Foxford Learning

YEAR 12 History
Paper 3, Option 33: The Witch Craze in Britain, Europe and North America, c1580–c1750

Over the course of the topic, I will be able to: -

Depth Topic 1: The North Berwick witches in Scotland, 1590–91 and the aftermath to 1597

Key Vocabulary

Gilly Duncan	A servant whose confession in 1590 triggered the North Berwick trials.
Daemonologie	James VI's 1597 treatise advocating firm belief in and prosecution of witches.
James VI	King of Scotland (later James I of England); personally involved in the trials.
Agnes Sampson	A key accused in the North Berwick trials; tortured and executed.
John Fian	A schoolmaster accused as a leading witch at North Berwick; tortured.
Earl of Bothwell	Nobleman implicated in an alleged conspiracy against King James VI.
Torture	Coercive methods used to extract confessions from the accused witches.
Denmark	Source of witch-hunting influence brought back by James VI's Danish voyage.
Conspiracy	An alleged plot by witches, via diabolical compact, to harm the king.
Confession	A formal admission of guilt; the central form of evidence in the trials.
Execution	The legal killing of a convicted criminal; burning was the Scottish method.
Judicial procedure	The legal processes by which criminal trials were conducted in Scotland.

Key Skills

- Analyse and explain the social, economic, religious and political factors behind witch persecution.
- Evaluate the roles of key individuals and institutions in prosecuting or challenging witch belief.
- Analyse and evaluate contemporary source material related to the witch craze.
- Retrieve knowledge to construct verbal and written arguments related to the key topics.
- Compose effective responses to essay questions.

I will understand

Topic 1. Origins of the persecution - Gilly Duncan's confession and its consequences; the impact of James VI's voyage from Denmark; the extent to which Danish witch-hunting practices influenced events in Scotland.

Topic 2. The widening net - The cases of Agnes Sampson and John Fian; the role of the king and the use of torture; the involvement of the Earl of Bothwell; the impact of confessions, trials, and executions.

Topic 3. Reasons for the extent of persecutions in Scotland to 1597 - Weaknesses in Scottish judicial procedures; lack of strong central control; the role of King James VI and the significance of his Daemonologie published 1597.