Government in Tudor England:

**Key terms:**

**Clergy:** A high ranking member of The Church – Bishop, Archbishop, Priest etc.

**Courtiers:** Men and women of the nobility who spend a lot of time at court

**Divine Right:** The belief that God chose the monarch to rule as they see fit

**Extraordinary taxation:** Occasional extra taxing to pay for unexpected expenses, especially war

**Local Government:** People who run smaller areas of the country (like local councils today)

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*How does government work in Britain today?*

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[www.stchistory.com](http://www.stchistory.com)
Elizabeth I
The monarch was head of the government.

Justices of the Peace (JPs) and Lords Lieutenants were the most important part of local government*. Their role was to make sure government policies were carried out locally and to keep law and order.

The Court was made up of courtiers*. These were nobles and important advisers. The Court had no power but courtiers could influence the king or queen. Its role was to entertain as well as advise the monarch.

The Privy Council was made up of 19 Privy Councillors. It met three times a week. Elizabeth was usually in charge of the meetings. Its role was:
- to advise the monarch on government policy*
- to carry out the Elizabeth’s decisions
- to check what the Justices of the Peace were doing.

Parliament was made up of the House of Lords* and the House of Commons*. The House of Lords was made up of noblemen and bishops. The House of Commons was made up of MPs who were voted for by male landowners. Its role was:
- to grant extraordinary taxation* if the monarch needed more money

You can see what the Elizabethan parliament looked like on page 12.
The Monarch:

The government in Elizabethan England centered on the monarch, partly due to the belief in Divine Right Monarchy. Elizabeth made all of the important decisions, taking advice from her Privy Council.

**What could Elizabeth do as Monarch?**

- 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
- Marriage, succession and foreign affairs could only be decided by Elizabeth, this was her “Royal Prerogative”
Patronage:

To provide some one with an important job or position is known as **patronage**. This could involve a grant of land or a title.

Patronage is a very effective way of getting support from people and controlling them. What the queen gave, she could also take away if displeased.

Why do you think Patronage could be useful in controlling the people?
The Monarch’s main responsibilities:

Decide policy on war, peace, religion, day to day running of government, appointing officials, building relationships with other countries, securing the succession and promoting economic growth & trade
The Monarch’s main responsibilities:

Enforce policy, providing laws to protect people from crime and disorder. Dealing with threats to internal security and ensuring the courts work effectively.
The Monarch’s main responsibilities:

Raise money:

Collect money from the **ordinary** sources (rents, taxes, customs duties, fines etc)
Sometimes collecting from **extraordinary revenues** – asking Parliament at times of war
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Raise money: Collect money from the *ordinary* sources (rents, taxes, customs duties, fines etc) 
Sometimes collecting from *extraordinary revenues* – asking Parliament at times of war or attack

### Describe two features of the role of the Monarch

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William Cecil was Elizabeth’s chief advisor and oversaw the whole of government. He became Lord Treasurer in 1572 after being promoted, with a new title to LORD BURGHLEY in 1571.

What can you infer from Burghley House about William Cecil?
The Court:

The Court was a collection of important people. 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. This was a golden opportunity to impress Elizabeth and seek her approval.

Foreign visitors (ambassadors) would also be at court.

How could being at Court help you advance yourself?
The Court:

Robert Dudley was a favourite at Court
The Court:
The Court was a collection of important 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. Foreign visitors (ambassadors) would also be at court.

Describe two features of the role of The Court

Feature 1

Feature 2
The Privy Council:

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 (Elizabeth’s sister Mary had 50!!).

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, influencing Parliament and keeping law and order.*

Why was it better that Elizabeth only had 19 Privy Councillors?
The Privy Council:

Read these problems Elizabeth faced, think about pros and cons then offer her your advice for each...

Should I choose nobles and gentry because of their power and class, or the men who have the most ability?

My half-sister Mary's councillors are all Catholics. Should I get rid of them all or keep some because of their experience?

I need men I can trust. Should I just choose men I know from the past?

Should I choose people who all have the same opinions, or people with a range of different views?

