

# Elizabeth I of England

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## Oh, England...

•The country of England was slightly different from other European nations in the era of Absolutism. For one thing, England had a long history of placing limitations on the monarch. Dating back to 1215 with the passage of the Magna Carta, the nobles exerted some authority over the King.

•Parliaments met with a fair degree of regularity from the 1200s through the 1600s for purposes of tax approval.

•The Tudor monarchs, who were notoriously headstrong, battled furiously with the Parliament, but ultimately respected it as one of the roots of English government.



## Elizabeth I

•Elizabeth was the daughter of Henry VIII and Anne Bolyne. Henry had broken with the Catholic Church to marry Elizabeth's mother. He established the Church of England, and declared England a Protestant nation.

•Mary, Elizabeth's half-sister, came to the throne before Elizabeth, and tried to convert the country back to Catholicism.

•When Elizabeth came to power, she tried to bring peace to an internally torn nation. She proclaimed England a Protestant nation, but tolerated Catholics.

•Elizabeth was highly educated (she could read and write more than 5 languages), and was considered the best political marriage in Europe. Kings from across Europe vied for her hand, but Elizabeth kept them all at bay – she didn't say 'yes', and she didn't say 'no'. Eventually, they lost interest. This way, she did not offend one by marrying another. Elizabeth never married; she often said she was married to England.



## Elizabeth's Policies

•Elizabeth had as hot a temper as her red hair suggested. She often had monumental conflicts with the Parliament.

Both were stubborn and willful, but ultimately, Elizabeth worked with the Parliament, instead of dissolving it and attempting to rule alone.

•One of Elizabeth's suitors was Philip II of Spain. Elizabeth rejected him, and then took special pains to torment him. •She directed her sea captains to pirate Spanish galleons heavy with American treasure. She also supported the Protestant Netherlands in their quest for independence from Catholic Spain.

•Ultimately, Philip turned his wrath on her and sent his powerful Armada to invade England. The Armada was defeated in one of England's greatest victories.



## Good Queen 'Bess

•Elizabeth presided over a Golden Age in England. Her reign was long (45 years), and largely peaceful. – it was the age of Shakespeare and Francis Drake, the English Renaissance, and the beginning of English exploration.

•Unfortunately, since Elizabeth never married, she died childless, and the throne passed to the son of her cousin – James, King of Scotland of the House of Stuart.

