

# Knowledge Organiser: Elizabethan England, c1568-1603

## (7) Conflict with Spain

### Key terms

Iconoclasm	The destruction of religious images and sculptures.
Fireship	Unmanned ship filled with burning material.
Line of battle	A naval tactic used in battle; ships line up to create a long wall of cannon fire.
Propaganda	Something that spreads a message in order to encourage people to think or behave in a particular way.

### Naval warfare

Fleet	Henry VIII spent a fortune building a huge navy to protect England. Before 1500, ships had simply been a way to get to battle, but Tudor ships were designed to fight. During Elizabeth's reign, under the command of John Hawkins, England's navy continued to grow.
Tactics	When full scale battles were fought, a tactic called line of battle was sometimes used. Ships formed into a single line and fired together on the enemy. Raids were a common form of attack. They took enemy ports by surprise and destroyed as many ships as possible before the enemy had chance to fight back. Fireships were an effective tactic. An old ship would be set alight and sent into the middle of the enemy fleet.
Technology	A new type of triangular sail, a lateen, allowed for much faster travel and new ships allowed for greater speed and manoeuvrability. New, more powerful, cannons meant it was now possible to fire at enemy ships from a distance. New inventions like the astrolabe allowed for greater accuracy when planning voyages and working out locations.

### Reasons for conflict

Issue of marriage	King Philip of Spain had been married to Elizabeth's sister, Mary I. During this time, he had been joint monarch of England their plan was to have a child to unite Spain and England but this never happened. Philip proposed to Elizabeth in 1559, but she kept him waiting for an answer. As it became clear the marriage wouldn't happen, tensions grew.
Papal bull	In 1570, the Pope excommunicated Elizabeth and called for all Catholics to challenge her rule. As a Catholic, Philip was keen to follow the Pope's instructions.
Religious differences	Elizabeth had returned England to Protestant faith after the Catholic years of Mary I. Spain had remained Catholic throughout the Reformation. Such opposing religious ideas led to conflict.
Actions of sailors	Sir Francis Drake and other English sailors had spent years raiding Spanish ports and ships, and stealing treasures from Spanish colonies in South America and closer to home. Elizabeth encouraged these acts by granting licenses in exchange for sharing the treasures with the country.
The Netherlands	As well as Spain, Philip also ruled the Netherlands. In 1566, there was a Protestant uprising in the country. Philip sent troops to restore order but this led to even greater resistance. Although she wanted to avoid war with Spain, Elizabeth agreed to send money to support the Protestants and allowed English volunteers to go and help in the fight. She also let rebel ships use English ports. All of this angered Philip greatly. William of Orange, the Dutch rebel leader was assassinated in 1584. In December 1585, Elizabeth agreed to send English troops to support her fellow Protestants. It was a clear act of war against Spain.



### Key questions: The Spanish Armada

#### What was Philip's plan and what happened?

- In 1588, Philip II of Spain launched his great Armada: 151 ships, 7000 sailors and 34,000 soldiers. They would sail to the Netherlands and collect more men before invading England. They would sail in an unbreakable crescent formation. Philip was confident of defeating the English navy.
- By 6 August, the Armada was anchored off the Dutch coast. They were delayed waiting for more soldiers to arrive. At this moment, the English, commanded by Drake, chose to strike. On 7 August, 8 fireships were sent into the Spanish fleet causing mass panic and plunging the Spanish into chaos.
- On 8 August the Battle of Gravelines began. The English fire constantly from a distance of 100 metres. The Spanish ships were badly damaged and tried to retreat. The English gave chase.
- A great storm blew the Armada off course. Many ships were wrecked and only 65 of the 151 ships returned to Spain.

#### How was the Spanish Armada defeated?

- English tactics: the fireships broke the formation of the fleet and made individual ships vulnerable to attack. The English had faster ships and more experienced and skilled commanders.
- The weather: storms caused destruction to the Spanish fleet. It delayed their return to Spain. Many sailors became too sick to sail.
- Spanish mistakes: Spanish ships were not designed for the harsh conditions of the English Channel and the North Sea. They were delayed in the Netherlands because the soldiers were not ready. Their weapons were mostly for land use and the commander of the fleet was inexperienced.

#### What made the defeat so significant?

- It proved that England was a major naval power.
- However, invasion remained a concern and Philip quickly began planning a second attempt, but he never actually tried again.
- The Armada had brought England together. Under threat of foreign invasion, most Catholics had declared their total loyalty to Elizabeth. It made Elizabeth even more popular and respected as a leader, and helped boost the ideas of the 'Golden Age'.

#### Exam question:

- Write an account of the growing conflict between England and Spain from 1568 to 1587. (8 marks)
- Write an account of the failure of the Spanish attempt to invade England in 1588. (8 marks)

Name: