

Explain Elizabeth's attitude to conflict

Queen Elizabeth I was the Queen of England from 1558 to 1603. During the course of her reign, attitude to conflict changed. She was averse to it in her early days, but this changed as her experience and confidence grew.

Early in her reign, Elizabeth tried to avoid conflict. This is perhaps because she had had a difficult ascent to the throne and needed like to build political support.

This conflict avoidance is reflected in the 'Peacock Portrait' from the early 1580s. She had reigned for over 20 years and was known for peaceful diplomacy. The painting depicts Elizabeth with an olive branch and a sheathed sword, both symbols of peace. It also shows a dog, representing her loyalty. - to whom? Submissive facial expression?

Elizabeth was consequently reluctant to fight land wars. She preferred to send her troops, but ordered that when they were volunteers, and were not fighting for her and England.

She was also shown her peaceful nature when she was involved in indirect naval warfare using 'privateers', sailors she involved in to fight the Spanish.

She chose to use the 'privateers' rather than a traditional navy for many reasons. In the past, when there was a war, the King had implemented a tax (e.g. the poll tax of 1377-81) and passing out a tax would make her unpopular and make even start a revolt (e.g. the peasants revolt in 1381). Because of this, she had nowhere to get the money to start a direct war.