

Teacher Notes

Henry VIII and All SIX of His Wives

Synopsis

Divorced, Beheaded, Sur... Would you have married Henry VIII knowing his track record? Would you have even had a choice? Or could you have used such an illustrious marriage for your personal gain? We delve into the world of Henry VIII and his SIX wives, and learn of heartbreak and head chops. Romance is dead.

Resources:

The Market-stall Holders:

History: Visit 'market-stall holders' to consolidate learning about each of Henry VIII's queens.

All the Drama:

English: Use role-play activities to create a balanced argument on whether Catherine Parr should marry Henry VIII.

Romancing the Throne:

History: Sequence the queens chronologically and produce a factfile for each.

After Eighths:

Art: Mint Tudor currency using clay and images of the new queens (what can we learn from Tudor currency?)

Key questions to consider:

What evidence is there to suggest that Henry treated his wives poorly? How do we know?

Why was a male heir significant to Henry VIII?

Why might we not trust the views of the Catholics regarding Henry VIII?

Why did Henry need to create the Church of England?

History curriculum objectives:

- Continue to develop chronologically secure knowledge of history.
- Regularly address and sometimes devise historically valid questions.
- Understand how knowledge of the past is constructed from a range of sources.
- NI: The life of a famous person, family or building in the past.
- Welsh Progression Step 4: I can analyse the usefulness and consider the reliability and validity of a range of evidence relating to my enquiry.
- SOC 2-01a I can use primary and secondary sources selectively to research past events.

Cross-curricula objectives:

- English: Participate in performances, role-play/improvisations and debates.
- Art: To improve their mastery of art and design techniques, including drawing, painting and sculpture with a range of materials.

Henry VIII Animation – Comprehension

Which dates did Henry VIII rule from and to? How long was his reign?

Why did Henry's daughters not get a look in when it came to ruling England?

What is the importance of having a male heir? What do you think might happen if Henry didn't have a male heir?

Why did Henry VIII set up a new church?

What punishment did Anne Boleyn receive?

Why did Henry marry Anne of Cleves?

List three of Henry's six wives.

What was the name of Henry's son?

What impression do you get of Henry VIII? Why do you think this?



Henry VIII Animation – Comprehension

Which dates did Henry VIII rule from and to? How long was his reign?

1509 – 1547, 36 years

Why did Henry's sisters not get a look in when it came to ruling England?

Only men were allowed to rule at the time.

What is the importance of having a male heir? What do you think might happen if Henry didn't have a male heir?

Having a son was important as it allowed Henry to have his family rule the country after he died. Without a male heir, it is likely that a different family would try and claim that they should rule.

Why did Henry VIII set up a new church?

He wanted a divorce/annulment from Catherine of Aragon and the Pope wouldn't let him.

What punishment did Anne Boleyn receive?

She was beheaded.

Why did Henry marry Anne of Cleves? Explain your answer.

For political reasons. After he created a new church, England was left on its own and in danger from some of the enemies nearby. Henry hoped marrying Anne would bring him some new allies.

List three of Henry's six wives.

Catherine of Aragon, Howard, Parr; Jane Seymour; Anne Boleyn, of Cleves

What was the name of Henry's son?

Edward

What impression do you get of Henry VIII? Why do you think this?

Various answers, with justified opinions



Romancing the Throne



"Cut out the stills from the animation and order the queens of Henry VIII chronologically. Underneath each queen, give their name, how long they were married to Henry, whether they had any children and what happened to them. For each queen, write a short quote that would portray how they felt whilst married to King Henry VIII. Use the template on the next page to help!"



Romancing the Throne

Template:

Name:

Length of marriage:

Number of children:

What happened to them and why:

Quote to portray life with Henry:

Name:

Length of marriage:

Number of children:

What happened to them and why:

Quote to portray life with Henry:

The Market-stall Holders

Summary

Children are tasked with finding out as much information as possible about each of King Henry VIII's wives from different market-stall holders. A sample of the cards, which are to be given and read out by the market-stall holder, are provided below.

