

2.6 16th-Century Society and Politics

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____ **Total: 12 marks**

Objective

Build the skills to explain **society and politics** in the sixteenth century.

You must be able to:

- describe the effects of population growth and price inflation
- state how religious division affected communities
- explain the position of women in the period's debates
- connect economic strain to political disorder

1 Worked examples

Study these first. Each one shows the method for a task used later.

■ Population and prices

Population recovery increased demand for food and land while output rose more slowly; American silver added to the money supply. The result was sustained inflation that hurt wage earners and those on fixed rents.

■ Division in communities

Where confession divided a town, it divided guilds, marriages, office-holding and charity. Religious difference became a social fact governing everyday transactions, not only a matter of belief.

■ Women

Reform debates touched marriage, clerical celibacy, education and household authority. Some traditions gave women a role in household religious instruction; formal authority in church and state remained closed.

■ Strain and disorder

Rising prices, land pressure and confessional division together produced revolt and disorder in several regions. Naming the combination is stronger than naming any one alone.

2 Practice

2.1 State two causes of sixteenth-century price inflation. [2]

2.2 Explain how confessional division affected everyday life in a town. [2]

2.3 A region experiences revolt.

(a) Name two contributing pressures. [2]

(b) State why naming both is stronger than naming one. [1]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 Sustained inflation hurt most [1]

- A landowners charging market rents
- B wage earners and those on fixed rents
- C merchants trading in bullion
- D nobody

3.2 Religious division became a social fact because it governed [1]

- A belief only
- B guilds, marriages, office-holding and charity
- C the weather
- D foreign policy only

3.3 Reform debates touched household authority.

(a) State one area in which women's role was discussed.

[1]

(b) Explain what remained closed.

[2]

Solutions

2.1 any two of: population recovery raising demand faster than output; American silver adding to the money supply; pressure on land.

2.2 it divided guilds, marriages, office-holding and charity, so confession governed ordinary transactions rather than belief alone.

2.3 (a) any two of: rising prices; pressure on land; confessional division. (b) the combination explains the timing and location better than any single pressure.

3.1 B. incomes fixed in money lose value as prices rise.

3.2 B. it governed the institutions of daily life.

3.3 (a) household religious instruction, marriage, or education. (b) formal authority in church and state, which remained closed to women throughout the period.