of the queen at these meetings.
- Edmund Grindal, the Archbishop of Canterbury encouraged prophesyings and was suspended by Elizabeth.
- In 1580, John Field, a prominent and very strict Puritan was banned from preaching.
- The leaders of a new separatist church founded in London in 1593, Henry Barrow and John Greenwood, were hanged.

How did Elizabeth and her government deal with Puritans?

- When Grindal died in 1583, Elizabeth replaced him as Archbishop with John Whitgift, who took a tough stance against Puritans. With this key appointment, and the deaths of Dudley and Walsingham, Elizabeth began to crack down on Puritanism.
- These measures included:
 - ⇒ New rules banning unlicensed preaching and forcing church attendance with recusancy fines.
 - ⇒ A new High Commission with the power to fine and imprison Puritans who refused to follow the rules.
 - ⇒ The dismissal or imprisonment of hundreds of clergymen.
 - ⇒ The punishment of printers for spreading the Puritan message.
 - ⇒ A crackdown on high profile Puritans, like Anthony Cope, who was imprisoned in the Tower of London.

Name: