

The Elizabethan Age, 1558-1603

The Spanish Armada

Reasons for the Spanish Armada

There were three main reasons for the Spanish Armada:

- The ambitions of King Philip II of Spain
- The war in the Netherlands
- The actions of English privateers

Task: Complete the gap fills below for more detail on these causes.

- Ambitions of King Philip II of Spain



Philip married _____ in 1554 and in 1555 he became the King of Spain, the Netherlands and all of Spain's colonies in Italy and America. He was now the ruler of the most _____ and wealthiest empire in the world. Philip was determined to protect the _____ faith with the Spanish navy and army and to do this he needed to attack the growth of _____ in the north.

After the death of Edward VI, Philip became _____ of England and Wales with his wife. They both wanted to re-establish _____ as the official religion in England. Mary died in 1558, so Philip tried to arrange a new marriage with _____.

However, she rejected his proposal so Philip married Isabella, daughter of King Henry II of _____. Later that year, Elizabeth introduced her Religious _____. This worried Philip who began to watch England closely. His eventual solution was to plan for an _____ so that the Catholic faith could be restored.

co-ruler

France

Mary Tudor

armada

Protestantism

powerful

Catholic

Settlement

Elizabeth

Catholicism

- The war in the Netherlands

At the beginning of Elizabeth's reign, relations between England and Spain were quite _____. This is because the Netherlands was very important to Spain economically, and the best way for them to travel there was through the _____. Therefore, Philip was originally quite happy to have Elizabeth as queen because she was less likely to side with France than _____, Queen of Scots.

In August 1566, _____ in various Dutch cities rose in rebellion against the Catholic rule of _____ and began rioting and smashing Catholic icons in the churches. Philip responded in _____ by sending an army of 10,000 _____ to the Netherlands. He was determined to crush the rebellion and _____ over 18,000 Dutch _____, ordering over a thousand to be burn to death.

Elizabeth kept a close eye on what was happening in the Netherlands. She was worried about having such a large Spanish fleet stationed near the English _____. Her Privy Councillors gave different advice; Cecil wanted to _____ war with Spain at all costs and _____ and Walsingham wanted direct military action to support the _____. Elizabeth decided to give unofficial support to the Protestants by supplying them with _____ and _____. She also allowed English _____ to disrupt the transport ships supplying the Spanish armies.

By 1579 the country had _____ into two. The southern parts of the Netherlands made _____ with Spain and the _____ parts formed the Union of Utrecht and rejected _____ rule. Elizabeth continued to fund _____ against Spain and in 1585 she went a step further and signed the Treaty of _____ with the Dutch rebels. In this treaty, _____ agreed to become _____ of the Dutch Protestants and send a force of 5,000 troops and _____ cavalry to help maintain the rebellion. England and Spain were now in a state of undeclared war.

1567

weapons

privateers

split

money

Mary

peace

Spanish

Dudley

Protestants

troops

avoid

coastline

English Channel

Spain

arrested

friendly

resistance

protector

Nonsuch

Elizabeth

1,000

Protestants

- The actions of English privateers

During the 1570s and 1580s, Elizabeth encouraged English privateers to _____ Spanish treasure ships . in 1577, Elizabeth sent _____ on a 3-year voyage to launch surprise attacks on Spanish treasure ships. One estimate claims he brought back gold, silver and jewels worth over £14,000 (roughly _____ today). Philip was furious with Drake and demanded his _____. Instead, Elizabeth was delighted and in 1581 she boarded his ship took out a sword and _____ him.

When war broke out with Spain in _____, Drake was sent to the _____ to attack Spanish settlements and disrupt _____ routes. He captured several _____ and returned with over £30,000 in treasure and _____ Spanish cannons. By the 1580s, these attacks by Drake and other English privateers were beginning to have a serious impact on Spain's _____.

250

knighted

economy

1585

Francis Drake

1567

towns

execution

West Indies

£20 million

attack

Task: What was the most important reason for the Spanish Armada? *Justify your answer*

Philip's preparation of the Armada

Philip first came up with his plan in 1586. He wanted to construct an armada of armed ships which were to be used to...

- Sail north from Lisbon into the English Channel, destroying the English fleet stationed there
- Carry on through the English Channel and anchor at Calais (France)
- A force of 170,000 Spanish soldiers would gather at Dunkirk ready to invade England
- The Armada would guard these soldiers as they travelled across the English Channel in barges
- The army would land at Margate, Kent and then travel up the River Thames to London where they would capture the city and overthrow Elizabeth
- English Catholics would join the Spanish and rise up in a rebellion against Elizabeth and her government

However, Philip's plan had some serious flaws and things didn't go as planned...

Task: Read through the events that took place and use two colours to show whether they were Philip's weaknesses or outside of his control.

