

OCR – AS GCE  
British History Period  
Studies  
F 961

**Unit 1 England under Elizabeth  
I, 1558–1603**

**ESSAY**

**Examiner's Specific Advice**

This question asks candidates to assess 'How far do you agree ...' and you should focus on assessing the relative importance of several problems facing Elizabeth during the relevant period. Parliamentary issues, finances, war with Spain, the poor, the death of ministers, Essex's rebellion are possibilities. You should explain which were more important and why the others were less important. You might disagree that the Irish Rebellion was Elizabeth's most serious problem from 1588 to 1603 but you should show a satisfactory understanding of Ireland because it is mentioned in the question.

**Exemplar Question**

How far do you agree that the Irish Rebellion was the **most** serious problem that faced Elizabeth I's government after 1588?

[50 marks]

**Click Here for a  
Chronology  
Relating to this  
Topic**

## Examiner's Exemplar Plan and Essay 1

### Plan

- 1 Introduction: importance of the Irish Rebellion in the 1590s
- 2 Earlier rebellions in Ireland
- 3 The outbreak of the Irish Rebellion
- 4 The Essex Revolt
- 5 Victory for Elizabeth I in Ireland
- 6 Elizabeth I and her ministers
- 7 Elizabeth I, Parliament and monopolies
- 8 Elizabeth I, finance and the Poor Law
- 9 Conclusion

(1)

I agree that the Irish Rebellion was the **most** serious problem that faced Elizabeth I's government after 1588. England defeated the Spanish Armada in 1588 and I believe that this was because of Elizabeth I's leadership. On the other hand, I also believe (2) that she was responsible for many of the problems that England faced after the Armada.

Ireland was a problem to all of the Tudors since the reign of Henry VII (3). England claimed authority over all Ireland but controlled effectively only an area around Dublin known as the Pale. The authority of Irish chieftains was more important elsewhere. Ireland supported Yorkist Pretenders against Henry VII. Whilst England became Protestant after Henry VIII's Reformation, most of Ireland remained Catholic. Thomas Cromwell reorganised the administration of Ireland but there were still problems. When Elizabeth I came to the throne in 1558, Ireland was therefore one of the problems that she had to face and it was not long before she had to put down a rising led by Shane O'Neill. Fortunately for England, the Irish were often divided among themselves; they did not form a united front against Elizabeth but there was a danger that Ireland could be used by England's Catholic enemies, especially Spain, as the base of an invasion.

The Irish Rebellion was led from 1591 by Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone, and he made an agreement with O'Donnell, another Irish chieftain. He managed to unite many of the Irish. The rebels wanted to end English power in Ireland and to restore the Roman Catholic religion. In order to strengthen their position, they opened negotiations for help with Philip II of Spain. Elizabeth was slow to realise the danger of a major uprising and believed that it could be suppressed as easily as earlier rebellions in Ireland. She was reluctant to pay for the soldiers that were necessary, especially because of her other expenses, including the war with Spain. By 1598, the Rebellion had spread over most of Ireland. The office of Lord Lieutenant of Ireland was vacant and so Elizabeth appointed the Earl of Essex. He was an ambitious and brilliant courtier, a favourite of the Queen, but he lacked political and military skills. He led a large army to Ireland that Elizabeth could hardly afford but

(1) This plan mentions relevant points but could be better organised. Why is Ireland mentioned twice in separate points?

(2) Avoid using the personal ('I believe', 'I think') too often in your answers. It appears three times in this paragraph. It is unnecessary because all of your answers in History represent your opinions.

(3) This paragraph is relevant as background but is too long. It could have been summarised quickly to focus on the period mentioned in the question.

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was completely unsuccessful in his attempt to defeat Tyrone, whose soldiers benefited from the difficult nature of the geography, with its bogs and mountains. The rebels avoided direct battle and Essex became more disillusioned. In the end, he met Tyrone personally and agreed a truce. This was completely contrary to Elizabeth I's orders and Essex's enemies at court used it as the opportunity to destroy his reputation with the Queen.

