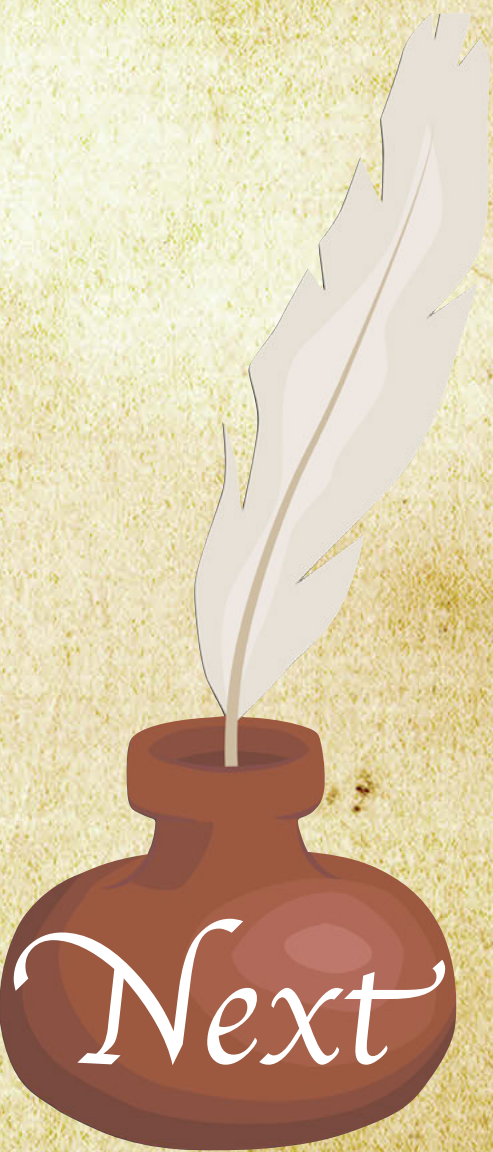


Elizabethan England

Learning Objective:

To find out about the attack of the Spanish Armada

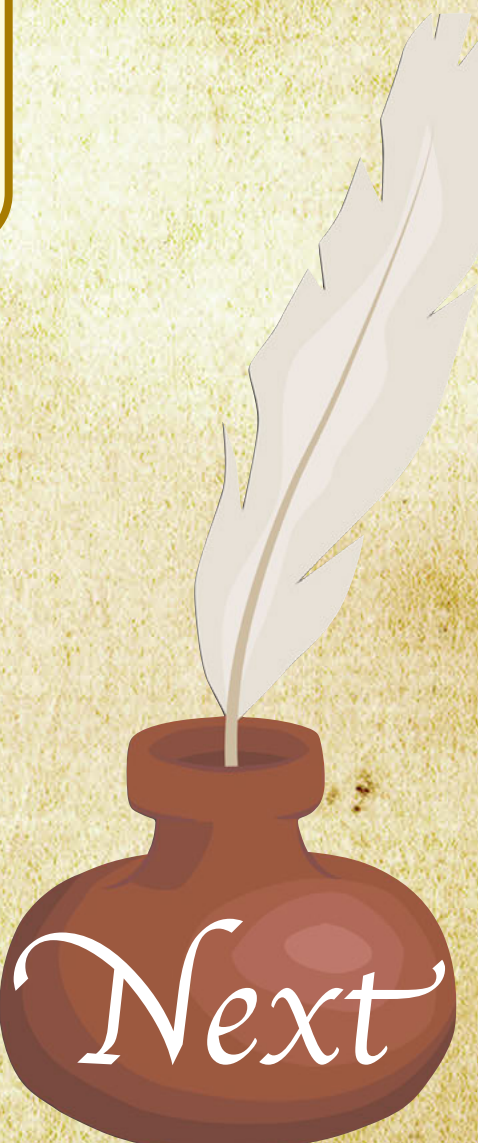




**During the reign of Queen Elizabeth I,
there was a country which was more
powerful than England.**

Do you know which country this was?

