

National Writing Board

730 Boston Post Road, Suite 24, Sudbury, MA 01776 USA

Author Report

25 July 2001

Title of Paper: Queen Elizabeth I

Code Number: 0701MAAL00065

Author: Name Withheld

School: Private High School

Home Address: New York, New York

Total Score: (5-30) Reader One: 17 Reader Two: 16 **Final: 16.5 (Average) (3)**

28-30 = A+ Superior (reported score of 6)

23-27 = A Very Good (reported score of 5)

18-22 = B Good (reported score of 4)

13-17 = C Average (reported score of 3)

8-12 = D Poor (reported score of 2)

5-7 = F Very Poor (reported score of 1)

Category (check one): Short (1,500 to 2,500 words) Actual length: 4,078 words
Long (4,000 to 6,000 words) x

Each paper is read by two Readers, and significant differences in scores are mediated by a coordinator, all senior secondary instructors in history.

I. Reading (Sources)

Score: (1-6) Reader One 3 Reader Two 3

Reader One:

The author uses a good range of biographies, especially recent ones, to good effect, though there is an over-reliance upon the Lewin work. Other sources (histories of England, surveys of the period, studies of women at this time) are not employed abundantly, which limits the writer's ability to place this life in context. No primary sources.

Reader Two:

The lack of a bibliography is a serious flaw, and there are some errors in the endnotes (e.g., the Williams source is not identified). Most of the reading is biographies of Elizabeth; it's good that the author consults several biographies, although she/he might have acknowledged any differences in interpretation among them. Only one history was used, Smith's A History of England, and this is a dated source. A couple of more contemporary histories of the Elizabethan Age would provide more background, context & scholarship.

II. Thinking (Understanding)

Score: (1-6) Reader One 4 Reader Two 3

Reader One:

The author does a good job of making a broad argument regarding Elizabeth's use of her femininity as a tool for survival and power. The author is attentive to the need to provide examples (other female rulers) to illustrate context, though the treatment of Catherine de Medici is subject to criticism as oversimplified. Little evidence here of original thought; this is an effective reprise of the work of others.

Reader Two:

Elizabeth's distrust of men is fairly well established in this paper, and her use of her eligibility for marriage as a diplomatic tool is, too. It would have been interesting to learn

more of what the ministers, admirals, archbishops, etc., who served Elizabeth thought of her capacity to govern, 1558–1603, as well as to examine the Kingdom’s regard for her upon her death and afterward, particularly as the Kingdom careened into another century of civil war.

III. Elaboration (Use of evidence)

Score: (1–6) Reader One 3 Reader Two 3

Reader One:

See Above...The author’s assertions about Elizabeth as a religious figure are unsupported. The effort to provide a larger context in the closing pages is clearly an “add-on” and falls short—and it was the 16th, not the 15th century.

Reader Two:

The author nicely knits evidence from several biographies, although she/he ignores any differences of interpretation that might exist, different views of Elizabeth by contemporaries and historians/biographers. This less-than-critical use of evidence is demonstrated most remarkably when the author asserts that Elizabeth could heal tuberculosis by touch, citing Levin as the source. It is not clear whether Levin claimed this, as well, or whether this is presented as evidence of the popular cult of Elizabeth.

IV. Writing (Use of language)

Score: (1–6) Reader One 3 Reader Two 4

Reader One:

Adequate but not elegant. Too many quotations without identifying the author.

Reader Two:

The paper is clear and coherent with only a few minor typos (missing words, double words, etc.)

V. Overall Result

Score: (1–6) Reader One 4 Reader Two 3

Reader One:

A good overview of the Virgin Queen. More analysis and less “plot summary” would strengthen the essay.

Reader Two:

This is a satisfactory research paper on the role of gender in Elizabeth’s reign and governance. The author ought to have documented his/her claim that women in 16th-century England were widely considered to be “weak and inferior;” the only evidence provided was John Knox’s very different charge that women rulers were “avaricious, deceitful, cruel, oppressive, and proud.” Also, the paper ought to have been more explicit about Elizabeth’s accomplishments—comparing the strength of the kingdom in 1603 with that of 1558—and including testimonials from contemporaries and historians to Elizabeth’s role in that progress.

Total Score (5–30) Reader One: 17 Reader Two: 16

Final: 16.5

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