

Elizabeth I was queen of England from 1558 until she died in 1603. Her **reign** was called the Elizabethan Age, a very exciting and **glorious** period in English history, in which England became an important world power.

She was born near London in 1533. Her father was Henry VIII and her mother Anne Boleyn, the second of the king's six wives. When Elizabeth was 3 years old her mother was **beheaded** because she was **accused** of having a relationship with someone else. Elizabeth had an **elder** half sister Mary, and a younger half brother Edward.

King Henry VIII **broke** with the Roman Catholic Church because the pope would not let him **divorce** his first wife. Henry then **founded** the Church of England and made his country protestant.

Although Henry **cared** very little about Elizabeth during her childhood she **received** a good education and was taught well in history and philosophy. She learned many languages, **including** French, Italian and Latin.

When Henry died in 1547 his only son, Edward, became king but the boy king died six years later. Mary became queen and made England a Catholic country again. She didn't like Elizabeth and thought that she was **plotting** against her. She sent her half sister to prison in the Tower of London for two months. When she was **released**, she had to live in the countryside.

Mary died in 1558 and Elizabeth **succeeded** her. She became very popular and many people thought that she would bring back peace and **stability** in a time of conflict. Elizabeth was a **cautious** and clever queen; she knew a lot about **economics** and had good **advisors**. She returned England to Protestantism but she was not a **radical** religious reformer.

Although there were many young men who wanted to marry her, Elizabeth stayed alone and had no children. This was a **threat** to the English monarchy because without children her cousin Mary, Queen of Scots, would **inherit** the **throne**. She was a Catholic and a friend of France. Elizabeth was **aware** of this danger and had Mary sent to prison for many years. She was **executed** in 1587.

Elizabeth gave her country a lot of **self confidence**. During her **reign** it built up its sea power and ships sailed across the seas to **trade** in the New World. At that time Spain controlled much of the **trade** in the New World. Elizabeth sent Sir Francis Drake and other sea captains to **raid** Spanish ships and **seize** gold and other **treasures** that the Spanish had **captured**.

This was too much for Philip II of Spain so he **decided** to **attack** England. After years of **preparation** he put together a strong **fleet** of ships called the Spanish Armada. In 1588 the Armada sailed into the **English Channel**. In the **battle** that lasted for nine days the British **defeated** the **Spaniards** because their ships were smaller and faster. Only a few of them **managed** to get back to Spain. Elizabeth had **celebrated** the greatest **victory** of her **reign**.

The Elizabethan Age was also an age of **art** and culture. Many musicians, **scholars** and writers came to her palace. William Shakespeare was the greatest writer of the period and wrote some of the world's finest plays and poems.

The last years of Elizabeth's **reign** were **troubled** by scandals and **revolts**. Parliament started to criticize the queen and health problems made her weaker. She died on March 24, 1603 at the age of 69. At her wish, Mary Stuart's son, James VI of Scotland became king of England and the two countries were **united**.



WORDS

- **accuse** = to say that someone has done something bad or committed a crime
- **advisor** = a person who helps you because they know a lot about a subject
- **although** = while
- **art** = painting and drawing
- **attack** = to start using guns and other weapons against an enemy
- **aware** = here: know
- **battle** = the fight between armies in a war
- **behead** = to cut off a person's head
- **break—broke** = here: to end a relationship
- **capture** = to catch a person and keep them as a prisoner
- **care** = to be worried about
- **cautious** = careful
- **celebrate** = to do something special and have fun at an event
- **decide** = to choose to do something
- **divorce** = to end a marriage
- **economics** = the study of the way money and goods are produced and used
- **elder** = older
- **English Channel** = the water between England and France
- **execute** = to kill someone as a punishment
- **fleet** = a group of ships
- **found—founded** = start something new
- **glorious** = wonderful, great
- **including** = as well as, together with
- **inherit** = to get from someone after their death
- **manage to** = to do something that is difficult
- **plot** = to make a secret plan against someone
- **preparation** = to make plans for something that is going to happen
- **radical** = extreme
- **raid** = to go to a place and steal things
- **receive** = get
- **reign** = the period when someone is king or queen
- **release** = to set free
- **revolt** = rebellion
- **scholar** = an intelligent and well-educated person
- **seize** = take, get hold of
- **self confidence** = you are sure that you can do things well
- **Spaniard** = someone from Spain
- **stability** = not changing, always staying the same
- **succeed** = to be the next person to become king or queen
- **threat** = danger
- **throne** = the power and position of being king or queen
- **trade** = to buy and sell things
- **treasure** = valuable things like jewels and gold
- **troubled** = worried
- **unite** = to get together
- **victory** = if you have won a battle, fight or a war