Drake had sailed a group of English warships into the harbour at Cadiz and attacked the Spanish fleet.	Shortly after the Armada set sail, it ran into a storm and was blown off course. It was forced to stop for repairs.	Philip ignored the advice from his ministers and military commanders to delay the launch.
In February 1588, the admiral in charge of the Armada died and Philip chose a duke that was not qualified for the job and hated sailing.	There weren't any harbours in the Netherlands deep enough for the Spanish fleet to dock. This made it difficult to pick up the army.	Drake had burnt timber supplies and seasoned wood that was to be used for barrels. When the Armada set sail the following year, the barrels split and leaked because they used unseasoned wood.

The threat posed by the Armada

Philip was very confident that Spain would be successful. In an attempt to intimidate the English, the Spanish government released details of the Armada's size just before its departure.

- 130 galleons and supply ships
- 30,000 men
- 1,900 cannon and small guns
- Extensive supplies of food and drink
- 17,000 well-trained soldiers

Task: Read through the different ways England prepared for the invasion, in two colours highlight strengths and weaknesses.

- Set up a line of warning beacons along the coast that would be lit when the Armada was sighted. Church bells would also be rung to warn people.
- The English army didn't know where the Spanish army would land so it was difficult to place land forces appropriately.
- Most English soldiers were untrained and poorly equipped.
- Elizabeth managed to raise a force of about 20,000 men, which was organised into three armies, one based in the north of England, one based in Kent and one at Tilbury in Essex to guard the south coast.
- The English Navy was the main line of defence. It was led by Lord Charles Howard and his vice-admirals, Francis Drake and John Hawkins.
- The 54 English battleships were light and fast moving in comparison to the Spanish galleons. They were also fitted with long-range cannons.
- 140 merchant ships had been converted into battleships, making a total of 200 ships.

Task: 'The Armada posed a serious threat to Elizabeth.' How far do you agree with this statement?

Course of the Armada

Task: Put the events in chronological order to show what happened during the Spanish Armada. Some have been done to help you.

	After the Armada set sail, the English sailed out of Plymouth and pursued them for a week. There were regular battles, but they failed to break the crescent formation of the Spanish ships.
	The Spanish ships cut their anchor ropes and headed out to sea in all directions to escape the fireships. They had broken their crescent formation.
	The English ships continued to follow the Armada until it got to the Scottish border. The English fleet then turned back because they were short of ammunition and some sailors were sick.
	The Armada set sail from Lisbon, but it was soon hit by a storm and was forced to pull into a harbour at Corunna to repair the boats and get fresh supplies.
	Only 67 ships returned to Spain full of wounded, starving and sick men.
	The English took steps to attack the stationary Spanish fleet and loaded 8 unmanned ships with tar, gunpowder and cannons. They were set on fire and left to drift towards the Spanish ships.
	Elizabeth visited her troops at Tilbury, Essex. She made a speech to prepare the soldiers for battle as Spanish invasion was still possible.
	The Armada anchored off Calais, but were forced to wait for the Spanish army who were delayed by one week.
	The Spanish lacked accurate maps to get around the coasts of Scotland and Ireland safely. They lost more of their fleet due to shipwreck than actual fighting.
	On the same day as Elizabeth's speech, the wind changed direction. This meant that the Spanish ships couldn't return to the English Channel and now had to sail around Scotland and Ireland.

Reasons for the failure of the Armada

Task: Read through the reasons for the failure of the Armada and organise them into the following categories using four colours: English strengths, Spanish weaknesses, tactics and weather.

English ships were smaller, faster and more manoeuvrable than the Spanish galleons.	The weather blew the Spanish fleet northwards and they didn't have the correct maps to navigate the waters safely.	The Spanish commander was not as experienced at commanding a fleet as his English rivals.
The use of 'fireships' was a turning point in the battle because it split the Spanish ships and made them difficult to control.	The lateness of the Spanish army caused a delay and allowed the English to attack the Spanish fleet at Calais.	English ships had heavier fire-power, they were fitted with long-range cannons allowing them to fire from a safe distance.
Spanish cannons were ineffective, the shot was made of poor quality iron and many exploded whilst being fired.	Once the crescent formation was broken the Spanish ships were out-gunned and easier targets for the more experienced English ships.	Spanish ships didn't have enough food and water to last the voyage around Scotland and Ireland. Sailors became ill and morale was low.

Results of the Armada

News of the Armada's defeat led to great celebrations across England and Wales. The country remained Protestant and it continued to be ruled by Queen Elizabeth. English Catholics had not risen up in support of Spain and there were no further Catholic plots or rebellions for the rest of Elizabeth's reign.

However, it is important not to over-emphasise the significance of the defeat of the Armada as its effects were limited.

- The war against Spain dragged on for a further decade
- Still a successful Spanish army in the Netherlands under the command of a very able leader, the Duke of Parma
- Still a risk of Spanish invasion and within a short time Philip had constructed another armada of 100 ships- it was sent to attack England on two occasions but was sent back due to storms
- The English continued to support the Dutch Protestants in their rebellion against Catholic Spain
- English sailors continued to attack Spanish treasure ships and ports
- There was an increased anti-Catholic feeling within England, but it did not result in any major arrests

Task: Explain why the defeat of the Spanish Armada didn't end the Spanish threat to Elizabeth and England.
