

# KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER: The Elizabethan Age 1558-1603 (Unit 1)

## Key Question 3: What were the most popular types of entertainment in Elizabethan times?

KEY EVENTS/ TIMELINE	
<b>1572</b>	Strolling players were banned.
<b>1576</b>	The first theatre was built (The Theatre).
<b>1585</b>	Failed attempt to ban bear baiting on Sunday.
<b>1595</b>	Shakespeare's Richard II and Romeo and Juliet were written.
<b>1599</b>	The Globe theatre was opened.

THEATRE COMPANIES	
<b>The Earl of Leicester's Players</b>	Established in 1574
<b>The Queen's Men</b>	Established in 1583
<b>The Lord Admiral Howard's Company</b>	Established in 1583
<b>The Lord Chamberlain's Men</b>	Established in 1594

KEY IDEAS	
<b>Who supported the theatre?</b>	<p>Queen Elizabeth regularly attended the theatre.</p> <p>Poorer people who could afford the cheaper tickets.</p> <p>Nobles liked to dress up and attend theatres, it gave them a chance to be noticed and to socialise.</p> <p>The government used the theatre as propaganda, to deliver messages to the public in the plays.</p>
<b>Who opposed the theatre?</b>	<p>Puritans saw theatres as the work of the devil. They thought plays encouraged sinful behavior and that they should all be banned.</p> <p>Some people disliked theatres as they thought they encouraged crime from beggars and pickpockets, as well as helping to spread diseases like the plague. Some authorities objected to opening theatres as a result.</p>

KEY BUILDINGS	
<b>Cockfighting pit</b>	Cockfighting was a popular form of entertainment and most towns had a cockfighting pit in Elizabethan times. Usually, it was a fight between a single pair of birds, but sometimes as many as twenty gamecocks would be put into the ring at the same time and left to fight it out until only one bird survived. Spectators would bet on which bird they thought would win.
<b>Bear/ bull baiting arenas</b>	Many towns had arenas where people would gather to watch a bull or a bear being attacked by dogs. Bulls were more popular than bears as bears were hard to find. The bull or bear would be chained by the neck to a wooden stake driven into the ground. Dogs would then attack the animal, trying to kill it. Spectators would bet on which dogs would survive or whether the bull or bear would survive.
<b>Theatres</b>	The government encouraged the building of theatres during Elizabeth's reign as they believed strolling players were spreading diseases like the plague through the country. Theatres were usually basic. The only roof was over the actors to protect them from the rain and over the more expensive seats. Poorer people could purchase tickets to stand around the stage. A flag would be flown above the theatre to indicate that a play was being shown. There was no scenery, so it was up to the actors to fill in these details to the audiences.

KEY VOCABULARY	
<b>May Day</b>	A popular public holiday.
<b>Strolling players</b>	Actors and performers who wandered from town to town performing their plays in the courtyards of inns. There weren't many theatres outside of London and none in Wales so strolling players were a popular form of entertainment.
<b>Cruel sports</b>	Sports involving animals being injured or killed.
<b>Hawking</b>	Flying birds of prey for entertainment.
<b>Archery</b>	Using a bow and arrow. All men over the age of 14 were expected to practice every Sunday.
<b>Cnapan</b>	Similar to the football played in England. The gentry would be on horseback and everyone else on foot. Two teams would try to push forward with the cnapan (ball) until one of them crossed the finishing point. There was no pitch and very few rules.
<b>Playwright</b>	Someone who writes plays.

KEY PEOPLE	
<b>Actors</b>	Women were not allowed to act so men had to play the female parts as well as the male ones.
<b>Richard Burbage</b>	A famous actor of tragedies who performed the lead roles in many of Shakespeare's plays. He later became part owner of The Globe theatre.
<b>William Shakespeare</b>	One of the most important playwrights of Elizabethan times. His popular plays include Romeo and Juliet, Othello, Hamlet and Macbeth.
<b>Sir Christopher Marlowe</b>	One of the greatest playwrights of his day who was stabbed to death in a brawl outside a tavern. His most famous play was Dr Faustus.

SUMMARY
Entertainment was very important during the Elizabethan Age as it gave poor people an escape from their often miserable lives. Cruel sports were popular and encouraged gambling amongst all social classes. Theatre became very popular and gave us playwrights like Shakespeare who remain popular today. There was significant opposition to some forms of entertainment, especially the theatre. Puritans believed they should have been banned completely.