Essex was dismissed and arrested. However, he was still widely popular because of his personality and had some powerful friends at court. Southampton and Rutland planned a rising to free Essex. They denied any threat to Elizabeth I herself but wished to gain power in the future by making sure that James VI of Scotland would become king when Elizabeth I died. The plot came to a climax when some of Essex's supporters rose in London. The signal was a performance of Shakespeare's 'Richard II', which is a play about the deposition and death of a lawful king. However, few were involved in the rebellion, which was easily put down but it led to the execution of Essex (4).

Meanwhile in Ireland (5), the government appointed Mountjoy to succeed Essex. Elizabeth I was determined to crush Tyrone and his rebels and Mountjoy was an efficient soldier. Instead of marching his army aimlessly, he set up strong points and deprived the rebels of food and other resources. The greatest danger came when Philip II sent another force to Ireland and it landed at Kinsale. There was a possibility that the Spanish soldiers might combine with Tyrone's rebels but Mountjoy managed to force them to withdraw. Tyrone realised that his cause was hopeless without Spanish support and he surrendered. So finally Elizabeth I had solved the most serious problem of the period from 1588 to 1603 (6).

Another problem that faced Elizabeth I during the period from 1588 to 1603 was the war with Spain. England tried to follow up the victory over the Armada by an attack on Corunna and Lisbon, led by Drake. The expedition was poorly organised and failed to achieve its objectives. The war continued with expeditions against Spanish colonies in the New World that were mostly unsuccessful. Spain strengthened its defences to protect its convoys, or flota, which brought silver to Europe. Philip II even organised more armadas to invade England although all of them failed. However, England did not win the war with Spain and it continued to be expensive. There was not a peace agreement until after Elizabeth I died, when James I signed the Treaty of London with Spain.

Another problem that faced Elizabeth I during the period from 1588 to 1603 was from Parliament over money (7). MPs objected to the monopolies that the Queen issued to courtiers because they were expensive and prevented free trade. They

(4) These paragraphs contain accurate knowledge, which deserves credit, but the emphasis should have been on explanation. They tend to tell a story.

(5) A poor link between paragraphs. It shows that the answer could have been better organised.

(6) Here you will get some credit for accurate explanations.

(7) Monopolies and finance were linked. They are both relevant but should

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included salt, an everyday necessity, starch and imported glass. Sir Walter Raleigh was granted monopolies on tin, playing cards and taverns. However, the Queen saw the right to grant monopolies as part of her royal prerogative. She promised to remedy the worst abuses but did nothing in practice. In 1601, the MPs demanded an end to monopolies. Although they did not criticise Elizabeth directly, they were attacking an important part of her methods of government. She had to climb down and issued a proclamation that cancelled the most unpopular monopolies.

Another problem that faced Elizabeth I during the period from 1588 to 1603 was the death of her most reliable ministers (8). Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, was one of the Queen's most important courtiers. She had promoted him to offices such as Master of the Horse and he was a prominent member of the Privy Council. There had even been strong rumours that she wished to marry him. He died in 1588 soon after the defeat of the Spanish Armada. Sir Francis Walsingham died in 1590. William Cecil, Lord Burghley, died in 1598. He had been a leading adviser in domestic and foreign policy and was fully trusted by the Queen even when he retired from active politics. He was succeeded by his son, Robert Cecil, although he was not as influential to 1603.

Another problem that faced Elizabeth I during the period from 1588 to 1603 was finance (9). The war against Spain and the Irish Rebellion were very expensive in spite of the Queen's tendency to save money. The government tried to increase its money by selling crown lands but this was a short-term measure because it lost future income. Other sources of income from trade and justice fines could not easily be increased. Parliament had to be called to vote additional taxes that were unpopular and they did not meet Elizabeth I's expenses. At the same time, the 1590s were a period of bad harvests. The condition of the poor worsened and vagrancy increased. There was a great fear of beggars and the disorder that resulted from poverty. The government re-issued laws that had been passed earlier in the reign to control prices and wages but it was too weak to make sure that its orders were carried out. New Poor Law Acts were passed in 1597 and 1601 that attempted to make sure that the able-bodied poor would be provided with work and that only the unfit should receive other benefits. JPs collected local taxes that could be used to buy materials that the poor could use and then be sold at a profit. Vagrants and those who refused to work would be ordered to return to the parishes where they had been born or they could be whipped and even sent to the galleys.