Think, pair, then share your ideas.



In the 16th century, **Spain** was one of the most powerful countries in the world. It led Europe in the exploration of the New World, it created many different trade routes, and it conquered large territories of land in North and South America, Asia and Africa. This all helped to increase the size and power of the Spanish Empire.

This is a map of Europe from 1547.
It shows all of the Spanish territories in Europe at the time.



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During Elizabeth I's reign, England and Spain were rivals, and there was constant unrest between the two countries.

King Philip II of Spain had been married to Mary I, Elizabeth's sister. After her death in 1558, he was no longer co-monarch of England. Hoping to keep some power and influence in England, he sent a marriage proposal to Elizabeth when she became queen. However, Elizabeth did not answer him.



How do you think this made King Philip II feel?



King Philip II of Spain



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Philip II was further enraged by Elizabeth I when in 1587, she executed Mary, Queen of Scots, for treason. The King of Spain believed that Mary had more of a claim to the throne than Elizabeth did, and it is said that he supported plots to overthrow her and make Mary queen of England instead.

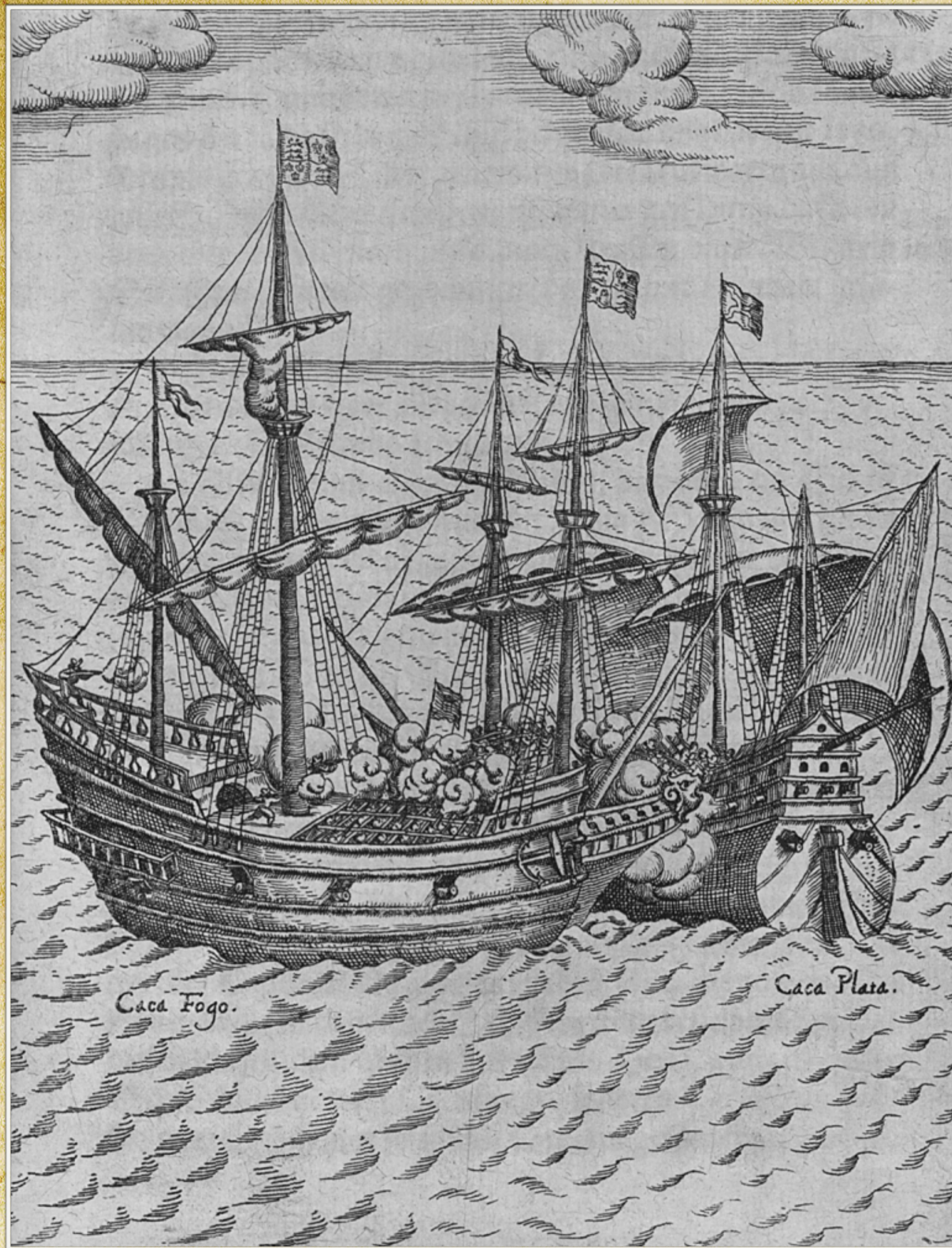


An artist's rendition of Mary's execution, painted in 1613, based on eye-witness accounts.

A further reason why Philip II disliked Elizabeth was due to her turning England into a Protestant nation. Spain was a fiercely Catholic country, and Philip II was intent on restoring what he saw as the 'proper faith' in England.

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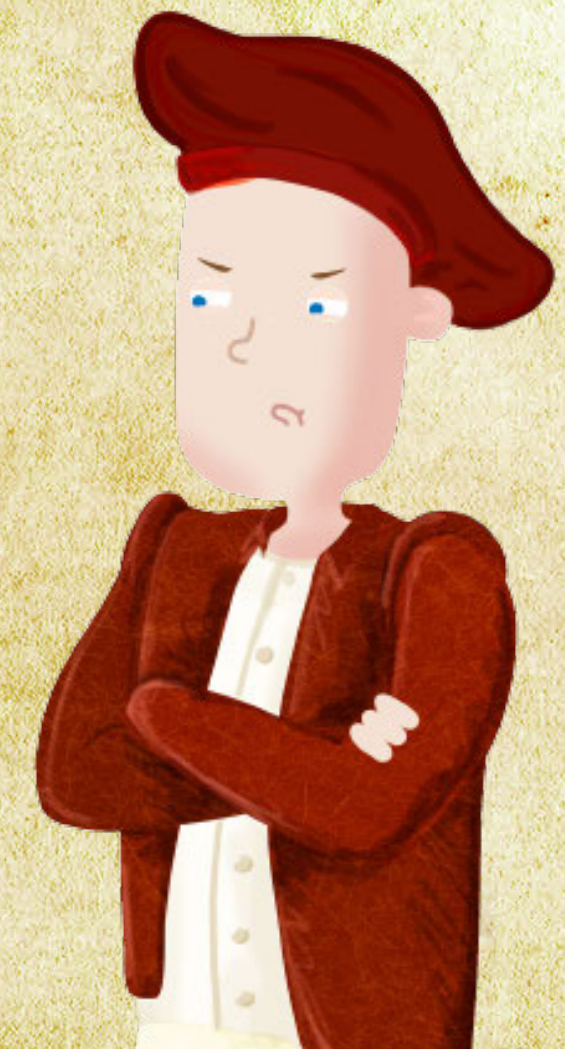


An engraving of Drake's ship capturing a Spanish treasure ship

The King was also very annoyed by English **privateers** (another word for pirates!), like Francis Drake amongst others, repeatedly attacking, capturing and plundering their treasure ships.

Collectively, all of these reasons led to King Philip II of Spain's decision to invade England.

Do you think King Philip II was justified in his reasons?
What would you have done if you were King Philip II?



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So, with the aim of overthrowing Elizabeth I and restoring Catholicism to England, as well as putting an end to privateering, King Philip II ordered a fleet of warships to be assembled, called the **Armada**.

In May 1558, 130 Spanish ships equipped with 2500 guns, and with 8000 sailors and 18,000 soldiers onboard, set sail from La Coruña on the north-west coast of Spain, led by the Duke of Medina Sidonia. Their intention was to first sail to Flanders (in now modern-day Belgium) to pick up 30,000 more Spanish soldiers, led by the Duke of Parma, before landing on the south-east coast of England.



What do you think of the King of Spain's plan of attack?

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Unfortunately for the Spanish Armada, their ships were sighted off the coast of Cornwall on 19th July. Fire beacons were lit along the coast to spread the warning. The English were ready for an attack.



On 21st July, the English fleet based at Plymouth set sail to try to stop the Armada's passage through the English Channel. They were led by Sir Francis Drake, Sir John Hawkins, and Lord Howard of Effingham. They had 200 ships, but only half of the number of guns that the Spanish had.



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The Armada sailed in a **crescent formation**. The larger but slower galleons were in the middle of the crescent, and were protected by faster but smaller boats surrounding them. This made it difficult for the English to attack the fleet effectively. They inflicted some damage on the Spanish ships, but could not stop them from sailing through the English Channel.

Can you tell the difference between the English and Spanish ships? How?



Drake's ship was called *Revenge*. Why do you think this was?

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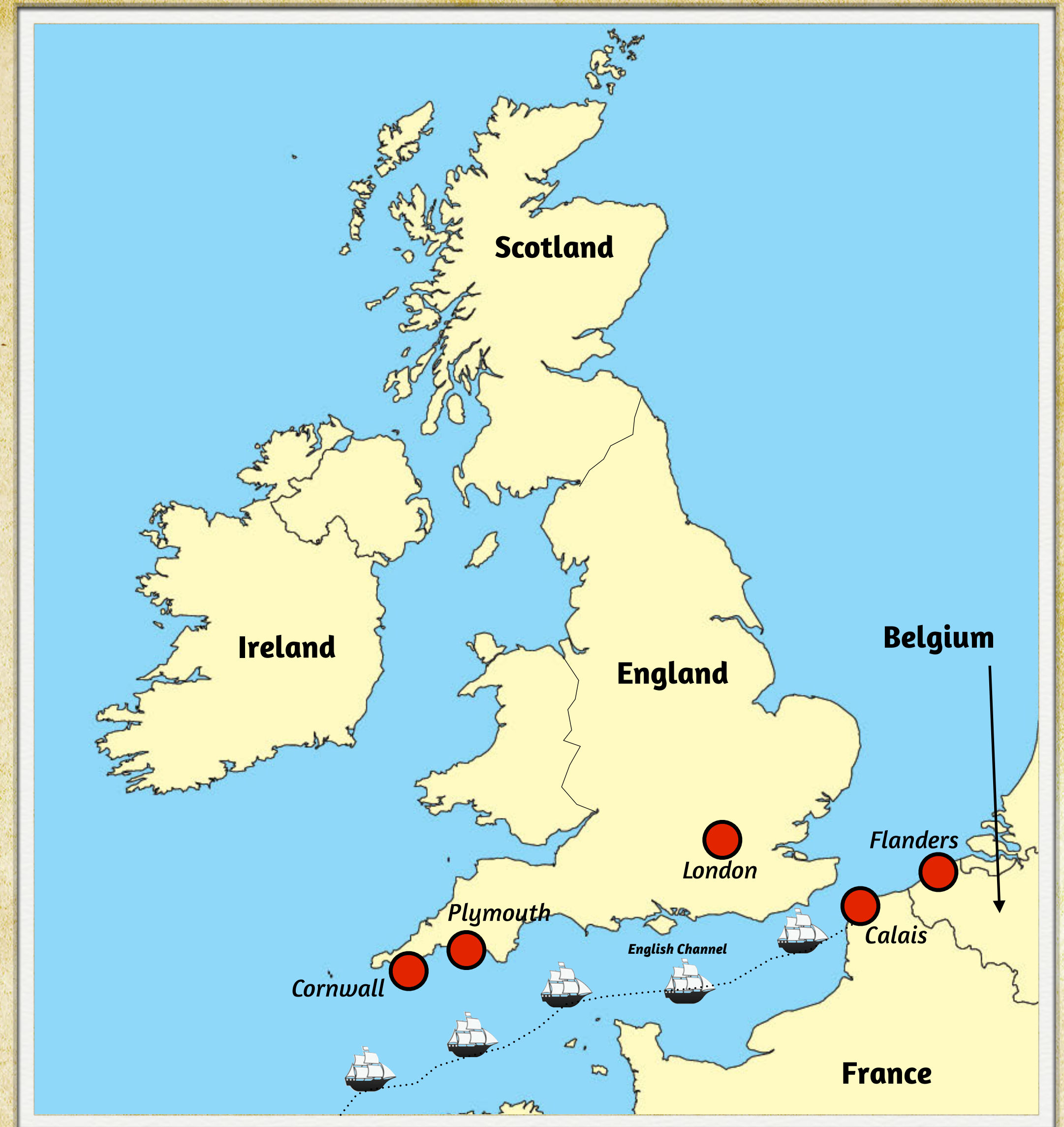
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The Spanish Armada anchored off the coast of Calais, in France, to await news from the Duke of Parma about the 30,000 soldiers they were supposed to be joining in Flanders, before landing in England.



How do you think the **English** fleet was feeling at this point?

How do you think the **Spanish** fleet was feeling at this point?



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However, the Duke of Parma's army was delayed, and so the Armada had to wait. The English used this opportunity to their advantage...

At midnight on 28th July, they set alight eight of their ships, and steered them into the Armada. This created panic amongst the Spanish, and made them scatter. In doing this, they lost their protective crescent-shaped formation.



An artist's impression of the fireships being steered into the Armada.

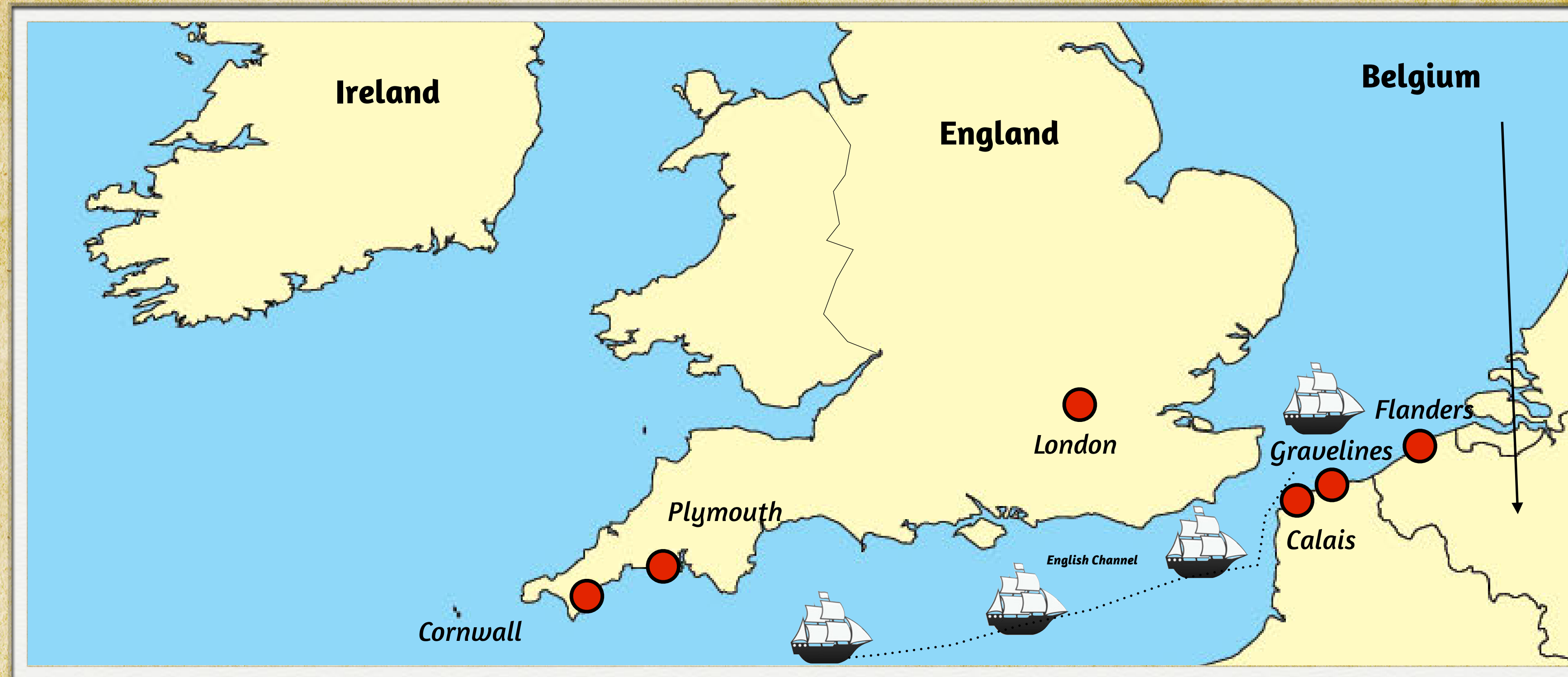


How would you have felt seeing the fireships coming towards you if you were part of the Spanish Armada?

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On 29th July, the English attacked the Spanish near the port of Gravelines off the north coast of France. The Spanish ships had the advantage in close-quarter fighting, but the English ships were faster and easier to move out of harm's way. They bombarded them from a safe distance with cannons.

