

# Elizabeth i: the greatest queen of all assignment

[History](#)



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

English king / queen and discuss their importance in the history of England. (About 2000 words) In about a thousand years of monarchy, England had many remarkable kings and queens and yet most probably none of them deserved the attention from historians and novelists like Queen Elizabeth I, also known as 'Gloria', 'Good Queen Bess' and 'The Virgin Queen'. She was the daughter of Henry VIII and his second wife Anne Bobble and is one of the most famous queens in England, who stayed on the throne for 44 years, starting in 1558 up to her death in 1603.

Her childhood was far from happy or peaceful, for she lived in an atmosphere of religious intolerance, with her father's desperate attempts at producing a son to succeed him on the throne, her half sister's hatred casting a shadow of peril on the young princess and political and religious intrigue. All this taught her to be shrewd and merciless. This essay aims to describe some important women in English history and show the facts that made Queen Elizabeth I the most remarkable and controversial ruler of all of them.

To begin with, in nearly two thousand years English Monarchy produced a number of very interesting characters on the throne, and we must say, that long before women's liberation, these characters were not only men. We can go as far as the prehistoric times and talk about the legendary King Arthur and his wife Guinevere: a remarkable couple. He was the founder of a kingdom of Justice sited in the castle of Camelot where he and his knights sat at a Round Table, this marked the great rule that the King was not a Ruler but Just 'The First among Equals'.

In this case, women were not invited in terms of equality. According to some historians they could accompany the men as sort of wise guides, motherly advisers, but not much more than that. A relevant female character at that time was Guinevere. She came from a pre-Christian religion where male chauvinism was not a prevailing rule; and according to some it simply did not exist. There must have been many disagreements between her and her ever-so-democratic husband.

In our contemporary times, there was Queen Victoria, who was the monarch of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland from 20 June 1837 until her death and who, from 1876, used the additional title of Empress of India. She lived in marital harmony with Prince Albert of German origin. In spite of the fact that by that time Great Britain was a constitutional monarchy the Queen showed strong influence on everything that was going on in her kingdom and in most of Europe.

Many people remember her as the creator of very strict and up to a point very hypocritical type of morality, which was true, but it can hardly be regarded as the main feature of her reign. Another amazing woman in English history was Margaret Thatcher, who was known as the 'Iron Maiden'. She was not a queen, but she was the head of the British government. She also won a battle in defense of her colonies in the South Atlantic. This triumph earned her the re-election she needed so much, but she went down in school children used to receive ever since the boom of World War II. She died a short time ago.

But probably the most relevant queen in history is Queen Elizabeth I, also known as 'Gloria', 'Good Queen Bess' and 'The Virgin Queen': we can only imagine what kind of feelings could have surfaced in the brain of that strong, willed young woman when she saw her mother falsely accused and executed for her failure to bear a son. If she had been born a couple of centuries later maybe she would have become the leader of a feminist movement; but that was not the case, so she decided to fight for power as a manner of asserting her own personality probably marked by the tragic story of her parents' marriage.

Obviously, she had to earn the support of important sectors of society, partly as self-defense and partly perhaps because she really enjoyed the beautiful things of life. When she became queen in 1558, she was only five years old, and not only a survivor of family scandals and danger, but also considered an illegitimate queen by most Europeans. She inherited a bankrupt nation, destroyed by religious conflicts and political disputes between the great powers of France and Spain. 'The Virgin Queen' was not the first Queen to succeed her father on the throne.

Her half-sister Mary came before her and unleashed a ruthless persecution of Protestants that earned her the nickname of Bloody Mary. This is an important element to take into account when we discuss the controversial characteristics of her reign. The tragic history of her parents' marriage, religious intolerance, the craving for power and the desire to extend her rule may be used as an explanation for the ruthless way she dealt with her opponents, the most outstanding of whom was Mary Queen of Scots, her cousin.

<https://assignbuster.com/elizabeth-i-the-greatest-queen-of-all-assignment/>

There were many reasons for conflict: Mary was Stuart while Elizabeth was Tudor: two rival dynasties. Mary, who was a Catholic brought up in France was seen as the best option for transferring Scotland to France, especially because she was also the Queen Consort of France, while Elizabeth wanted to unite the countries of the island under her own rule. Elizabeth knew the country she had to rule. Mary was a foreigner in her land of origin. It was not very difficult to put the Scottish lords against Mary due to her frivolous manners and so have her isolated when the final attack came.

Mary was executed and – adding insult to injury – as a commoner, not as a member of aristocracy. With Mary out of the scene, Elizabeth had control over Scotland as well, fulfilling her aim of expansion inside the country. From the point of view of the English Crown, this was a tremendous achievement and Mary's execution was a small price to pay for it. During her reign, Elizabeth I, had to deal with the problem of the religious divisions created in England over the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI and Mary I.