Elizabeth I died in 1603 and was succeeded by James VI of Scotland. She had many successes during her reign but she faced many problems after 1588, the most serious being the Irish Rebellion (10).

not have been discussed in separate sections. The planning of the answer could have been improved.

(8) Vary the way in which paragraphs begin. Four successive paragraphs just repeat the question. It is very important to be relevant but you should not write mechanically.

(9) The section on finance is relevant. It would have been improved if the answer had explained more clearly how successful Elizabeth was in dealing with this problem.

(10) A poor conclusion. It is vague. It does not explain why the Irish Rebellion was the most important problem.

## Examiner's Assessment

The answer is relevant, mostly accurate and includes appropriate historical terms but the planning could be improved. The essay discusses events in Ireland, then explains Essex's rising in London, and then returns to Ireland. The writing is clear but the style is too mechanical. These features merit a Level III mark of 15 (AO1a).

The essay discusses most of the major problems that faced Elizabeth after 1588 and explains issues clearly. However, it does not explain sufficiently why Ireland was Elizabeth's most serious problem, though this is mentioned at the beginning and end. The rest of the answer discusses a series of problems but does not try to put them into an order of importance. A better answer would have tried to link the points. These features merit a Level III mark of 18 (AO1b). The total mark for the essay is 33 (Grade C).

## Examiner's Exemplar Plan and Essay 2

### Plan

- 1 Introduction: outline of problems. Which was the most serious?
- 2 Elizabeth I's problems in dealing with Ireland
- 3 Tyrone's success and defeat
- 4 War with Spain. Links to other problems
- 5 Essex's rising: why was it a serious problem?
- 6 Financial problems. Links to other problems
- 7 Alternative points. Elizabeth's successes in succession and religion
- 8 Conclusion. How serious overall were the problems?

(11)

The defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588 might seem to have been Elizabeth I's greatest triumph. The threat of foreign invasion and the danger to Elizabeth I as queen and to Protestantism had been averted. In the previous year, Mary, Queen of Scots, had been executed, removing the Queen's long-standing rival to the throne and the centre of dangerous plots. The prospect seemed bright but the remaining years of Elizabeth's reign, until her death in 1603, were beset with problems. The war with Spain dragged on and England did not achieve more significant successes. There was a brief but dangerous rebellion by the Earl of Essex, Elizabeth's favourite. The crown had serious financial problems and poor harvests affected everybody but especially the poor, who were more exposed to famine, illness and even plague. However, the most serious problem that faced the Queen from 1588 to 1603 was rebellion in Ireland (12).

There were different but connected reasons why Ireland was Elizabeth I's major problem at the end of her reign (13). She had faced problems there from the beginning of her reign,

(11) This is a better plan than the one for Essay 1. Each point focuses on the question in order of importance and sorts out issues clearly.

(12) Good introduction. The answer begins immediately to discuss the question, outlining the points that will be discussed.

(13) A well organised answer

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beginning with the Shane O'Neill rising in Ulster in 1559, followed by trouble from Fitzgerald in 1569. Ireland was difficult to control and the policy of encouraging English immigrants to Ireland to ensure Protestant authority had not worked. The rebellion that was led by Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone, from 1593 therefore arose from a background of disorder. The English army was small and it was difficult to put down a population that was largely hostile and which was well led by Tyrone. The majority of the Irish were Catholic and were seen by the Protestant English as potential allies to foreign Catholic enemies, such as Philip II of Spain. Ireland might be the back door to invasion and Elizabeth's government found it difficult to maintain security. The rebellion of the 1590s was the most considerable expense that Elizabeth I had to meet; its cost was greater than the war against Spain. The Queen was always very careful about spending money but she had difficulty in controlling the expense of the forces that were sent against Tyrone. This worsened the government's other financial problems. There was also a direct link between the troubles in Ireland and Essex's rebellion. Ireland was therefore the Queen's most serious problem because it was important in itself and was also linked to other major difficulties for the government (14).

that begins by discussing the most important point. It spends more time on this than on other issues.

(14) Good link between issues. Credit is given when points are linked rather than listed separately.