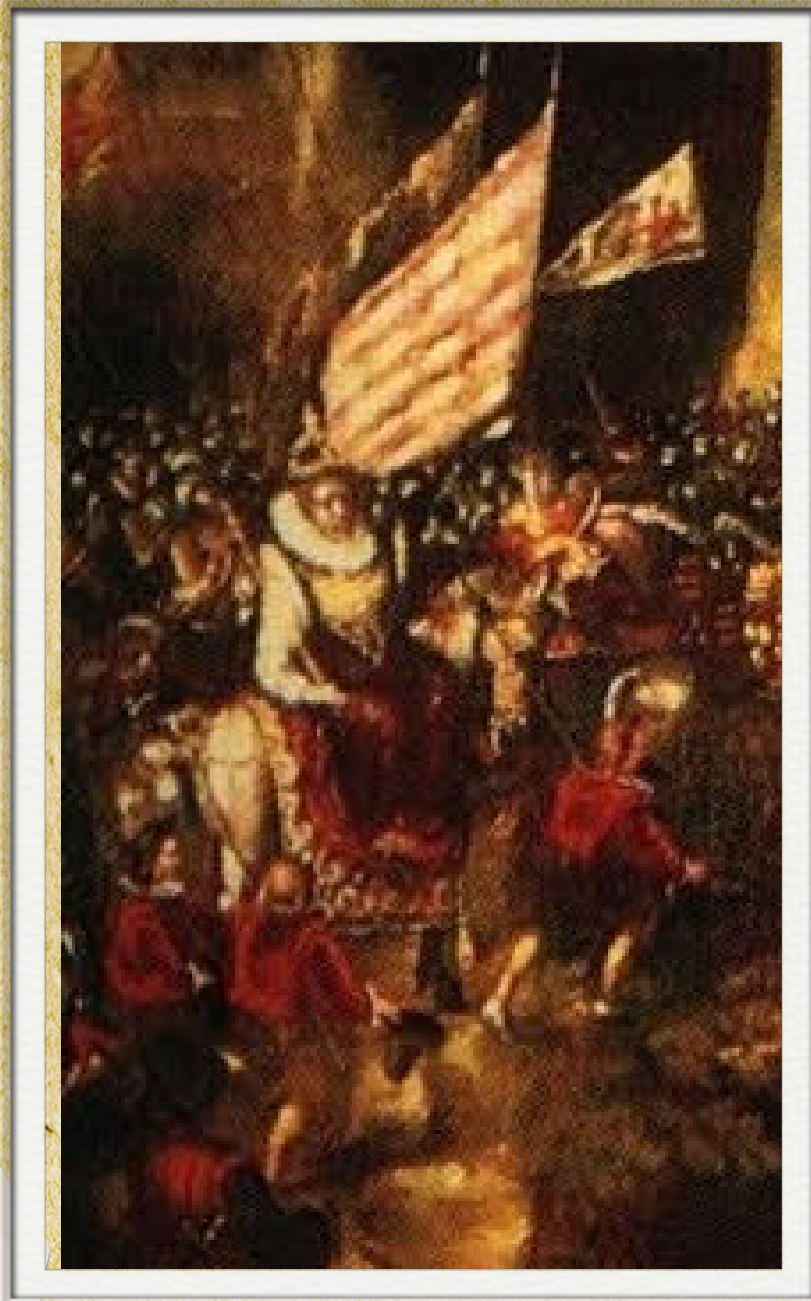


This battle was disastrous for the Armada. Over 600 men were killed, 800 wounded and 400 captured. Five of their ships were sunk or captured.

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On 8th August, Queen Elizabeth I travelled to West Tilbury, in Essex, where her troops were stationed ready to defend England if the Armada should land. She arrived in full armour, and gave what is now considered to be one of her most famous speeches:



...I am come amongst you, as you see, at this time, not for my recreation and disport, but being resolved, in the midst and heat of the battle, to live and die amongst you all; to lay down for my God, and for my kingdom, and my people, my honour and my blood, even in the dust. I know I have the body of a weak, feeble woman; but I have the heart and stomach of a king, and of a king of England too, and think foul scorn that Parma or Spain ... should dare to invade the borders of my realm ... we shall shortly have a famous victory over these enemies of my God, of my kingdom, and of my people.

How do you think the troops felt after hearing this speech? Why?

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After their losses at the Battle of Gravelines, and being unable to join the Duke of Parma and his troops, the Armada decided to return home to Spain. However, the English fleet were blocking the way back through the English Channel, and so their only choice was to sail north around Scotland.

