

Elizabethan Government

What	Key Features / Function	Why was this feature needed?
<p>The Monarch (Elizabeth I)</p>	<p>During the Elizabethan period, monarchs of England believed they had the right to rule 'by the grace of God.' This was later known as 'Divine Right'. Because of this, Elizabeth I made all the most important decisions in the country; deciding if England went to war and when to call or dismiss parliament.</p> <p>Although she listened to parliament's opinions and took advice from her Privy Council, she could reject them. Elizabeth could reward people with land, a title or supporting their cause (this was called patronage).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • declare war and make peace • call and dismiss parliament, and agree to, or reject any laws they voted for • rule in some legal cases, for example, if the law was unclear or if people appealed a judgement • grant titles, lands, money, and jobs • reward people with land, a title or supporting their cause (Patronage)
<p>Court</p>	<p>The Court was a body of people who lived in, or near, the same palace or house as the monarch. The court was made up of members of the nobility. They were the monarch's key servants, advisers and friends. Attending court required the monarch's permission and they were required to entertain and advise the monarch. As such, they could influence and persuade the monarch to take action in their best interests.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entertain and advise the monarch. • Public display of wealth and power. • Courtiers had influence with the monarch rather than actual power • Foreign Ambassadors could try and influence the Queen and report back to their own countries what is happening in England
<p>Privy Council</p>	<p>The Privy Council was made up of leading advisers, as well as nobles and very senior government officials, like Sir William Cecil. There were approximately 19 members on the Privy Council, chosen by the monarch. They met at least three times a week and debated current issues and made sure the monarch's final decisions were carried out. They made sure that the rest of government worked efficiently; monitoring the Justices of the Peace, influencing Parliament and keeping law and order.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • debate current issues and advise the monarch on government policy • made sure the monarch's final decisions were carried out. • oversaw law and order, local government and the security of England • monitored Justices of the Peace • monitored the proceedings of Parliament
<p>The Secretary of State</p>	<p>Elizabeth's most important member of the Privy Council was her Secretary of State. He was the person in government she was closest to. Sir William Cecil held the position from 1573 and was later named Lord Burghley. The Secretary advised the queen on matters important to the Crown; ensuring her safety and security.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advised the queen on matters important to the Crown • Most trusted friend and advisor

<p>Parliament</p>	<p>Parliament was made up of the House of Lords (which included bishops and nobles) and the House of Commons (members of the gentry). Parliament could only be called and dismissed by the monarch. Elections were held before each new parliament, but very few people could vote and the same Members of Parliament were often chosen. Elizabeth I called parliament ten times during her reign; usually so that they would grant her taxation (money collected from the people). Parliament passed new laws and offered advice to the queen.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • grant extraordinary taxation • passed laws (Acts of Parliament) • offered advice to the monarch
<p>Lords Lieutenant</p>	<p>Each county (eg Norfolk, Suffolk) had a Lord Lieutenant chosen by the monarch. They were members of the nobility and were often also on the Privy Council. They were essential to maintaining the monarch's power and England's defences. They were in charge of raising and training the local militia (soldiers) and overseeing county defences in case England was attacked. They ensured that the queen's laws were enforced by people far away from central government by giving orders to JPs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In charge of raising and training the local militia and overseeing county defences • Oversaw the enforcement of policies • Part of the local government
<p>Justices of the Peace (JPs)</p>	<p>JPs were members of the nobility and gentry. They were unpaid and they reported to the Privy Council. Being a JP was a position of status, and so was a very popular job. They made sure all Elizabeth and parliament's social and economic policies were carried out by local people. For more serious crimes, JPs acted as judges in local courts every three months.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Made sure all social, Religious and economic policies were carried out. • Heard county court cases every three months for more serious crimes. • Gave out punishments

The monarch and parliament – Summary

Although the monarch had regular income, there were often times when more was needed. Raising '**extraordinary taxation**' could only be done with parliament's agreement and so it was not possible to govern effectively without parliament. Although the queen could issue direct orders (known as **proclamations**), they could not be enforced in England's law courts. Acts of Parliament, however, could be enforced and so any really important policies would be presented to parliament for its approval. Although, in theory, it was possible to vote against what the monarch wanted, this rarely happened because the Privy Councillors persuaded MPs to follow her policies.

There were some areas that only the monarch had the right to decide upon. The most important of these included **foreign policy, marriage and the succession**. This was known as the **royal prerogative**. Elizabeth I claimed it was her right as monarch to stop parliament discussing any issues she didn't want them to discuss.