In much of Ireland, the authority of local nobles was as important, perhaps, even more important, than the authority of the English government. However, the Irish usually lacked unity. After Elizabeth put down the early risings, the Irish returned to fighting between themselves. This condition of uneasy peace ended when Tyrone was more successful in uniting the Irish against England. He was an able military commander who knew how best to use guerrilla tactics against the English army. Avoiding direct battles, he constantly outwitted the English who relied on traditional methods of fighting that were out of place in Ireland. Tyrone also made a dangerous alliance with Philip II of Spain, who sent two armada fleets in 1596 and 1597 to invade England through Ireland. Neither was successful but the threat to Elizabeth I was clear. She reluctantly agreed to appoint the Earl of Essex as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland and the head of the English army in 1599. He was completely unsuccessful and ended by making an unauthorised truce with Tyrone that resulted in his dismissal. At the very end of her reign, Mountjoy, a careful but effective military leader, defeated Tyrone, who surrendered just after Elizabeth I died. The Irish problem had finally been solved as far as Elizabeth I was concerned, although it was a temporary solution (15) and the Queen's success did not hide the long and expensive failures of her earlier policies.

(15) Good judgement about the extent of Elizabeth I's success.

The defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588 was a spectacular success for the English navy. England was saved from the imminent threat of invasion. However, its significance was short- rather than long-term (16). 1588 represented the

(16) Shows awareness of short-

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beginning rather than the end of the war with Spain, which remained a powerful international country, probably the strongest military power on sea and land in Europe. Philip II was not deterred by his defeat in 1588 but was willing and able to organise other invading armadas in the 1590s. English expeditions against Spain and its territories had limited success. An attack on Spanish-controlled Portugal in 1589 was a failure. An important success was the capture and plunder of Cadiz in 1596 but England was too weak to follow it up. Privateers continued to harass Spanish ships in the Atlantic and in the Americas but the war continued indecisively. There was also the danger to Elizabeth I that the conflict with Spain might drag her further into other continental wars (17), especially the French civil wars and the Dutch revolt. There were pressures at court and in Parliament to intervene more actively on the side of the Protestants and against Philip II and his allies in these struggles. When the Queen died in 1603, the war, with its dangers and expense, was still continuing and it was left to James I to make peace with Spain in 1604, soon after his accession.

and long-term issues.

(17) Good link between the Spanish war and other aspects of foreign policy.

Essex's rebellion in 1599 was brief but serious for Elizabeth I because of the divisions that it showed in the English government. The Queen had been able to control her courtiers and ministers partly by avoiding giving too much power to one group or faction. William Cecil, Lord Burghley, had never been pre-eminent against Robert Dudley, the Earl of Leicester. Burghley remained in office until he died in 1598 but, throughout the 1590s, influence in his faction passed to Robert, his son. Leicester died in 1588. Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, was his stepson and, as well as becoming the leader of the Leicester faction, he was also to be the Queen's favourite. Unlike Robert Cecil, he was a natural courtier who could charm Elizabeth with his good looks and manners. However, he was more ambitious for personal glory and power than either of the Cecils or Leicester. He saw himself as a military leader but proved a failure on several occasions, most seriously when he persuaded the Queen to appoint him Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. He failed completely to defeat Tyrone. His hasty and unauthorised return to London and his attempted rising showed the weakness in his character and judgement. Although the rising was quickly suppressed and Essex was executed, there was danger to Elizabeth because he was supported by a group of courtiers, such as Southampton, Sussex and Bedford, who were hostile to Robert Cecil. It can be claimed that his rising resulted more from his animosity to Robert Cecil than from treason against the Queen herself but it was a major problem for Elizabeth I at the end of her reign because it ended in discord rather than harmony (18). In addition, there was no counter-balance to the Cecil faction at the end of her reign, as she had intended in earlier years.

(18) Answer explains why the Essex rising was a serious problem.

The government's financial problems were the basic reason for

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troubled relations with Parliament during this period. For most of her reign, Parliament co-operated with Elizabeth. Arguments, for example over Church reform or Mary, Queen of Scots, were less important than the areas of agreement, and trouble usually arose from a minority of members. Parliament's most important role was to grant supplies and vote taxes. War expenses and the effects of inflation on the government's finances meant that Elizabeth had to request more taxes. Parliament reluctantly agreed in 1589 and 1593. Tensions increased when Parliament petitioned the Queen to abolish monopolies. These were unpopular because they increased costs and did not allow for free trade. However, the issue was important to Elizabeth because grants of monopolies were seen by her as part of her royal prerogative; she had the right to regulate trade. Monopolies were also a cheap way to reward courtiers because they did not involve Elizabeth herself in any expense. In 1597, the Queen gave vague promises to remedy the situation but she did nothing and even issued more monopolies. The result was that criticism of monopolies and of the crown was more intense in the 1601 Parliament. Elizabeth I was forced to concede and withdraw many monopolies. This was the occasion of her Golden Speech which might have seemed to be a triumph for the Queen but in reality it covered a humiliating concession. Problems over finance had led to a considerable problem over the royal prerogative (19).

(19) Links finance to the royal prerogative and sees the connection between issues.

However, the extent of Elizabeth I's problems during the later years of her reign should be put into perspective (20). They did not outweigh her continuing successes. She solved the problem of the succession, which had troubled England since her accession in 1558, by doing nothing. It was risky not to marry and produce an heir. Uncertain succession had been a problem for her Tudor predecessors and Elizabeth lived longer than could be expected at that time. She survived a serious illness in the 1560s and there was always the danger of assassination. A number of continental leaders, such as William of Orange and Henry III of France, were assassinated during her lifetime and Henry IV of France was murdered soon after her death. She never acknowledged formally a successor but it became accepted that James VI of Scotland would succeed and the process was to be handled skilfully and tactfully by Robert Cecil. Largely by luck, she avoided a civil war over the succession.

(20) Considers an alternative explanation: argues that Elizabeth I's problems were less serious than her successes.

Religion was another potential cause of civil war but she succeeded in establishing a religious settlement that was widely accepted by 1603. By the 1590s, the Catholic threat had been diminished. Jesuits and other missionary priests failed to convert England to Catholicism and they also failed to maintain that religion among many of its sympathisers. The Puritans were curbed, partly by Archbishop Whitgift's harsh discipline. At a time when many European countries were split



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by religious controversies, England's religious position was comparatively calm at the end of her reign. The religious peace was temporary. It was possible that Catholics and Puritans were waiting for a new king to improve their prospects and religion was to be a major cause of the civil wars in the middle of the seventeenth century. But even a temporary solution could be regarded as a major success for Elizabeth and she cannot be blamed for the later troubles.

The Queen retained most of her power. The death of her closest ministers such as Burghley and Leicester, the Essex rebellion and the withdrawal of monopolies did not mean that Elizabeth became a weak ruler. She was an old woman at the head of a younger court, many of whom looked forward to a new king to improve their prospects, but she never lost control. When Elizabeth I became Queen in 1558, she was in a very weak position. Her problems were so serious that she might well lose power. Nevertheless, she did not only survive on the throne for almost 50 years but she overcame most of the threats against her. All rulers have problems but even her most serious problems, such as the Irish Rebellion, did not seriously endanger her position (21).

(21) The conclusion comes to an overall judgement about the question. It does not merely repeat points that have been made earlier. It does not sit on the fence.

### **Examiner's Assessment**

The essay uses a wide range of accurate, detailed and relevant evidence, and is very well organised. It merits a maximum AO1a mark of 24.

The argument consistently explains many aspects of Elizabeth's problems, why they were important, and thoughtful links are made between the sections. It considers both successes and failures and comes to a clear judgement. As a result, it merits a Level IA mark of 26 for its AO1b skills. Total mark of 50 (Grade A).

[Click here for a Mark Scheme that accompanies the exemplar answers provided above](#)

[Click here for further sample Questions to test your skills](#)

## Mark Scheme

Examiners use Mark Schemes to determine how best to categorise a candidate's essay and ensure that the performances of thousands of candidates are marked to a high degree of consistency. Few essays fall neatly into the mark levels indicated below. Some answers will be particularly well argued but offer little supporting detail; others may be factually full but poorly organised or contain few judgements. Examiners therefore seek to find the 'best fit' when applying the scheme. Each essay has a final mark based on two Assessment Objectives (AO1a and AO1b) worth 24 + 26 = 50 marks. As the standard of the two essays lies between Level 1 and Level IV, only the descriptors and marks for these levels have been tabulated below.

|  | <b>AO1a Mark Scheme for Levels I, II, III and IV</b>  |
|--|---|
| <b>Assessment Objectives</b>           | <b>Recall, select and use historical knowledge appropriately, and communicate knowledge and understanding clearly and effectively</b>   |
| <b>Level IA</b><br><b>21–24 marks</b>  | Uses a wide range of accurate, detailed and relevant evidence. Accurate and confident use of appropriate historical terminology. Answer is clearly structured and coherent; communicates accurately and legibly.  |
| <b>Level IB</b><br><b>18–20 marks</b>  | Uses accurate, detailed and relevant evidence. Accurate use of a range of appropriate historical terminology. Answer is clearly structured and mostly coherent; writes accurately and legibly.  |
| <b>Level II</b><br><b>16–17 marks</b>  | Uses mostly accurate, detailed and relevant evidence, which demonstrates a competent command of the topic. Generally accurate use of historical terminology. Answer is structured and mostly coherent; writing is legible and communication is generally clear.   |
| <b>Level III</b><br><b>14–15 marks</b> | Uses accurate and relevant evidence, which demonstrates some command of the topic but there may be some inaccuracy. Answer includes relevant historical terminology but this may not be extensive or always accurately used. Most of the answer is organised and structured; the answer is mostly legible and clearly communicated. |
| <b>Level IV</b><br><b>12–13 marks</b>  | There is deployment of relevant knowledge but level/accuracy of detail will vary; there may be some evidence that is tangential or irrelevant. Some unclear and/or under-developed and/or disorganised sections; mostly satisfactory level of communication.  |

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| <b>AO1b Mark Scheme for Levels I, II, III and IV</b> |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Assessment Objectives</b>                         | <b>Demonstrate an understanding of the past through explanation and analysis, arriving at substantiated judgements of key concepts and of the relationships between key features of the period studied</b>  |
| <b>Level IA</b><br><br><b>24–26 marks</b>            | <p>Clear and accurate understanding of key concepts relevant to analysis and to the topic.</p> <p>Clear and accurate understanding of issues in their historical context. Answer is consistently and relevantly analytical with developed and substantiated explanations, some of which may be unexpected.</p> <p>The argument evaluates a range of relevant factors and reaches clearly substantiated judgements about relative importance and/or links.</p>   |
| <b>Level IB</b><br><br><b>22–23 marks</b>            | <p>Clear and accurate understanding of most key concepts relevant to analysis and to the topic.</p> <p>Answer is mostly consistently and relevantly analytical with mostly developed and substantiated explanations.</p> <p>Clear understanding of the significance of issues in their historical context.</p> <p>Substantiated judgements about relative importance of and/or links between factors will be made but quality of explanation in support may not be consistently high.</p>   |
| <b>Level II</b><br><br><b>19–21 marks</b>            | <p>Mostly clear and accurate understanding of many key concepts relevant to analysis and to the topic.</p> <p>Clear understanding of the significance of most relevant issues in their historical context.</p> <p>Much of the answer is relevantly analytical and substantiated with detailed evidence but there may be some description.</p> <p>The analysis of factors and/or issues provides some judgements about relative importance and/or linkages.</p>  |
| <b>Level III</b><br><br><b>16–18 marks</b>           | <p>Some uneven understanding of key concepts relevant to analysis and of concepts relevant to their historical context.</p> <p>Answers may be a mixture of analysis and explanation but also simple description of relevant material and narrative of relevant events <b>OR</b> answers may provide more consistent analysis but the quality will be uneven and its support often general or thin.</p> <p>Answer considers a number of factors but with very little evaluation of importance or linkages between factors/issues.</p> <p>Points made about importance or about developments in the context of the period will often be little more than assertions and descriptions.</p> |
| <b>Level IV</b><br><br><b>13–15 marks</b>            | <p>Understanding of key concepts relevant to analysis and the topic is variable but in general is satisfactory.</p> <p>Limited and patchy understanding of a few relevant issues in their historical context.</p> <p>Answer may be largely descriptive/narratives of events and links between this and analytical comments will typically be weak or unexplained <b>OR</b> answers will mix passages of descriptive material with occasional explained analysis.</p> <p>Limited points made about importance/links or about developments in the context of the period will be little more than assertions and descriptions.</p>   |

### Further sample questions

1. How successfully did Elizabeth I deal with her financial problems?
2. How convincing is the claim that Parliament became more powerful during the reign of Elizabeth I?
3. Assess the claim that religion caused the **most** serious quarrels between Elizabeth I and Parliament.
4. How powerful and popular was Elizabeth I at the end of her reign?
5. How effectively did Elizabeth I control her ministers?
6. How far do you agree that the powers of the monarchy were not seriously weakened during the reign of Elizabeth I?
7. Assess the role of the Privy Council in Elizabeth I's system of government.
8. Assess the role of Elizabeth I's ministers in her government to 1603.
9. How far do you agree that parliamentary privilege was the **most** important cause of disputes between Elizabeth and Parliament during her reign?

**Chronology: Key Events in *England under Elizabeth I, 1558–1603***

- 1558 Accession of Elizabeth I (1). William Cecil appointed Principal Secretary.
- 1559 Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity. The House of Commons criticised for requesting Elizabeth I to marry.
- 1566 Tensions between Elizabeth I and Parliament over the succession and the Queen's marriage (2).
- 1568 Flight of Mary, Queen of Scots, to England.
- 1569–70 Rising of the Northern Earls (3).
- 1570 Publication of Bull of Elizabeth I's Excommunication by Pope Pius V. Rise of Sir Francis Walsingham as Ambassador to France.
- 1571-72 Ridolfi Plot.
- 1571 Strickland introduced bill in the House of Commons to reform the Prayer Book. The Queen tries to ban him from the House of Commons.
- 1572 William Cecil (Lord Burghley) appointed Lord Treasurer. Walsingham replaces Burghley as Principal Secretary.
- 1576 Peter Wentworth imprisoned over free speech by the House of Commons (4).
- 1583 Throckmorton Plot.
- 1586 Babington Plot.
- 1586–7 Cope introduces a bill to the House of Commons to repeal the Prayer Book. Arrested by the Privy Council.
- 1587 Mary, Queen of Scots, executed.
- 1588 The Spanish Armada.
- 1590 Death of Walsingham.
- 1595 Irish Rebellion led by Tyrone.
- 1596 Riots against enclosures.
- 1597 House of Commons grievances over monopolies.
- 1598 Death of Burghley.
- 1601 Essex's Rebellion.
- 1601 Elizabeth I's 'Golden Speech' (5).
- 1603 Death of Elizabeth I.

(1) Accession of Elizabeth I

Elizabeth I's accession after the death of Mary I was popular but she faced many problems. The most important of these were to make an acceptable religious settlement, to defend England's interests against powerful countries in Europe and to deal with finance. She was a female ruler at a time when men were expected to govern.

(2) Succession and the Queen's marriage

Elizabeth I's Tudor predecessors, Henry VIII, Edward VI and Mary I, had faced problems in ensuring a safe succession. Elizabeth's closest heir was Mary, Queen of Scots, descended from Henry VII, but she was Catholic. Some English nobles, such as the Duke of Norfolk, had remote claims based on medieval ancestors. Elizabeth knew the problems that marriage had

caused to Henry VIII and Mary I. An English husband might cause rivalries at court. The main suitors abroad were in France and Spain, Catholic countries.

(3) Rising of the Northern Earls

This was the most dangerous rebellion in the reign. It involved nobles such as the Earl of Westmorland and the Earl of Northumberland, both of whom were powerful in the north of England, and the Duke of Norfolk. It arose from religious grievances (the north was largely Catholic), poverty and resentment against London ministers. A planned marriage between Norfolk and Mary, Queen of Scots, would be dangerous to Elizabeth I. The revolt was suppressed quickly. Allegedly 800 people were executed but the revolt threatened to revive the civil wars of the Middle Ages.

(4) Free speech by the House of Commons

MPs claimed to have freedom of speech in parliamentary debates, freedom from arrest and free access to the Queen to express their grievances. The problem was to balance these freedoms with the Queen's power or prerogative.

(5) Elizabeth I's 'Golden Speech'

This was a good example of Elizabeth I's effective speeches. 'Though God has raised me high, yet I count this the glory of my crown, that I have reigned with your love. I was never so much enticed with the glorious name of a king, as delighted that God has made me His instrument to maintain his truth and glory, and to defend his kingdom from peril, dishonour, tyranny and oppression. Though you have had, and may have, many mightier and wiser princes sitting on this throne, you have never had nor never will have any that will love you better.'

## **Teaching Activities**

1. This Unit requires students to write two essays. This is probably longer than the answers required at GCSE. An essay is a more sustained piece of writing that includes a brief introduction, a main section that deals with different issues and a brief conclusion. It should be well organised and accurately written. The skills in writing an essay cannot be learned during the revision period but need to be developed throughout the course. Discuss what is relevant and what can be omitted from a question. Which are the key points? Reinforce important rules of writing such as paragraphs and accurate spelling.
2. The Specification contains six Key Issues. Each is linked to paragraphs of Content. Students should spend an equal amount of time studying each of the Key Issues.
3. When all of the Key Issues have been studied, discuss the links between them.
4. Discuss the meaning of key instructions in questions, e.g. 'Assess', 'How far do you agree that ...?', 'Which was the most important reason for ...?' How are they different? What approach do they require? Discuss the key phrases in sample questions: dates, people, events, issues.
5. Choose a sample question. Discuss how to make a good but brief plan. Students should understand why plans are important. In which order should the points appear in the answer? Decide which are the more important to come first, and then the less important. What are the key facts that an answer should mention? Provide student groups with different sections of a sample question. Ask them to write several paragraphs explaining a section and discuss these.
6. Introductions should be brief but they are important because they help students to start on the right lines. Choose a sample question and get groups to write examples of good introductions and poor introductions. Discuss what sorts of introductions are effective.
7. Construct a time chart of the major political changes during the years 1558–1603. Make this a continuing exercise, to be completed as the course continues. The chart might have six rows, one for each of the Key Issues in the Specification. Work out links between the Key Issues.
8. Explain and keep a record of important terms that are relevant to the topic, e.g. faction, parliamentary privilege, Privy Council, royal prerogative.
9. Encourage students to consider alternative explanations and to judge between them. For example, divide them into three groups: (a) students to argue that Ireland was the most serious problem; (b) students to argue

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that Parliament was the most serious problem; (c) students to argue that Elizabeth I had no serious problems. Then discuss these alternatives.

10. Study the problems. Students can work in groups to assess their importance. Decide which was the most serious and the less serious.

11. 'Mark' problems in order of importance, e.g.:

| <b>Problem</b> | <b>Main developments</b> | <b>Why a problem to Elizabeth I?</b> | <b>How serious? Mark /10</b> |
|----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|
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**Resources**

S. Doran, *Elizabeth I and Foreign Policy 1558–1603* (Longman, 2000)  
S. Doran, *Elizabeth I and Religion 1558–1603* (Longman, 1993)  
C. Haigh, *Elizabeth I* (Longman, 2000)  
J. Hurstfield, *Freedom, Corruption and Government in Elizabethan England* (Cape, 2004)  
K. Randell, *Elizabeth I and the Government of England* (Access to History: Hodder, 1994)  
G. E. Seel and D. L. Smith, *Crown and Parliaments 1558–1689* (CUP, 2001)  
W. Simpson, *The Reign of Elizabeth* (Heinemann, 2001)  
P. Thomas, *Authority and Disorder in Tudor Times 1485–1603* (CUP, 1999)  
J. Warren, *Elizabeth I: Religion and Foreign Affairs* (Access to History: Hodder, 2002)

**Weblinks**

- [www.historytoday.com](http://www.historytoday.com)
- [www.history-compass.com/HistoryCD/default.htm](http://www.history-compass.com/HistoryCD/default.htm)
- [www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/modsbook.html](http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/modsbook.html)
- [www.bbc.co.uk/history/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/)