**Spartacus Educational Classroom Activity**

[**Elizabeth Barton and Henry VIII**](http://spartacus-educational.com/ExTEU15.htm) **(Questions & Answers)**

<http://spartacus-educational.com/ExAnTEU15.htm>

This commentary is based on the classroom activity: [Elizabeth Barton and Henry VIII](http://spartacus-educational.com/ExTEU15.htm)

**Q1**: Read the introduction and then explain what is happening in source 1.

**A1**: Source 1 shows Elizabeth Barton having one of her "trances" where she claimed received messages from God.

**Q2**: Study sources 2 and 3. What did [Elizabeth Barton](http://spartacus-educational.com/Elizabeth_Barton.htm) do in 1525 that convinced [Edward Thwaites](http://spartacus-educational.com/Edward_Thwaites.htm) that she had supernatural powers because she could predict the future? Do you think [Diane Watt](http://www.surrey.ac.uk/englishandlanguages/staff_list/complete_staff_list/diane_watt/) agrees with Edward Thwaites that Barton has supernatural powers?

**A2**: Edward Thwaites describes how Barton predicted the death of a sick child during one of her trances. Diane Watt believes Barton was suffering from "a form of epilepsy, manifested itself in seizures (both her body and her face became contorted), alternating with periods of paralysis".

**Q3**: Source 2 was written by someone who knew Elizabeth Barton. Source 3 was written nearly 500 years after her death. Does this mean the information in source 2 is more reliable and valuable than source 3?

**A3**: Edward Thwaites knew Barton and might have even witnessed this prediction that apparently came true. Thwaites believed this incident showed that Barton was in communication with God. Diane Watt, a modern historian, benefits from information that has been produced over the last 500 years. She is therefore able to suggest that Barton was probably suffering from epilepsy. Thwaites account is probably reliable (to be trusted) as he saw it but is restricted because of his lack of knowledge of medical matters. It is also valuable as it is one of the few contemporary accounts that we have of Barton's trances (visions). Watt's account is both more reliable and valuable because she has a lot more information at her disposal about these trances. For example, she is aware that Barton was being manipulated by people like [Edward Bocking](http://spartacus-educational.com/Edward_Bocking.htm).

**Q4**: Read source 4. Do you think [Thomas Cranmer](http://spartacus-educational.com/TUDcranmer.htm) believed that Elizabeth Barton was really communicating messages from God?

**A4**: In this account Thomas Cranmer seems to believed that Elizabeth Barton was really communicating messages from God as he describes it as "a great miracle" and it was produced "by the power of God". He changed his mind when she began saying things that offended Henry VIII.

**Q5**: What did [Eustace Chapuys](http://spartacus-educational.com/Eustace_Chapuys.htm) mean by the phrase that "she (Elizabeth Barton) merited the fire" (source 6)?

**A5**: Eustace Chapuys means that some of the judges believed that Elizabeth Barton should be burnt at the stake.

**Q6:** How does source 8 help to explain why Elizabeth Barton was forced to make a public confession (source 7)?

**A6**: The author of source 8 suggests that large numbers of people might believe that Elizabeth Barton might be receiving messages from God. As Barton was suggesting that God disapproved of Henry VIII then this might lead to "insurrection" or revolution.

**Q7**: Study sources 9, 10 and 11. Compare their value as evidence in helping us understand why Elizabeth Barton was executed.

**A7**: Elizabeth Barton's confession on the scaffold admits mistakes she has made but does not make clear what she has done wrong (source 9). Source 10 shows the execution but does not provide any evidence why she is being killed. The author of source 11 does not seem to have any idea of why she is being executed.