Activity

Children are split into groups of around six, with each group given a 'market stall' and key information about one of Henry VIII's queens. Children first read their card and highlight key information so that they are prepared to answer questions. A child stays at the market stall as the *font of knowledge* with the information card, whilst the other children individually visit the other market stalls to ask suitable enquiry questions to gather information about each of Henry VIII's six wives. They then return to their group to share the key information they have recorded.

Key questions and considerations

Words in italics are words of historical importance or may require some discussion. While listening to the text, it is important for children to discern what is reliable. After the activity, key questions to encourage why different interpretations of the past occur can be asked alongside contrasts to aspects of Tudor life and today:

- Why might the Catholic perception of Anne being a witch be unreliable?
- Why is divorce seen in such a negative light in Tudor times in comparison to today?
- Why were the queens so much younger when they were married off?
- Why might a marriage be arranged for political reasons?

The Market-stall Holders

Catherine Howard

Oh, yes, 'the Rose without a Thorn' Henry liked to call her. Yep, he thought a lot of Catherine Howard, he was besotted in fact, but the same couldn't be said for her. A huge untreatable ulcer on Henry's leg had turned him into a massive grump, and he'd more than enjoyed the lavish luxuries of being king, if you get my gist. So, the 'glamorous' life of a queen wasn't quite what the 18-year-old Catherine got: no children of her own; step-mother to Mary, a whole two years older than her; an ailing husband – it wasn't long before she got lonely. Still, you'd think after what happened with the four wives before, Catherine might have watched her step around Henry, taken it easy, shown him some affection, you know? Which she did, but rumour has it she showed more of it to other people while she was married to Henry, and, unsurprisingly, Henry did not take well to that. AT. ALL.



Catherine Howard

And so, after being stripped of her 'Queen' title, Catherine was placed on the old chopping block, and lost her head, the poor thing. Now, you'd think that would be the last we hear from her, BUT, you be careful now if you're ever walking the corridors of Hampton Court Palace... there's a 'Haunted Gallery' there. And Catherine's the ghost....

Anne Boleyn

Ahhh dear Anne, not like the other queens. No surprise Henry fell for her: she spoke French, the 'language of love', and she could have wooed anyone with her serene *lute*-playing skills from what we've 'eard. Henry's love for her was massive. So much so, he broke away from the Roman Catholic Church, and took over the Church of England, just so he could *annul* his previous marriage and marry Anne instead! You can bet that caused some issues...



Anne Boleyn

About a thousand days she did as queen, from 1533 to May 16, 1536, but you know what old Henry was like... too busy tapping his foot waiting for a *male heir*. Rumours were she was a witch, according to some Catholics, because she had six fingers, a welt on her throat and she couldn't have a boy. Anne tried and tried for a baby boy, but it wasn't to be. She did however give birth to the future queen, Elizabeth I, which I think's pretty important, even if Henry didn't!

Anne should have been burned at the stake, ya' know, because of a plot of *treason* and for *conspiring* against the king, but, I bet ya' didn't know that she was the first queen to be publicly executed. Most of 'em are done by axe, but she faced the sword. Swoooosh; clean off, in one fell swoop!

The Market-stall Holders

Jane Seymour

Oh, Jane Seymour? Well, she was the queen that was never a queen! Her *coronation* in October 1536 was cancelled because of a plague, so she was never crowned. For a while, there wasn't much to her – the Earl of Bedford described her to be 'as gentle a lady as [he] ever knew', whilst the Spanish ambassador was quoted as saying she was 'of middle stature, and no great beauty'... harsh!



But I tell you, she worked her way up and she sure knew how to play the *politics* game – both of her brothers found their way to positions of importance because of her antics.

