



**Summary**

Elizabeth I's reign is often said to be a 'Golden Age', a period of time when people were prosperous and happy. Education expanded during the Elizabethan era, the first theatres were built, people enjoyed many other past times and it was the age of exploration. **Francis Drake** was the first English man to circumnavigate the world and **Walter Raleigh** paved the way for the colonisation of America. However, it was also a time when poverty increased. Harvests each year were unpredictable, Henry VIII's closure of the monasteries meant that there was no relief for the sick and poor and his 'debasement' of the coinage contributed to inflation. Changes in farming from labour intensive crop farming to sheep farming and the collapse of the woollen trade in the 1550s meant there was rise in unemployment. High prices and competition for fewer jobs from a growing population mean that numbers of Vagabonds roamed the land spreading fear and possible disease. There was such concern about rising numbers of vagabonds and increasing cost of poor relief that the 'Poor Laws' were passed to deal with the situation in 1572 and 1576.



**Key Vocabulary**

<b>Gentlemen</b>	A class in society including nobles, lords and gentry.
<b>Citizens/Burgesses</b>	A class in society including townsmen such as Merchants, master craftsmen and lawyers.
<b>Yeoman</b>	A class in society. They were framers who owned their own land.
<b>The Fourth Sort</b>	Farm labourers, servants, shopkeepers and craftsmen such as tailors, shoemakers, carpenters and bricklayers. Most people belonged to this social class.
<b>Vagabond</b>	Wandering beggars who often turned to crime.
<b>Deserving Poor</b>	Poor people who wanted to work but could not.
<b>The Idle Poor</b>	Poor people who could work but chose not to. Also known as 'sturdy beggars.'
<b>The Theatre</b>	The first theatre built in 1576 by <b>James Burbage</b> .
<b>The Curtain &amp; The Rose</b>	Elizabethan theatres built in 1577 and 1587. People of all classes loved the theatre. For a penny people could stand in the pit and watch a play written by writers such as <b>Christopher Marlowe</b> .
<b>Paris/Petty School</b>	Local schools for children aged four to seven.
<b>Grammar School</b>	The sons of the gentry, merchants and yeoman would go here to study Latin, Greek and Hebrew and arithmetic.
<b>Winchester and Eton</b>	These were the earliest independent 'fee paying' schools and were for 'ruling class boys'. Similar curriculum to the Grammar Schools but also with an emphasis on conduct, courtesy and etiquette.
<b>Private Tutor</b>	Sons of the nobility (and some daughters) would be educated at home by a private tutor before going on to university where all degrees involved grammar, rhetoric, logic, music, theology, astronomy and geometry.

**1550s:** Collapse of the wool cloth trade causes unemployment.

**1570s:** A bad sequence of harvests meant food shortages which pushed the price of bread and other food stuff up.

**1572:** Vagabonds Act stated guilty would be whipped and burned on the right ear. Second offence prison and execution for persistent offend-

**1576:** The Act for the Relief of the Poor stated that towns must provide work for the able-bodied poor, if refused, sent to prison.

**1577-80:** Drake circumnavigated the globe. His flagship was called *The Golden Hind* upon which he was knighted on his return.

**1585 & 1587:** Raleigh's two voyages to America. The lost colony of Roanoke was the result of the latter voyage.

**TIMELINE**

Early Elizabethan England





### The Voyages of Raleigh and Drake

#### Reasons for the growth of exploration.

- Development of stronger, faster ships and navigational instruments meant sailors could make longer voyages. E.g. **Gerardus Mercator** introduced sea charts showing latitude and longitude.
- Finding new markets after the collapse of the woollen cloth trade motivated exploration.
- Elizabethan's felt it was their duty to spread Christianity and the Queen and nobility were willing to fund the voyages.

#### 1. Drake's circumnavigation of the world 1577-80

Drake hated Catholicism and Spain (he was a Puritan) and wanted to weaken the Spanish Empire with this voyage and find new lands for the Queen. Stage 1 of the voyage consisted of sailing down the west coast of Africa and across the Atlantic Ocean to Brazil. The second stage involved fights with local people in Brazil, Drake having his friend (Thomas Doughty) executed for treason and burning two of the five ships. Drake discovered that Tierra del Fuego was a group of islands before being hit by stormy weather in the Pacific Ocean. Drake lost another ship and was then attacked by the inhabitants of the island of Mocha. Success followed with the successful plundering of Spanish settlements in Peru and the capturing of the *Cacafuego*. Stage 3 began at Guatulco in Mexico Drake had to decide his return route (he had one ship and 55 men left). He landed in California and claimed it for the Queen calling it New Albion, after two months he reached the Molucca Islands and then sailed onto Ternate for its spices. Drake then followed the uncharted coast of Java discovering it was an island, sailed across the Indian Ocean, past the Cape of Good Hope and up the coast of West Africa. His first question when he reached Plymouth on 26 September 1582 was whether the Queen was still alive.

#### Extra resources

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/z3nqsg8/revision/1>

<https://www.tutor2u.net/history/collections/edexcel-gcse-early-elizabethan-england-1558-1588>

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#### Key Words Cont...

<b>Astrolabe</b>	The daughter of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn. She became Queen in 1558 at the age of 25.
<b>Galleon</b>	Elizabeth's father who had broken from the Roman Catholic church in order to divorce Catherine of Aragon leading to religious turmoil in England for many years.
<b>Caravel</b>	Elizabeth's elder half sister who ruled 1553 to 1558. Known as 'Bloody Mary' she made female monarchs unpopular.
<b>Plunder</b>	To steal goods typically using force.
<b>Cacafuego</b>	Spanish treasure ship plundered by Drake during his circumnavigation of the world in 1577. Drake gained treasure worth £140,000.
<b>Lost Colony of Roanoke</b>	All the settlers in the second colony at Roanoke disappeared. Historians think they may have gone to the nearby island of Croatoan, could have split up or died.

#### 2. The Voyages of Raleigh

The Queen would not let her favourite leave court so in 1585 108 male settlers under the command of Ralph Lane sailed to America with Sir Richard Grenville after a favourable reconnaissance mission in 1584. The ship hits rocks and sea-water damaged supplies and seed crops, relations with local tribes became hostile and Lane was forced to abandon Roanoke Island in June 1586.

Raleigh was determined to learn from the first voyage and his second expedition, led by John White, took settler families in 1587. A second colony was established at Roanoke Island but it was too late to plant seeds and the natives were hostile. White returned to England to get more supplies and the Armada needed all ships for defence. When White returned in 1590 all the settlers at Roanoke had vanished with just a message saying 'CRO'.

#### Challenge-

*Find out about the lives of Francis Drake and Walter Raleigh. Produce a biography for both of them.*

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