**ARGOMENTATIVE TEST ABOUT ELIZABETH I**

Elizabeth I was the first woman to ascend the throne in English History and she reigned from 1558 to 1603. She was the daughter of Henry VIII, chief of the Anglican Church and Anne Boleyn that the King had married after parting with Caterina d’Aragona. He wanted to marry Anne Boleyn and asked the Pope to declare his marriage null but he refused his request. Henry decided to divorce all the same and in 1534 he summoned Parliament and made it pass the “*Act of Supremacy*” by which the King was confirmed Supreme Head of the Church of England and Protestantism was recognized as the State Religion. All Englishmen were required to take an oath to accept the rejection of Pope’s authority and recognized the marriage to Anne Boleyn as lawful.

The next monarch Edward VI, imposed Protestantism while Mary Tudor, who succeeded him reigned from 1553 to 1558, attempted a restoration of Catholicism and imposed a cruel repression of the Protestants, thus earning herself the nickname “Bloody Mary”. By marrying Philip of Spain she weakened England’s role in Europe. Moreover, the loss of Calais to France in 1558 was a hard blow to English pride and determined the growth of popular opposition. When Mary Tudor died, she left behind her a country without religious unity but internal peace and stability was achieved when Elizabeth I came to the throne and reestablished the Anglican Church. Elizabeth I was 25 when she came to the throne. A clever and determined woman, she had remarkably tolerant religious views. Although raised as a Protestant, she firmly believed that Catholics and Protestants were both part of the same faith: thanks to the “Second Act of Supremacy”, Elizabeth ensured England internal peace and increased wealth and commercial power. After the discovery of America, Elizabeth supported the new explorations thanks to the creation of a powerful fleet. She encouraged the growth of the Royal Navy and the birth of the *East India Company* founded in 1600. Thanks to you, British they have experienced a long period of prosperity. A golden age of exploration began: Sir Walter Raleigh led many expeditions to America and founded the first English colony there, calling it Virginia.

Elizabeth, however, also had to face conflicts with Spain, England’s competitor for the dominance of commercial domains in the West. Conflict became harsher when Spain supported the claims to the English throne of Elizabeth’s Catholic cousin Mary Stuart, Queen of Scotland. The English Catholics, who wanted to restore Catholicism, tried to make her Queen of England but Elizabeth I kept her virtually prisoner for nineteen years. When the latest plot was discovered, Elizabeth consented to Mary’s execution. After Mary’s execution things went worse between Spain and England. The frictions brought to open war in 1588 when Philip II of Spain tried to invade England. The Spanish “*Invincible Armada*”, was defeated in the English Channel and England’s victory saved her independence. Elizabeth I died in 1603, a popular and much-loved monarch, considered a devout defender of her nation’s peace, unity and flourishing.