Elizabeth’s succession to the throne -

- Succession of Henry VIII 1509-47 - Edward VI 1547-53 and finally Mary 1553-58
- privileged upbringing however lead to great danger
- 1536 – mother, Anne Boleyn, beheaded whilst Elizabeth was only two, struck from line of succession
- Childhood spent in the company of servants and governess, cut off from family and friends
- Education was bright and nourished, fluent in various languages (Greek, Latin, French, Italian) and taught to speak in public, profoundly studious
- 1543 – Henry’s sixth wife, Catherine Parr, brought her back
- 1547 – Henry VII dies and Edward becomes king however only nine so advisors ruled, made Church of England more protestant and many Catholics protested against this
- 1548 – Elizabeth was sexually assaulted by Thomas Seymour, Catherine Parr’s new husband, she resisted his attempts
- 1553 – Edward dies, leaving her sister, Mary Tudor, to rule – imposed strong catholic ideals back into England and restored church ceremonies, ordered burning of 300 protestants, made her unpopular (Elizabeth hid her beliefs to keep herself safe)
- 1554-1555 – THE WYATT REBELLION
- 4000 individuals rebelled against Queen Mary
- due to her marrying Catholic King of Spain
- proposed for Elizabeth to be made queen
- she was thought to have participated so taken to tower of London
- however released when no evidence was found
- 1558-1603 – death of Mary, ruled for 45 years alone

Structure of Elizabethan society and government at the beginning -

- Monarch – The Queen, made all the decisions but advised by leading nobles, in charge of the law courts, head of the Church and commanded the navy.
- Nobles – wealthiest landowners expected to be the monarch’s leading advisers and could resent being left out
- Gentry – next layer down made up of lesser nobles, knights and lawyers. Hereditary nobles had considerable influence in local and central government
- The Queen governed the country but relied on the support of the nobles, gentry and merchants to rule effectively
- Court – courtiers members of nobility, monarchs advisers and friends – entertain but also advise, display wealth and power
- Privy Council of nobility, advisors and courtiers - responsible for crown’s finances and controlled business of Parliament and justices of the peace, oversaw law/order and security of country
**Act of uniformity –**

- new protestant prayer book
- clergy swore on oath to use in services
- services and bible now in English
- holy communion took place with bread and wine, meaning left deliberately open
- Latin mass omitted but still taken in secret, E accepted if shown loyalty
- some ornaments and decoration still left in church
- singing of hymns continues
- priests wore fine vestments, allowed to marry
- had to attend on a Sunday and other holy days or fine to pay (1 shilling)

**Puritans -**

- Puritans at heart of the government
- 1570s, fair number of Puritan MPs in parliament (Sir Francis Walsingham)
- Puritanism education within University
- Openly criticised the church, wanted to remove leftover catholic ideals (vestments to plain black gowns)
- Group of educated, literate and vocal individuals
- Small, minority group in Elizabethan society, strict views put them at odd with ordinary people
- Prominent fear of “the other option” – evicting Elizabeth would result in the upcoming of Catholicism, of which they feared, wanted to avoid this so she was their next best option
- Minor group which were divided into different levels of extremism, not united/strong body
- Less popular due to the requirement of literate individuals who could read the bible, of which many couldn’t
- Government determined and took strong action against Puritans who challenged religious statement – shut down parliament to prevent their involvement
- Pleased with protestant church but too much compromise with Catholics
- Reasons for leading church in this way - to raise enemy against catholic countries, however – risk of losing support from large sum of people, wanted to run own churches and would challenge her power

(Puritanism therefore acted as a relatively minor threat to Elizabeth – lack of support, government action, weak and divided body and no alternative)

**Catholics -**

- Majority of country still Catholic, hugely powerful noble families, most of gentry,
- 8000 clergy from Mary Is reign suggests could have been mass opposition – but not!
Spanish Armada 1585/1588–

Rivalries -

- **Phillips marriage proposal** – 1559, Phillip proposed to Elizabeth however was declined, Disappointed as wanted to secure Catholicism within England, would have made war unlikely so it not happening permitted war, However Spain and England remained on good terms for a number of years after this

- **Civil war in France** - 1562-1598, civil war broke out between protestants and Catholics, France being weaker mean threat towards Spain was reduced and Spain able to attack England without interference of France

- **Religious and political rivalry** - Spanish Catholicism seen as threat, Phillip II became involved in plots against Elizabeth and saw Protestantism as a threat to authority of the catholic church, disliked the increase of penalties against Catholics in 1570 and Despised religious settlement but took no action until 25 years later

- **Spanish policy in the Netherlands** – brutal Spanish campaign under Duke of Alba aimed to restore Catholicism in Spain, executed many Dutch protestants following council of blood in 1568, Angered many in Elizabeth’s government who now saw Spain as hostile, direct threat to England made

- **English response to the Spanish** - Elizabeth’s government decided to intervene and help Dutch protestants resist, Dutch rebel ships allowed to hide in English ports, financially support to others fighting the Spanish (John Casimir volunteers) and English Privateers encouraged to attack Spanish shipping’s/colonies in Latin America (sir Francis Drake), proposed marriage to French Heir hoping he would be persuaded to fight

- **Spanish fury and pacification of Ghent** – by 1576, Spanish found war thee unaffordable (troops went unpaid due to lack of funds), resulting in Spanish fury when troops looted Antwerp, then all 17 Dutch provinces joined an alliance against Spanish drawn up in document (pacification of Ghent) – Spanish to be expelled from Netherlands
