

Knowledge Organiser: Elizabethan England, c1568-1603



(5) The Catholic threat

Key terms	
Recusancy	When a person refused to attend services of the Church of England.
Papal Bull	Special message issued by the Pope.
Excommunicate	Officially remove from the Catholic Church by order of the Pope.
Seminary	A training college for priests.
Missionary	Someone whose aim is to spread their religious faith.
Counter-Reformation	The reform of the Catholic Church in Rome in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in response to the Protestant Reformation.
Rosary Beads	An item used by Catholics during prayer.

Key figures	
Pope Pius V	Pope between 1566 and 1572. He issued a papal bull in 1570 in which he excommunicated Elizabeth from the Catholic Church.
Cardinal William Allen	An English Catholic who was made a Cardinal on the recommendation of King Philip II of Spain in 1587. He was a key figure in the Pope's plan to return Catholicism to England. He was involved in the Throckmorton Plot and the Spanish Armada.
Edmund Campion	He became a scholar at Oxford University during Mary I's reign. As his Catholic views became known and less acceptable, Campion left England. He travelled alone and by foot to Rome to join the Jesuits in 1573.

Exam question:
Write an account of how Elizabeth's policy towards Catholicism changed in the 1580s. (8 marks)

Key plots and rebellions	
Northern Rebellion, 1569	Inspired by Elizabeth's refusal to allow the Duke of Norfolk to marry her Catholic cousin Mary, Queen of Scots, two northern nobles led a rebellion against Elizabeth. <i>*See Knowledge Organiser on rebellions for more detail.</i>
Ridolfi Plot, 1571	A plot led by an Italian named Ridolfi which would involve a second northern rebellion and an invasion of foreign Catholics. <i>*See Knowledge Organiser on rebellions for more detail.</i>
Throckmorton Plot, 1583	Led by Sir Francis Throckmorton. The plan was to assassinate Elizabeth and replace her with Mary, Queen of Scots. There would be an uprising of English Catholics and a French invasion. The Spanish Ambassador was also involved. The plot failed and Throckmorton was executed.
Babington Plot, 1586	Led by Anthony Babington. The plan was to murder Elizabeth and replace her with Mary, Queen of Scots. The plot's discovery led to the trial and execution of Mary.

New laws introduced by Elizabeth	
1571	Recusancy fines for Catholics who did not take part in Protestant services. They could be fined or have property taken away. However, the rich could afford to pay them. It became illegal to own any Catholic items such as rosary beads.
1581	Recusancy fines were increased to £20—more than most could afford; this law was strictly enforced. It became high treason to convert to Catholicism.
1585	Any Catholic priest who had been ordained (made a priest) after 1559 was considered a traitor and he, and anyone protecting him, faced death. It became legal to kill anyone who attempted to assassinate the queen.
1593	The 'statute of confinement' - Catholics could not travel more than five miles from home without permission from the authorities.

Key questions
<p>What was the papal bull and how did Elizabeth respond to it?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 27 April 1570, Pope Pius V issued a papal bull. In this message, he excommunicated Elizabeth from the Catholic Church and called on Catholics to end her rule. English Catholics were faced with the dilemma of whether to be loyal to their queen or the Pope. Plots after the papal bull showed that Elizabeth could no longer rely on the loyalty of all her Catholic subjects. New laws were introduced to try to disrupt Catholic activities and show that challenges to the queen's rule would not be tolerated.
<p>Who were the Jesuits?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Society of Jesus was created in 1540. Its members were known as Jesuits and they were part of the Counter-Reformation. Their aim was to convert the Protestant population to the Catholic faith. Jesuit priests were seen as a threat to Elizabeth so the 1585 Act against Jesuits and Seminary Priests called for all Jesuits to be driven out of England and many were executed. Although the Protestant faith was now widespread across Europe, the two most powerful countries, Spain and France, remained firmly Catholic. War was avoided but France and Spain supported the Jesuit missionaries and also gave financial support to those who wanted to get rid of the queen.
<p>What threat did Campion pose?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 1580, the Jesuits began a mission to England with two exiled Englishmen, Robert Parson and Edmund Campion, being chosen to lead it. On arrival in England on 24 June, Campion, disguised as a jewel merchant, began to preach to the ordinary English people. He travelled the country spreading his message. News of his presence reached the authorities and he became a wanted man. Campion was arrested on 14 July in Berkshire and taken to the Tower of London. Under questioning, Campion maintained he didn't want to overthrow the queen. He was held for four months and tortured several times on the rack. He was found guilty of treason on 20 November 1581 and he was then hung, drawn and quartered on 1 December.

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