

Shakespeare

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[Elizabethan England](#) Grade Level: 9-12

You will find some fascinating background on the history of Elizabethan England and specifically Elizabeth I's love of the arts and the prevalence of the visual, decorative, and performing arts. This historic background information accompanies a collection of art pieces that are representative of this time period. You can view the pieces in a slide show or click on each image to find descriptive details and get the opportunity to examine the piece of art up close.

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[Crime and Punishment in Elizabethan England](#) Grade Level: 6-8 9-12

The idea of imprisoning a person for their crimes was fairly unusual and new in Elizabethan England. Prisons had simply been used to hold a person until their trial, often an unfair proceeding that would result in brutal punishments or execution. Beheading and hanging were among the more merciful punishments. Other criminals might have their hand cut off before being hung or be quartered while not yet dead. Whippings, dunkings, pressings, and being chained alive or having their hand burnt were common punishments for thieves.

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[Poverty in Elizabethan England](#) Grade Level: 6-8 9-12

In the royal court, the Elizabethan Era was characterized by extravagant entertainment and costumes. Not everyone in England enjoyed such privileges. Rising prices and population growth strained resources. The poor became poorer during the reign of Queen Elizabeth and benefactors could no longer provide for the needs of all the homeless and unemployed. Poor Laws divided the poor into three categories based on the ability to work and the tendency toward crime. Able-bodied beggars or vagabonds might be whipped, burned, executed, or sent to a house of correction. Taxes and work projects provided materials and jobs for the "deserving" poor.

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