

## QUEEN ELIZABETH I



Queen Elizabeth I was the last Tudor monarch. She was the daughter of King Henry VIII and born in 1533. She became queen of England in 1558 and died in 1603.

### HOW ELIZABETH BECAME QUEEN

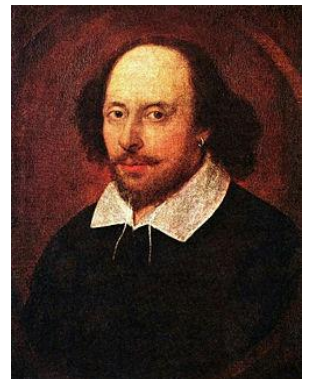
When Henry VIII died, Elizabeth's half-brother, Edward, became king at the age of ten. However, he was very sickly and died after only six years as monarch. Her half-sister, Mary, was then crowned queen but she only reigned for five years before her death in 1558. Elizabeth ascended the throne aged only 25

### ELIZABETH AND RELIGION

When Henry VIII wanted to divorce his first wife, Catharine of Aragon, the Catholic Church wouldn't allow him so he became a Protestant and established his own, the Church of England. Elizabeth, who was also a Protestant, originally tolerated Catholics although they could be fined for not attending Church of England services. However, with rising fears of an invasion by the Catholic countries France and Spain, things began to change. She banned Catholic masses, imprisoned people and burned Catholic priests at the stake.

### ELIZABETH AND THE ARTS

The Elizabethan era saw a flowering of the arts. Playwrights, such as William Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe and Ben Jonson, became extremely popular. Many new theatres were built in cities in which their plays were performed, like Shakespeare's Globe. Also, Edmund Spenser and Sir Philip Sidney were writing great poetry and artists, such as Nicholas Hilliard and Isaac Oliver, were producing their best work. However, Elizabeth didn't seem too interested in the arts and didn't support them financially although she did enjoy watching plays being performed at her palaces.



William Shakespeare



Francis Drake

### ELIZABETH AND EXPLORATION AND TRADE

Elizabeth's reign saw a huge increase in exploration of the world and she often supported these expeditions with her own money. Sir Francis Drake circumnavigated the world between 1577 and 1580 and Sir Walter Raleigh founded the first English colony at Roanoke Island in America. The East India Company created trading posts in India, China and South East Asia. However, there was a darker side to all this. Drake and Raleigh often acted as little more than pirates with Elizabeth's consent, raiding Spanish ships and colonies in South America. Worse still, an explorer called John Hawkins began buying

African slaves and selling them to English and Spanish colonies in the Caribbean and Americas.

## ELIZABETH AND THE WAR WITH SPAIN

Tensions were very high with Spain. The Spanish resented English sailors raiding their ships and colonies. Philip II of Spain had been married to Elizabeth's half-sister Mary, reigning England as joint monarchs, and saw the country as rightfully his to rule. Furthermore, he was a Catholic who wanted to overthrow Elizabeth, and return England to the Catholic faith. In 1588, he sent a fleet of ships, named the Armada, to invade England. Sir Francis Drake attacked the Spanish and as they fled, a huge storm sank many more ships. The victory over the Spanish made Elizabeth very popular.

## ELIZABETH'S CHARACTER

Elizabeth was pursued by many suitors but remained unmarried, seeing herself wed to her English subjects. She had a very close friendship with her childhood sweetheart, Robert Dudley and they remained devoted to one another for their entire lives. Another close friend was Robert Devereux, the Earl of Essex. However, he was very charming but manipulative, causing Elizabeth many problems. Eventually, he led a rebellion against her and she had him beheaded for treason.

Elizabeth had a terrible temper and could often be heard shouting and swearing at her advisors. She was also very jealous and when Dudley married another, after waiting for Elizabeth for over twenty years, she flew into a violent rage and held a life-long hatred for his wife.



Elizabeth in white make-up

Elizabeth contracted smallpox in 1562, causing her to suffer from hair loss and forcing her to wear wigs. The disease had also left her with facial scars which she covered up with thick white make-up made with poisonous lead oxide which further damaged her skin. She loved sweets but hated dentists and, as a result, she suffered from terrible tooth decay which blackened her teeth and gave her very bad breath.

Elizabeth could be very vain and encouraged her courtiers to flatter her. Portraits of her in later life became unrealistic, making her look younger and more beautiful than she was.

However, Elizabeth had a strong character and was determined to succeed in a world ruled by men. She would resist her advisors if she thought they were manipulating her for their own ends. Her reign saw an increase England's wealth, power and influence, and its self-confidence as a nation. She was also brave when the Spanish threatened to invade and she helped inspire England's victory over them. In a speech she made to soldiers and sailors preparing to face the Spanish Armada, she said,

"I know I have the body but of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a king, and of a King of England too, and think foul scorn that Spain, or any Prince of Europe, should dare to invade the borders of my realm."