3.2 Early Elizabethan England, 1558-1559: Elizabeth's Succession and Character: 30-minute Pack

EDEXCEL 1HI0 · about 30 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. Write in full sentences for Questions 2 and 3. You are advised to spend about 30 minutes on this pack.

1 Give two consequences of Elizabeth remaining unmarried and childless through the years 1558-88.

(Total for Question 1 is 2 marks)

2 Explain why some people in 1558 doubted Elizabeth's ability to rule England successfully.

(Total for Question 2 is 12 marks)

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3 'Elizabeth's own character and political skill were the main reason she overcame the doubts about her ability to rule in 1558.' How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer.

(Total for Question 3 is 16 marks)

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Mark scheme · 3.2 Early Elizabethan England, 1558-1559: Elizabeth's Succession and Character: 30-minute Pack

Question 1

there was no clear, universally accepted heir to the English throne, keeping the succession an ongoing source of political anxiety **B1**

rival claimants, such as Mary, Queen of Scots, became a focus for plots and unrest among those who wanted a different, often Catholic, successor **B1**

Answer: An unresolved succession question, and rival claimants such as Mary, Queen of Scots becoming a focus for plots.

Question 2

Level 1 Identifies one or two general reasons for doubt about Elizabeth's rule, with little or no supporting detail or explanation. **1-3**

Level 2 Identifies and begins to explain one or two reasons, supported by some accurate detail. **4-6**

Level 3 Explains two or three reasons for the doubts, each supported by accurate and relevant detail. **7-9**

Level 4 Explains three or more reasons in a well-developed, logically structured way, supported throughout by precise and accurate detail, showing how the reasons connect. **10-12**

Indicative content:

- Gender and contemporary prejudice: many believed women were unsuited to the demands of government and warfare, a view expressed in works such as John Knox's 1558 pamphlet against female rule.
- Age and inexperience: Elizabeth was 25 at her accession and had no direct experience of government, having spent parts of Mary I's reign under suspicion and even briefly imprisoned.
- Doubts over her legitimacy: some Catholics viewed Henry VIII's marriage to Anne Boleyn as invalid, so questioned Elizabeth's right to the throne at all.
- Religious uncertainty: it was not immediately clear whether Elizabeth would govern as a Protestant or seek to maintain Mary I's Catholic restoration, worrying different religious factions for different reasons.
- The unmarried, childless queen also raised the succession question from the very start of the reign, adding a further layer of long-term political uncertainty to the immediate doubts about her rule.
- These factors were interconnected: gender-based prejudice fed directly into anxiety about the succession, since a woman's rule was widely assumed to depend on eventually producing an heir through marriage.

Question 3

Level 1 Shows limited relevant knowledge of Elizabeth's early reign, and offers only a simple, unsupported opinion on the statement. **1-4**

Level 2 Shows some relevant knowledge and identifies relevant factors, but the argument is only partly supported and lacks a developed judgement on how far the statement is accurate. **5-8**

Level 3 Shows good relevant knowledge and explains a range of factors, reaching a supported judgement on how far the statement is accurate, with some links made between factors. **9-12**

Level 4 Shows precise, well-selected knowledge and explains a range of factors in a balanced way, reaching a fully supported and sustained judgement on how far the statement is accurate, with clear analytical links between factors and consistently accurate use of specialist historical terminology. **13-16**

Indicative content:

- Supporting: Elizabeth's careful, cautious approach to major decisions, such as the 1559 religious settlement, and her skilful management of her public image (portraiture, progresses, the 'Virgin Queen' persona) helped win and hold popular and political support.
- Supporting: Elizabeth's careful handling of the marriage question, refusing to be rushed by Parliament's 1559 petition, allowed her to use the prospect of marriage as a diplomatic tool for years without ever fully committing to one match.
- Against: the quality of her early councillors, especially William Cecil, was crucial to competent, stable government, suggesting her success depended significantly on the people she appointed rather than her own skill alone.
- Against: there was, by 1558, no realistic alternative candidate widely acceptable across the political nation, meaning Elizabeth benefited from a lack of serious rival claimants at the very start of her reign rather than purely from overcoming doubts through her own ability.
- Balanced: Elizabeth's personal skill and her strong choice of advisers were closely linked, since choosing capable, loyal councillors such as Cecil was itself an act of political judgement.
- Judgement: while circumstances (a lack of an obvious rival, and a general desire for stability after Mary I's difficult reign) gave Elizabeth an initial opportunity, her sustained ability to manage Parliament, her councillors and her public image over many years suggests personal skill was the more significant factor in turning early doubt into lasting authority.

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