



THIS IS THE KEY KNOWLEDGE  
NEEDED TO UNDERSTAND THIS  
UNIT

# ELIZABETHAN ENGLAND UNIT 2: LIFE AT THE TIME

## Poverty increased WHY?



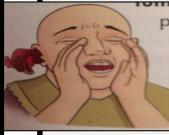
Less support for the poor – Henry VIII had closed down monasteries



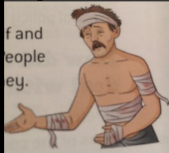
Population growth – birth rate increased and death rate decreased



Food production didn't keep up with pop growth – prices went up and there were shortages



Developments in agriculture – enclosure and sheep farming



1590's failed harvests – led to extreme poverty and death

The period is sometimes called a Golden Age because of the growing prosperity of the elite which led to flourishing architecture, the arts and education

- THE GENTRY (part of the social elite, below the nobility but were landowners who lived off the profits of the land)
- Population growth and farming practices were good for the gentry – more efficient farming therefore more profits and rise in rents meant more money!
- The beginning of national and then international trade allowed some to get very rich

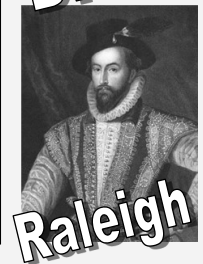
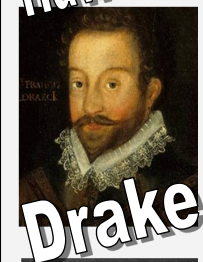
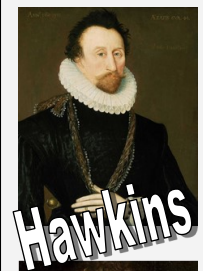


How did the government respond to poverty?

- KEY POINT – the government feared that rising poverty could lead to a threat to law and order, higher crime rates and potentially rebellion
- Three categories of poor – Helpless poor (unable to support themselves), Deserving poor (poor but wanted work), Undeserving poor (Beggars, criminals and those who refused work)
- 1560s onwards – series of POOR LAWS designed to help
  - 1.A tax called the “poor rate” to raise money
  - 2.This became a national system after 1597 and 1601 and there was a compulsory tax rate
  - 3.Money used to provide hospitals and housing
  - 4.Poor children were given apprenticeships
- Very harsh punishments for undeserving poor – whipped, prison

What did the GENTRY spend their money on?

Improved or built homes and places to show of their wealth. Money also spent on elaborate decorations (paintings, portraits, tapestries). Collected large collections of books to put in their libraries, some became patrons of the theatres, some used it to provide an education for their children



### TRADE AND EXPLORATION

- England behind Spain and Portugal in this area
- JOHN HAWKINS – first Englishman to be involved in the slave trade – made 3 slave trading voyages—On the third voyage he was confronted by Spanish and his fleet was destroyed
- FRANCIS DRAKE – Hawkins cousin and first Englishman to circumnavigate the world—Was probably not what he set out to do— this was to explore South America and look for colonisation opposition (also probably part of the plan to steal from the Spanish!) Knighted and a hero! Key role in the defeat of the Spanish Armada
- WALTER RALEIGH – One of the Queen's favourites and a powerful position at Court. Had visited America in 1578 and then given permission to try and set up colonies in America in 1584 – 1st attempt failed (Virginia) as settlers ran out of supplies and returned home, 2nd attempt – set up in Roanoke in 1587 – failed as settlers probably killed by native Indians. Disgraced in 1592 as he secretly married one of Elizabeth's ladies in waiting – banished from court

