3.10 The Execution of Mary, Queen of Scots, 1587: 30-minute Pack

EDEXCEL 1HI0 · about 30 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. You are advised to spend about 30 minutes on this pack.

1 Name the main plot uncovered in 1586 which produced evidence used to justify Marys trial. Answer in one short phrase.

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

2 Give the month in which Mary was executed at Fotheringhay.

(Total for Question 2 is 1 mark)

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3 Explain why Mary, Queen of Scots, was executed in 1587.

You may use the following in your answer:
- the evidence produced after the Babington Plot linking Mary to conspirators
- the political and security concerns Elizabeth and her ministers faced

You must also use information of your own.

(Total for Question 3 is 12 marks)

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4 'Marys execution was the single most important cause of the deterioration in Anglo-Spanish relations in the late 1580s.' How far do you agree? Explain your answer.

You may use the following in your answer:
- Philip IIs reaction and the increased diplomatic hostility after 1587
- the argument that other factors, such as religious rivalry and English privateering, also drove relations apart

You must also use information of your own.

(Total for Question 4 is 16 marks)

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Mark scheme · 3.10 The Execution of Mary, Queen of Scots, 1587: 30-minute Pack

Question 1

The Babington Plot **B1**

Answer: The Babington Plot

Question 2

February **B1**

Answer: February

Question 3

Level 1 Identifies one or two simple reasons why Mary was executed, with limited supporting detail. **1-3**

Level 2 Addresses one or more reasons and gives some accurate supporting detail, showing an awareness of the link to the Babington evidence or security concerns. **4-6**

Level 3 Explains several reasons clearly, with relevant evidence and some analysis of how these reasons combined to make execution likely. **7-9**

Level 4 Provides a developed, well-structured explanation covering multiple factors, fully supported by precise and accurate detail and showing how the reasons connected to produce the decision to execute Mary. **10-12**

Indicative content:

- Evidence from the Babington Plot: intercepted letters and confessions suggested Mary had consented to plans to assassinate Elizabeth and to be restored, giving ministers concrete grounds for charging her with treason against the English crown.
- Political and security concerns: Elizabeths government feared continued Catholic plots and saw Mary as a focal point for rebellion and foreign intervention, so removing her was presented as removing a long-term security threat.
- Legal and jurisdictional arguments: ministers argued Mary could be tried in England for treason against Elizabeth because the conspiracies targeted the English monarch and realm, and Parliament passed enabling measures to allow proceedings.
- Pressure from ministers and the Privy Council: some councillors, notably Walsingham and Burghley, argued that mercy risked more plots and that decisive action was needed to protect the state, increasing pressure on Elizabeth to accept execution.
- International considerations and deterrence: executing Mary was intended to deter further conspiracies and to signal resolve to domestic Catholics, although it risked provoking Spain and the Pope; ministers balanced these risks against the immediate internal threat.
- Elizabeths personal hesitation: while she delayed and feared the precedent and the reaction, ultimately the weight of evidence, council pressure and security calculations persuaded her to authorise the warrant.

Question 4

Level 1 Shows limited relevant knowledge and offers a simple, unsupported judgement on the statement. **1-4**

Level 2 Shows some relevant knowledge and begins to weigh the evidence, but the argument is only partly developed and the judgement is tentative. **5-8**

Level 3 Shows good knowledge, offers a balanced analysis of factors for and against the view, and reaches a supported judgement on how far the statement is accurate. **9-12**

Level 4 Shows precise, well-selected knowledge and provides a sustained, balanced evaluation of the role of Marys execution among several factors, reaching a clear and well-argued judgement supported by detailed evidence. **13-16**

Indicative content:

- Arguments that support the statement: Philip IIs fury at the execution and the Pope's condemnation increased diplomatic hostility and gave moral and political grounds for Spain to consider more forceful action against England.
- Supporting detail: after 1587 Spanish envoys protested and propaganda used the execution to portray Elizabeths regime as illegitimate and tyrannical, strengthening Spanish resolve.
- Arguments against the statement: long-standing causes such as deep religious rivalry since the Reformation, English support for Protestant rebels in the Netherlands, and English privateering against Spanish shipping had already strained relations significantly before 1587.
- Counterpoint detail: English attacks on Spanish treasure ships and the growth of English involvement in the Netherlands made open conflict more likely independently of Marys fate.
- Balanced view: Marys execution was a significant and immediate catalyst that hardened opinions and removed a diplomatic safety valve, but it operated alongside and amplified existing causes rather than being the single most important cause on its own.
- Judgement: a strong answer weighs both sides, concluding that the execution was an important trigger which contributed to deterioration, but not the sole or exclusive cause given the wider political and religious context.

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