

The Defeat of the Armada

Aim: Identify and prioritise reasons for the defeat of the Armada



In our recent work we have examined the attempted Spanish Invasion of England in 1588. Philip II of Spain was determined to punish Elizabeth for a number of reasons:

- Rejection of his marriage proposal
- Religious differences
- Execution of Mary Queen of Scots
- English sailors robbing Spanish treasure ships

This worksheet helps you identify and prioritise the reasons for the defeat of the Armada:

Why did the Armada fail?

Information and source material

A "I sent you to fight with men, and not the weather."

PHILIP II, talking to survivors of the Armada (1588)

B "God blew with His wind, and they were scattered."

Inscription on the Armada medal issued by Elizabeth I (1588)

C "Though the English ships were smaller and fewer than those opposed to them, they were better built and better manned... their skilful use of artillery gave them a great advantage."

J. Oliphant in his book, *A History of England* (1920)

D "...the Spanish fleet was conquered for the first time. But not by the men, nor by the ships... It was defeated by the weather... Only against the hurricane and the gales did we lose."

L. Ortiz Munoz, *The Glorious Spanish Armada* (1940)

On August 6th 1588, the Spanish Armada anchored at Calais. The English filled eighty ships with flammable material and set fire to them. The ships were allowed to sail towards the Spanish ships. The Spanish panicked and fled to the open sea.

In the open sea, the Armada wasn't in formation, so the Spanish ships were easy targets for the English artillery. The Spanish tried to sail close to the English ships so their soldiers could board them. However the English ships were too quick and could easily keep their distance.

Many Spanish galleons were sunk. The survivors fled north, determined to round Scotland and sail back to Spain.

GLOSSARY

Prioritise	Put in order of importance
Opposed	Against
Artillery	Weaponry
Flammable	Catches fire easily
Slain	Be killed



Continued on side 2

By Mr Field
www.SchoolHistory.co.uk

The Armada successfully sailed round Scotland. However, as it continued on south towards Spain it encountered terrible weather. Strong winds and terrible rain forced many ships onto rocks near Ireland. Some Spanish made it ashore, only to be killed by English soldiers and settlers.



Over 25,000 men set out on the Spanish Armada - determined to teach Elizabeth I a lesson. Less than 10,000 made it back to Spain safely.

Tasks: Complete the questions and activities below as fully as possible.

Understanding:

1. Using Source A, explain what Philip II blamed the defeat of the Armada on.
2. How are Sources A and B connected?
3. What did the English use 80 ships for in August 1588?
4. When English ships were firing on the Spanish, why did the Spanish try to get closer?
5. **Where** did the Spanish encounter terrible weather?
6. Which sources provide evidence that weather was an important factor?
7. **How** were Spanish soldiers slain during the course of the Armada? [3 ways]

Analysis:

Write out each reason for the defeat of the Armada (given below) with your own sentence explaining the reason.

Weather	Design of English ships	Fire-ship tactics
Spanish mistakes	English artillery	

Prioritising:

Using your previous work, create a table with five reasons for defeat. Put the reason you think is **most important** at the top, with a explanation next to it. Then complete the table with the four remaining reasons, in order of **priority**:

Reason	Explanation
1. The most important reason...	My explanation of why I think this is the most important...

Concluding:

Why did the Spanish Armada fail? [Explain in 125 words.]