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 3: The Great Witch Hunt in Bamberg, Germany, 1623–32

Key Vocabulary

Prince-Bishop	A ruler combining both ecclesiastical and secular governing authority.
Von Dornheim	Prince-Bishop of Bamberg 1623–32; chief instigator of the witch hunt.
Frederick Forner	Bamberg's suffragan bishop; the key ideological driver of the persecution.
Thirty Years' War	European religious and political conflict 1618–48; created economic crisis.
Witch prison	A purpose-built detention facility constructed in Bamberg for the accused.
Torture	Coercive interrogation methods used systematically to extract confessions.
Property confiscation	Seizure of convicted witches' assets and wealth by the authorities.
Counter-Reformation	Catholic campaign to reassert authority and win back Protestant territories.
Imperial Chamber Court	The Holy Roman Empire's highest court; eventually intervened in Bamberg.
Emperor Ferdinand II	Holy Roman Emperor whose court intervention helped end the witch hunt.
Swedish Army	Protestant military force whose arrival in 1631 halted the persecution.
Social breadth	Bamberg's hunt uniquely targeted men, children, and civic elites, not just women.

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. Economic, political and religious context, 1623–32 - Reclaiming Catholic territory via the Counter-Reformation; the economic and political impact of the Thirty Years' War on Bamberg; how crisis conditions created the conditions for mass persecution.

Topic 2. The scale and methods of persecution - Numbers and social groups affected; the use of torture and property confiscations; the roles of Prince-Bishop von Dornheim and Frederick Forner in organising and sustaining the hunt.

Topic 3. Reasons for the ending of the craze - The influence of Emperor Ferdinand II and the Imperial Chamber Court; the arrival of the Swedish Army in 1631; why the Bamberg persecution collapsed so suddenly after a decade of mass killing.