

# Witches

Religion played a large part in people's lives in this period. People not only believed in God, they also believed that the devil was causing evil in the world.

## BELIEFS AND SUPERSTITIONS

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### Super-natural ideas

People did not know much about science, so they did not know why natural things happened. If things went wrong people thought that it was the work of the devil.

### Witches

People thought that witches worked for the devil and were evil. Some people accused witches of murdering people by witchcraft. Others were accused of turning milk sour or making crops grow badly. People often blamed their problems on witches.

### The king

Even important people believed in witches. King James I of England wrote a book which described the signs to look out for to spot a witch. King James told Parliament to pass laws against anybody who was thought to be a witch. Witches were put on trial and hanged if found guilty.

### The Pendle Witches

In 1612 a famous trial took place. Some people from the Pendle area of Lancashire were accused of being witches, found guilty and hanged.

### Source A – A list of 'evidence' which King James said showed a true witch.

- They are almost always women.
- They are often old.
- They have a 'familiar' (an animal that follows them around, usually a cat – often a black one).
- They have a 'mark of the devil' (a birth mark or mole) on their skin.
- They make models of their victims and cast spells on them.
- They hold strange ceremonies.
- They live alone.



Please turn over when your teacher asks you to!

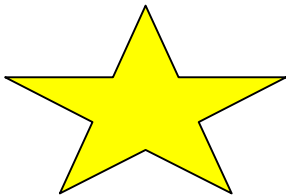


## Tasks – complete these in your exercise books please!

1. Explain why people believed in witches.
2. Copy this chart into your books. For each of the people in the FactFile, put a tick to show if there is evidence of them being a witch according to King James's list in Source A.

James's list	Elizabeth Southernns	Elizabeth Device	James Device	Alison Device	Anne Whittle	Ann Redfearn
Woman						
Old						
Owens an animal						
Has a mark						
Makes models						
Holds ceremonies						
Lives alone						

3. Why would it be hard to prove that witches caused problems (such as bad harvests)?
4. Make a list of at least three different reasons why people might really have accused others of being witches.



**Bonus Task –** Lots of booklets containing stories of witches were published in this period. Why do you think they were so popular?





**For each of the people in the FactFile, put a tick to show if there is evidence of them being a witch according to King James's list in Source A.**

<b>James's list</b>	<b>Elizabeth Southernns</b>	<b>Elizabeth Device</b>	<b>James Device</b>	<b>Alison Device</b>	<b>Anne Whittle</b>	<b>Ann Redfearn</b>
<b>Woman</b>						
<b>Old</b>						
<b>Owns an animal</b>						
<b>Has a mark</b>						
<b>Makes models</b>						
<b>Holds ceremonies</b>						
<b>Lives alone</b>						

# FACTFILE

## Details of the people accused in the Pendle witch trial.

'Old Demdyke' (Elizabeth Southernns) - 80 years old and blind.

Alison Device, daughter of Elizabeth Device – had a black dog which followed her and had a mark on her body.

Elizabeth Device, daughter of Elizabeth Southernns – deformed, with one eye higher than the other.

'Old Chattox' (Anne Whittle) – 80 years old and ugly.

James Device, son of Elizabeth Device – mentally unfit, and probably 'simple'.

Ann Redfearn, daughter of Anne Whittle – made clay figures.

**When we read the 'evidence' against the people in the FactFile, it looks as though they have been accused on very little information.**