



EDX.EE6 Early Elizabethan England, 1558-88: Elizabethan Society and the Problem of the Poor

EDEXCEL 1HI0 · Calculators not allowed · about 65 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Answer ALL questions. Write in full sentences for Questions 15 and 16. You are advised to spend about 65 minutes on this pack.

- 1** Give the year of the Vagabonds Act that introduced a compulsory local poor rate and harsher punishments for vagrants.

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

- 2** Name the type of local government official made responsible for enforcing poor relief and vagrancy laws under Elizabeth.

(Total for Question 2 is 1 mark)

- 3** State two causes of the rise in poverty and vagrancy during Elizabeth's reign.

(Total for Question 3 is 2 marks)

- 4** Name two categories used at the time to distinguish between different types of poor people.

(Total for Question 4 is 2 marks)

- 5** Give the year of the Vagabonds Act that first introduced a compulsory local poor rate.

(Total for Question 5 is 1 mark)

6 Name one punishment used on a first-time vagrant under the 1572 Vagabonds Act.

(Total for Question 6 is 1 mark)

7 Give the year of the Poor Act that required Justices of the Peace to provide materials so that the able-bodied unemployed could be set to work.

(Total for Question 7 is 1 mark)

8 State two things required of local authorities under the 1576 Poor Act.

(Total for Question 8 is 2 marks)

9 Name the type of institution set up under the 1576 Act to punish able-bodied people who refused to work.

(Total for Question 9 is 1 mark)

10 Give one long-term cause, dating back to the 1530s under Henry VIII, that historians link to rising poverty later in the Tudor period.

(Total for Question 10 is 1 mark)

11 Name the earlier Tudor Act, from 1563, that regulated wages and required able-bodied people without another trade to work in agriculture.

(Total for Question 11 is 1 mark)

12 State two reasons why vagrants and 'sturdy beggars' were widely feared in Elizabethan society.

(Total for Question 12 is 2 marks)

13 Give two consequences for a vagrant caught begging again after an earlier punishment under the 1572 Act.

(Total for Question 13 is 2 marks)

14 Describe two features of the government's response to poverty in the 1570s.

(Total for Question 14 is 4 marks)

15 Explain why the problem of poverty grew more serious in England during Elizabeth's reign.

(Total for Question 15 is 12 marks)

16 'The Elizabethan government's Poor Laws were mainly designed to help the poor, rather than to control and punish them.' How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer.

(Total for Question 16 is 16 marks)

Mark scheme · EDX.EE6 Early Elizabethan England, 1558-88:

Elizabethan Society and the Problem of the Poor

Question 1

- **B1** 1572
- **Answer:** 1572

Question 2

- **B1** a Justice of the Peace (JP)
- **Answer:** A Justice of the Peace

Question 3

- **B1** enclosure of farmland, especially for sheep farming, reduced the amount of paid agricultural work available
- **B1** a rapidly growing population increased competition for work and pushed up prices faster than wages could keep pace (the 'price revolution')
- **Answer:** Enclosure reducing farm work, and population growth outpacing wages amid rising prices.

Question 4

- **B1** the 'deserving poor' (people unable to work through no fault of their own, e.g. the old, sick or orphaned)
- **B1** the 'undeserving poor' or vagabonds/vagrants (able-bodied people thought capable of working but who did not)
- **Answer:** The 'deserving poor' and the 'undeserving poor'/vagabonds.

Question 5

- **B1** 1572
- **Answer:** 1572

Question 6

- **B1** whipping (accept: being branded/burned through the ear)
- **Answer:** Whipping (or branding through the ear)

Question 7

- **B1** 1576
- **Answer:** 1576

Question 8

- **B1** providing raw materials (e.g. wool or flax) so unemployed but able-bodied people could be given work
- **B1** setting up houses of correction for those who refused available work
- **Answer:** Providing materials for work, and setting up houses of correction for refusers.

