**1509: Accession of Henry VIII**

**1517: Martin Luther’s Wittenberg Theses; beginning of the Reformation**

**1558: Accession of Queen Elizabeth I**

**1576: Building of the Theatre, the first permanent structure in England**

**1603: Death of Elizabeth I; accession of James I, the first of the Stuart dynasty.**

**1603-1625: James I**

1. **Henry VII Tudor:** He [Lancaster] won the crown by defeating Richard III [York} and thus end the war between the two Houses. **Impoverished and divided by the dynastic wars, the barons could no longer oppose the power of the Crown. === a much stronger central authority and order.**
2. **Henry VIII: enclosures, the fencing of common land by wealthy landowners, land that was for centuries farmed in common by rural communities, so as** to permit grazing. [see *Utopia*]. Woolen cloth market made up more than three fourths of England’s exports. The ensuing misery, displacement and food shortages led to bloody riots and people driven off the land to the cities and London. The greatest rebellion, Kett’s Rebellion [1549], involved 16000 peasants and the Oxfordshire rebellion [1596]. Then in Jacobean England the Midland Revolt of 1607 against enclosures.
3. **The Reformation [Germany, Geneva, England, Holland etc.]:** Luther’s theses ignited a mass revolution. A call to return to pure Christianity, cleansing the church of all the corruption and idolatry over the centuries of Catholic rule, [a vast system of relics, confessions, pardons, indulgences and ceremonies. The Bible and the mass in Latin]. The common watchwords of R: only the scriptures have authority in religion, only God’s grace and personal faith [not good works] can effect salvation, and only enlightened private conscience [not the priests] can determine what an individual must believe.
4. I**n England (Henry VIII):** The split with the Church of Rome because of Henry who was unable to obtain permission for a divorce from his first wife Catherine of Aragon. The king was excommunicated by the Pope. In 1534, Henry VIII declared himself “Supreme Head on Earth” of the English church. He dissolved the monasteries and distributed their property to his courtiers, **thereby binding them firmly to his cause**. He authorized a vernacular translation of the Bible.
5. **The Renaissance:** rebirth of arts and letters stimulated by the recovery and study of texts from classical antiquity. New ideas that emphasized the dignity and potential of the individual and the worth of life in this word. **Humanism and education** [LATIN grammar, logic, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music] **with great emphasis on rhetoric and classical texts.** The purpose was to train the sons of the nobility/gentry to speak and write good Latin [diplomacy and high professions]\* only for men
6. **Elizabeth: 1558-1603: *”I know I have the body of a weak and feeble woman but I have the heart and stomach of a king and of England too”***
* She had received a fine humanist education and she made clear that she intended to rule. **She made adroit use of her situation as an unmarried female monarch so as to retain all power in her hands**. The Papal Bull of 1570 excommunicated her so as to bring to the throne Mary Stuart, Queen of the Scots, Catholic and French by culture. The people rallied to their Queen **who became the symbol of Englishness and nationalism**. Plots by Mary and Catholics ended up in Mary’s execution.
* **Elizabeth’s Patronage** was used as a powerful means to transform the nobles from independent powerful magnates into courtiers dependent on the Crown. In reality her power wasn’t absolute because she had no standing army, police and limited financial resources and at times had to rely on Parliament’s funds because Parliament had the right to levy taxes.
* **Sumptuary laws:** restricted to the aristocracy the right to wear precious fabrics, satin, velvet, gold and silver lace from abroad. The importation of luxury goods, wine, fish, olive oil, sugar, lemons, tobacco, oranges and spices caused concern about the balance of trade. **That was also an attempt to protect the existing order from upstarts since class mobility wasn’t accepted by moralists either.**
* **The colonization of Ireland**: brutal measures to eradicate Catholicism and the Celtic culture and to seize the Irish land. Bloody Irish rebellions culminated in open war, the English victory led to the impoverishment and the subjugation of the Irish. **(*The Tempest*)**
* **Theatre**: The career of professional authors did not exist, most of the writers were courtiers, statesmen and landowners. So financial reward for writers came mostly in the form of gifts from patrons [the Queen, the court, the great families]. **Tragedy:** The influence of Seneca [Goddess Fortuna}: violent plots, use of ghosts, high rhetoric. The first English tragedy *Gorboduc* 1561 in blank verse. In 1581 Elizabeth assigned the Master of the Revels the task to regulate theatre by restricting them to a limited number of authorized London-based companies and **read and censor** plays for possible religious and political repercussions.

**According to Sir Thomas Smith, Elizabeth’s ambassador to Paris, the commonwealth was divided into 4: “gentlemen, citizens, yeomen, artificers {skilled workers] and laborers” *[Macbeth,* *King Lear*]**

1. **The monarch**
2. **Aristocracy:** small group of nobles: dukes, marquesses, earls, viscounts and barons
3. **Gentry:** the knights and simple gentlemen [according to Smith , those who have studied and can live idly without manual labor and have the countenance of one”
4. The **burgesses** who had responsible positions in the city
5. **Yeomen** (farmers with land)
6. **The great mass** of people with no voice nor authority, only to be ruled.

***The source of wealth and status comes from land***

**James I 1603-1625**

**James VI of Scotland,** raised as a protestant, favors-selling of the titles.

**The Puritans arose during Elizabeth. It’s** the general name for a variety of protestant sects that were agitating for a radical reform of the Church of England, the overthrow of the conservative hierarchy of bishops and the rejection of rituals