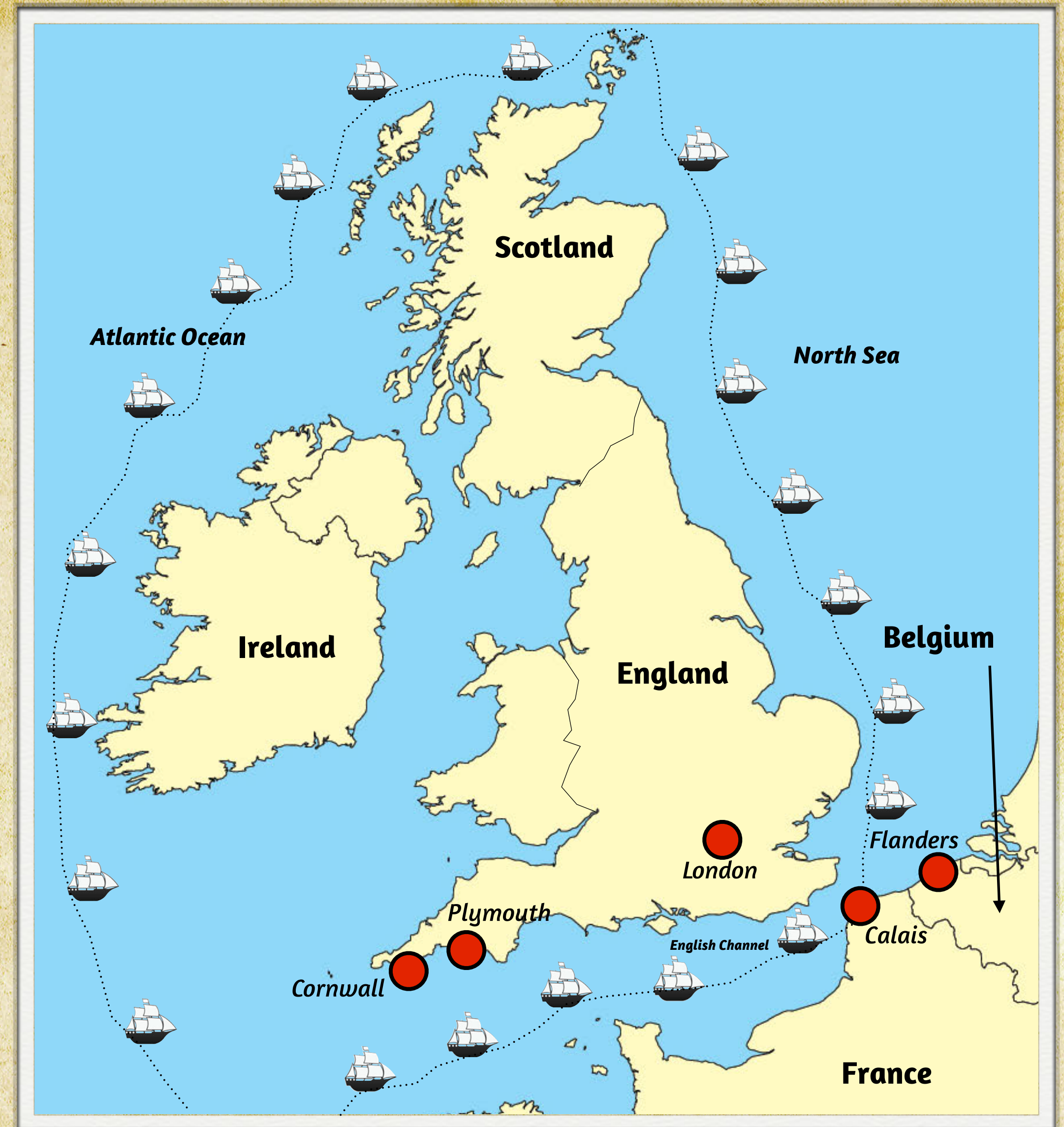


How do you think the English fleet felt when they realised that the Spanish Armada was retreating?

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However, by now, many of the Spanish ships were in poor repair, and had little food or water left. Severe storms meant that many of the ships were wrecked off the west coasts of Scotland and Ireland. Only one third of the original number of ships, and less than 10,000 men, returned to Spain. Many more died from diseases that they had caught during the voyage too. The attempted Spanish invasion of England had failed.



How do you think King Philip II of Spain reacted to this news?

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An artist's impression of the wrecking of one of the Spanish ships, *Girona*, off the coast of Ireland.

The king of Spain did not blame the Duke of Medina Sidonia or his men, but rather the weather. He said:

I sent the Armada
against men,
not God's winds and
waves.

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Queen Elizabeth was extremely pleased with the successful defeat of the Spanish Armada. She had the following sentence imprinted on medals to commemorate the victory:

God blew and they
were scattered.


Many English people thought that God had helped them to defeat the Armada in order to save Protestantism.



A portrait of Queen Elizabeth I painted after the successful defeat of the Spanish Armada.

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**Now it's time for you to use
your knowledge and
understanding of the attack
and defeat of the Spanish
Armada in your independent
work!**



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Next

Plenary:



How do you think the defeat of the Spanish Armada affected people's viewpoint of Queen Elizabeth?

How do you think it affected the atmosphere of the country as a whole?



Think, pair, then share your ideas.