Question 9

- **B1** a house of correction
- **Answer:** A house of correction

Question 10

- **B1** the dissolution of the monasteries (1536-40), which had traditionally provided charity/almshousing to the poor
- **Answer:** The dissolution of the monasteries

Question 11

- **B1** the Statute of Artificers (1563)
- **Answer:** The Statute of Artificers

Question 12

- **B1** they were associated in the popular imagination with crime, such as theft and fraud
- **B1** their movement between towns, with no fixed home or master, was seen as a threat to the social order of a society that expected everyone to have a settled place and role
- **Answer: Association with crime, and their unsettled, masterless way of life threatening social order.**

Question 13

- **B1** they could be tried as a felon
- **B1** unless someone agreed to take them into service for a year, they could face execution
- **Answer: Trial as a felon, and possible execution unless taken into a year's service.**

Question 14

- **B1** feature 1 identified, e.g. a compulsory local poor rate
- **B1** supporting detail for feature 1, e.g. introduced by the 1572 Vagabonds Act, requiring parishes to raise money through a tax to support the deserving poor
- **B1** feature 2 identified, e.g. provision of work for the able-bodied unemployed
- **B1** supporting detail for feature 2, e.g. the 1576 Poor Act required JPs to supply raw materials so they could be set to work, with a house of correction for those who refused
- **Answer: Any two features, e.g. the 1572 compulsory poor rate, and the 1576 work-provision requirement.**

Question 15

- **Level 1** (1-3): Identifies one or two general reasons for growing poverty, with little or no supporting detail or explanation.
- **Level 2** (4-6): Identifies and begins to explain one or two reasons, supported by some accurate detail.
- **Level 3** (7-9): Explains two or three reasons, each supported by accurate and relevant detail.
- **Level 4** (10-12): Explains three or more reasons in a well-developed, logically structured way, supported throughout by precise and accurate detail, showing how the reasons connect.
- **Indicative content:**
 - Population growth across the sixteenth century increased competition for land and work, while wages failed to keep pace with rising prices (the price revolution).
 - Enclosure of farmland, particularly the conversion of arable land to sheep pasture, reduced the amount of agricultural work available in the countryside, pushing landless labourers towards towns or vagrancy.
 - A series of poor harvests, including in the 1550s, drove up food prices and caused hardship among the poorest.
 - The earlier dissolution of the monasteries under Henry VIII had removed an established source of charitable relief that the poor had previously relied on.
 - The decline of some traditional local industries added regional unemployment on top of these wider national pressures.
 - These causes reinforced one another, so that by the middle of Elizabeth's reign vagrancy and poverty were widely seen as a growing and interconnected crisis needing a national, not just local, response.

Question 16

- **Level 1** (1-4): Shows limited relevant knowledge of the Elizabethan Poor Laws, and offers only a simple, unsupported opinion on the statement.
- **Level 2** (5-8): 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.
- **Level 3** (9-12): 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.
- **Level 4** (13-16): 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.
- **Indicative content:**
 - Supporting: the 1572 compulsory poor rate raised real money specifically to support the 'deserving poor', a genuine and increasingly systematic form of relief.
 - Supporting: the 1576 Act required JPs to provide materials so the unemployed could work, aiming at real relief through employment rather than simple punishment.
 - Against: harsh corporal punishments for vagrants, including whipping, branding and the threat of execution for repeat offenders, show a strong concern with deterrence and public order, not compassion.
 - Against: the sharp legal distinction between 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor meant many of the poorest, judged work-shy, received punishment rather than help.
 - Balanced: houses of correction combined an element of relief (providing work) with an element of punishment (compulsion and penalties for refusal), showing the two aims were not fully separate in practice.
 - Judgement: the laws combined genuine, increasingly systematic relief for those judged deserving with real fear of, and harsh punishment for, those judged undeserving; the Elizabethan Poor Laws are best understood as pursuing both aims together, though the growing willingness to raise and spend real local tax money on relief suggests government concern went beyond simple social control alone.