I need the advice of powerful nobles, but I have to show I am in charge of them. This could be a difficult balancing act, much harder for a woman.
The Privy Council

in action:

This was the most important Privy councillor. He was the person Elizabeth was closest to and advised the queen on matters important to the Crown.

Secretary of State
This job was to manage the income & spending of England

Commanded the Navy & all issues relating to sea

Stamped legal docs.

Managed the estates, militia and ££ of Lancaster
Your majesty,

I know you probably want to just relax after the chaos of the last few weeks as a new queen but we have urgent business to attend to and the Privy Council calls a vital meeting tomorrow.

The meeting will focus on you being inexperienced, the people of England seem happy that you are a fresh start following your sister’s devastating reign however there are whispers that you are a weak woman who will be just as bad! They remember your father well and he was strong and in control.

We also need to discuss the threats from abroad, we’re very weak and have no money! France & Spain are getting more powerful every day! Scotland is our most pressing worry with Mary Queen of Scots laying claim to your throne and, we fear, gaining support from English Catholics here!

Also, it doesn't take a genius to work out that there are some religious issues, following the rollercoaster of the last 25 years, the people are concerned with what you’re going to do! Most people are still Catholic and believe the Pope should be head of the Church not you! There are some extreme protestants, The Puritans, who are causing issues too.

I look forward to seeing you tomorrow and getting to work

[Signature]

How do you think Elizabeth would have responded to a letter like this?

Make a list of the key areas Elizabeth needs to deal with straight away
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 (Elizabeth’s sister Mary had 50!!). 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.

Describe two features of the role of The Privy Council

Feature 1

Feature 2
Parliament:

- 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.
- Elizabeth I called parliament approximately **ten** times during her reign; usually so that they would grant her taxation (money collected from the people).
Parliament:

- Parliament passed new laws and offered advice to the queen.
- Raising extraordinary taxation could only be done with parliament’s agreement so Elizabeth needed parliament to govern effectively.
- Acts of Parliament (laws) could be enforced - As a result, any important policies (usually to do with religion or the poor) were presented to parliament for its approval.
- Elizabeth used her Royal Prerogative to stop parliament discussing any issues she didn't want them discussing, mostly foreign affairs, the succession and her marriage.

What problems do you think the House of Lords having Catholic Bishops in might cause for Elizabeth?
What can you see going on here?

Are there any signs to show power?

Are there any similarities to today’s parliament?

Do you have any questions or observations?
Parliament:

There were no political parties, no prime minister, only wealthy men could vote or become MPs. Candidates up for election were decided by the Privy Council. Although MPs claimed the right to free speech, often they were sent to the Tower of London if they went too far, in Elizabeth’s opinion.

How might this help Elizabeth?

How might this give her more control?
Parliament:

Describe two features of the role of The Privy Council.
Lords Lieutenant:

• Each county 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 in the local areas.
• 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.

Describe 2 features of the Lords Lieutenants in full sentences using specific facts...
Justices of the Peace (JP’s)

JP’s 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.

Describe 2 features of the JP’s - in full sentences using specific facts...
The role of Elizabeth’s government

Monarch
declare war and make peace
call and dismiss parliament, and agree to, or
reject any laws they voted for
grant titles, lands, money, and jobs
reward people with land, a title or supporting
their cause (Patronage)
Chosen by God (Divine Right)

Secretary of State
Advised the queen on matters important to the Crown

Privy Council
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 in Parliament

The Court
Entertain and advise the monarch.
Public display of wealth and power.
Courtiers had influence with the monarch rather than actual power
Foreign ambassadors from every country

Parliament
grant extraordinary taxation
passed laws (Acts of Parliament)
offered advice to the monarch

Local Government

Lords Lieutenant
in charge of raising and training the local militia and overseeing county defences
oversaw the enforcement of policies part of the local government

Justices of the Peace / Sheriffs
made sure all social and economic policies were carried out.
heard county court cases every three months for more serious crimes.
Made sure punishments were given out

Which of these parts of Government would be most important to Elizabeth and why?