Edward VI’s death and the Succession Crisis 1553

- January 1553, Edward VI ill with tuberculosis, he recovered but suffered a relapse in May of the same year.

- 21st May 1553, Edward’s cousin Lady Jane Grey married Guilford Dudley, son of John Dudley Earl of Warwick, who is Edward's lord of the council.

- June 1553, Edward’s ‘devise’ is written, however fearing a Marian succession (Edward’s heir was his Catholic half sister, Mary—there were fears that she would restore Catholicism and undo all of Edward’s work on his Protestant Reformation) Edward changes his devise and names ‘Lady Jane Grey and heirs male’ as his succession.

- 21st June 1553, Edward’s councillors are forced to sign the devise.

- 6th July 1553, Edward VI dies aged 15, before Parliament could legalise the devise.

- That left two contenders for the Throne, Lady Jane Grey or Mary Tudor.

Explain how this event shows that Edward was in control of Faction

- Edward had written the devise, he himself was a dedicated Protestant and he feared upon his death his half sister would erase the Protestant legacy Edward had started.
- Edward himself forced his councillors to sign the devise.
- He favoured Lady Jane Grey, she was his cousin—shared royal blood (Lady Jane Grey was a granddaughter of Henry VIII’s younger sister Mary) and Jane herself was a staunch Protestant.
- The actual inept of the plot suggests that it was the work of an inexperienced mind.

Explain how this event shows that Edward was not in control of Faction

- Illness, it’s heavily argued that Northumberland accepted full responsibility.
- Northumberland’s sudden raise of importance when it was clear that Edward was dying.
- Edward was still a minor, therefore he was not able to make a will or override a Parliamentary statue, therefore the legitimate claim laid with Mary.