As a solution to this, she made some reforms described as “The Revolution of 1559” which were divided in two Acts of the Parliament of England: the “Act of Supremacy” (1558) with which she re-established the Church of England's independence from Rome, with Parliament giving to Elizabeth the title of Supreme Governor of the Church of England; and the “Act of Uniformity” (1559) in which it was established what form the English Church should take, including the re-establishment of the Book of Common Prayer. International level with the Pope encouraging King Phillip II from Spain (he was going to be heir to the English throne if Mary became Queen of England) to invade England. Apparently, the Spanish Armada had bigger and stronger <https://assignbuster.com/elizabeth-i-the-greatest-queen-of-all-assignment/>

ships than the English fleet and with the political support of the Pope they could not lose. But, against all predictions, in 1558 the so-called “Invincible Armada” was defeated by an English naval force with smaller ships under the command of Lord Charles Howard and Sir

Francis Drake (former slave dealer) and responding to the command of a woman who dared to encourage her troops at Utility Camp with a speech that included words that must have sounded unusual in those days: “... Therefore I am amongst you, as you see, at this time, not for my recreation and disport, but being resolved, in the midst and heat of the battle, to live and die amongst you all; to lay down for my God, and for my kingdom, and my people, my honor and my blood, even in the dust.

I know I have the body but of a weak and feeble woman; but I have the heart and tomcat of a king, and of a king of England too, and think foul scorn that Pram or Spain, or any prince of Europe, should dare to invade the borders of my realm.. “. 1 This speech showed how fiery the Queen was and that she was not going to let her opponents to think she was weak. The defeat of Spain at this point signified a tremendous set-back, because Spain was considered the great conqueror of the new world’ at that time.

On the other hand, as part of her strategy of winning popularity and support, she made great efforts to boost the flourishing of arts, having its main focus in theatre, tit the creation of a secular theatre. In spite of its popularity, the Elizabethan theatre attracted criticism, censorship, and lack of respect from some sectors of English society. The plays were often of inferior quality and rude, and playwrights and actors belonged to a bohemian class.

Puritan leaders and officers of the Church of England considered actors to be of questionable character, and they criticized playwrights for using the stage to disseminate their disrespectful opinions. They also feared the overcrowded theatre spaces might lead to the spread of diseases. At times wrought the sixteenth century, Parliament censored plays for profanity, heresy, or politics. But Queen Elizabeth and later King James offered protections that ultimately allowed the theatre to survive.

To alleviate Puritan concerns, the Queen established rules prohibiting the construction of theatres and theatrical performances within the London city limits. Its main representatives were William Shakespeare, whose most important plays were “Hamlet”, “King Lear” and “As you like it” (most of his inspiration came from English history); Ben Jonson, author of “Volcano” and “The Alchemist”; ND Christopher Marlowe, author of “Dry Faustus” and “Temperament”.

Another important fact during Elizabethan reign was the increase on lay education and lay attendance at university. By the end of her reign there were very few illiterate gentlemen and gentlewomen. Additionally, she contributed to economic prosperity by founding English colonies all over the world with the help of explorers like Sir Walter Raleigh (important participant on the English colonization of North America, he was granted a royal patent to explore Virginia, which opened the way for future English settlements)<sup>2</sup>, Sir

Francis Drake (an English sea captain, privateer, navigator, slaver, and politician of 1577 to 1 Sir John Hawkins (an English shipbuilder, naval

administrator and commander, merchant, navigator, pirate and slave trader. As treasurer in 1577 and controller in 1589 of the Royal Navy, he rebuilt older ships and helped design the faster ships that defeated the Spanish Armada in 1588).<sup>4</sup> Due to this England became one of the leading nations. Finally, when talking about her private life, she was known as the 'Virgin Queen' because she has never married.

One reason could be because she refused to share her power with a husband who would then claim to be her master. Another reason could be the not very happy memories of her parents' marriage. She had this strong attitude in every aspect of her life, such as in foreign affairs, when giving her fierce speech at Tilbury to encourage the troops, showing that she could be as strong as a man. To sum up, nowadays when women are taking over in many countries, they are leading in business, politics, sports and practically all human activities; we must regard this woman as part of the times when she lived.

These were the days when the Inquisition was rampant in Europe and as a woman who wore men's clothes in a battle, Queen Elizabeth I stands as a monarch who could not afford to be "too full of the milk of human kindness"<sup>5</sup>. She had a job to do: to lead her country to power and stability. And she did this even at the price of beheading her cousin, Mary Queen of Scots, depriving her not only of her life and throne but also of her aristocratic immunities. She proved to be not only a ruthless person but a very strong one. She ruled alone for nearly half a century, providing England with one of its most glorious eras in world history.