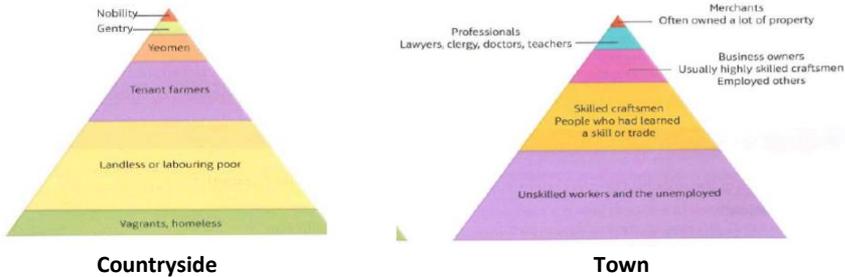


Knowledge Organiser – Early Elizabethan England 1558-88.

Part 1 – Queen, government and religion 1558-69 : Society and Government

1. Elizabethan society was very rigid, based on inequality, and a social hierarchy where everyone was ranked according to wealth and status, and everyone knew their place. Keeping order relied on a clear social structure, as there was no police force or permanent army. 90% of the population lived in the countryside and 10% lived in towns. Wherever you were in Elizabethan society, you owed respect and obedience to those above you and had a duty of care to those below you.



Elizabethan government had different organisations to keep England running smoothly. They included the **Court, Privy Council, Parliament, Lords Lieutenant and Justices of the Peace**. The **monarch** was the head of the government and made all of the important decisions such as:

- Declaring war and making peace
- Calling and dismissing parliament and agreeing to or rejecting laws
- Acting as judge in certain high profile legal cases
- Granting titles, land, money and jobs

Monarchs believed they had the right to rule by 'the grace of God', later known as the **Divine Right**. Elizabeth was also a patron, and provided **patronage**. Elizabeth said there were some issues that only she could make decisions about, and did not want Parliament to discuss. This was known as the **royal prerogative** and included foreign policy, marriage and the succession.

Key Events

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| 2. | 1558 – Elizabeth becomes Queen at the age of 25. |
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Key Individuals

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| 3. | William Cecil – Elizabeth's Secretary of State until 1573. |
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Key Words

4.	Nobility	Major landowners, Lords, Dukes and Earls.
5.	Gentry	Owned smaller estates.
6.	Yeomen	Owned a small amount of land

7.	Tenant Farmers	Rented land from the Yeoman or gentry.
8.	Landless or labouring poor	Did not own or rent land. Had to work to provide for their families.
9.	Vagrants or Homeless	Moved from place to place looking for work.
10.	Merchants	Wealthy traders.
11.	Professionals	Lawyers, doctors and clergymen.
12.	Business Owners	Highly skilled craftsman, such as silversmiths and carpenters.
13.	Skilled Craftsmen	Skilled employees, including apprentices.
14.	Unskilled Workers or unemployed	Had no regular work and could not provide for their families.
15.	Monarch	King or Queen.
16.	Patronage	Providing someone with an important job, title or financial support.
17.	Divine Right	The belief that the monarch's right to rule came from God.
18.	Royal prerogative	The right of the monarch to decide on certain issues.
19.	Court	Made up of noblemen who were the monarch's friends and advisers. They had influence and being a courtier was a public display of wealth and power.
20.	Privy Council	Approx. 19 members of the nobility, chosen by the monarch. Met at least 3 times a week to debate issues and advise the monarch. They monitored Parliament, and JPs and oversaw law and order and the security of England.
21.	Secretary of State	The most important member of the Privy Council, and advised the queen on matter important to the Crown.
22.	Crown	Refers to the monarch and their government.
23.	Parliament	Made up of the House of Lords (nobles and bishops) and the House of Commons, which were elected, although very few people could vote. They advised the monarch, passed laws (Acts of Parliament) and approved extraordinary taxation. Elizabeth called them 10 times during her reign.
24.	Lords Lieutenant	Noblemen, chosen by the monarch, who governed counties. They could raise the local militia.
25.	Justices of the Peace	Large landowners who kept law and order in their local areas, and heard court cases every 3 months for more serious crimes.
26.	Extraordinary Taxation	Extra taxes required to pay for unexpected expenses, especially war.
27.	Militia	A military force of ordinary people, rather than soldiers, raised in an emergency.