For me, Jane was the most important queen. I'm sure you can guess why..? Yep, finally after years of trying, Henry had himself a surviving *male heir*. (Catherine of Aragon's son died after 52 days, bless his soul). She gave birth to Edward VI on October 12th, 1537. But childbirth was extremely difficult, and only 12 days later, Jane died from (according to historians) *puerperal fever*. Despite his track record with his previous wives, Henry was so genuinely distraught, he wore black for three months and asked to be buried next to her. Could it be that a man married six times had genuinely found true love?

Anne of Cleves

Well, I don't even know exactly when she was born! It could have been September, but it could have been June. Who said history was reliable?

It's not a stretch to say that Henry wasn't really bothered about this marriage. It started in 1540 and ended in, well, 1540, just six months later, but at least she left with her head intact. After one particular incident, he declared 'I like her not' according to records. Not exactly romantic...



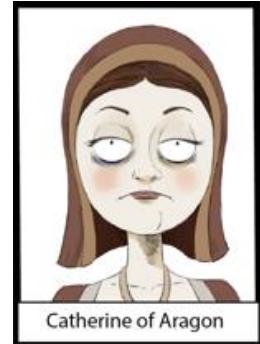
In fact, the marriage was one of politics. Anne was German, from Kleve, and with all the issues with religion in Europe and the *Reformation*, and the way Henry had turned his back on Catholicism, he was in need of an *alliance* with a high-powered Protestant family. To his credit, Henry actively discouraged the marriage, preferring women of his own choosing, rather than for political motivations. But still, married they were!

At six months, it was the shortest marriage; no children to speak of, but a big, big *dowry* followed Anne out of the door when Henry had had enough. 'The Flanders Mare', as she was so delightfully called, was no longer queen.

The Market-stall Holders

Catherine of Aragon

Wife 'numero uno' (or number one to you non-Spanish speaking folk), Catherine of Aragon was born in Spain. She married the big man in 1509 when she was 23 years old. Catherine had two surviving children – Henry and Mary. Sadly, Henry died within a few weeks, but Mary, well you'll get to know her soon enough – she became Mary Tudor, or the fiercely named 'Bloody Mary'.



Catherine was a pretty important and popular woman, and not just because she was queen. Yes, there may have been no surviving male heir, but from me to you, we English people LOVED her. It wasn't well received when she was banished from the public eye for sticking up for herself and rejecting Henry VIII's efforts to annul their marriage (kind of like a cancellation). And can you blame her for standing her ground??? Henry literally created a new religion – the Church of England – so that he could override the Catholic Pope and get rid of her, because he still didn't have a surviving son. I don't know what that is, but it sure isn't love!

At least she survived, I guess. Which is more than can be said for wife number two...

Catherine Parr

Wife number six – of six – Katharine (or Catherine or Katherine... the spellings differ) outlived Henry VIII. That's probably her largest claim to fame but it's a pretty good one considering Henry's track record. Yep, Henry died in 1547, while Catherine lived for another year, dying in 1548.



If you weren't confused enough by all the Catherine's involved in Henry's story, it's considered quite likely that Catherine was named after Catherine of Aragon – Henry's sixth wife named after his first – given that Catherine of Aragon was Catherine Parr's godmother. A nice link from the start to the end I'd say...

By the time that Catherine married Henry, Henry was considered aging (52... that's pretty good going for a Tudor!), and was quite ill, and so she took on a role more of nurse than wife. They married in 1543 and, from what I've been told, Catherine was well suited to the position. Intelligent, loyal and devoted to Henry, she helped guide Henry in his latter years!

Well.. divorced, beheaded, died. Divorced, beheaded, survived. That's some legacy left by Henry. But you have to think of those poor, poor wives right?

The Market-stall Holders – Recording Sheet



"Use this sheet to record any of the key information you find out about the queens. Remember: dates, number of children, manner of death and any other interesting facts are worthy of being written down!"

Catherine of Aragon

Anne of Cleves

Catherine Howard

Catherine Parr

Anne Boleyn

Jane Seymour

Hot-seating Henry!

Lets put Henry VIII in the hotseat and make him sweat!

Henry has now divorced two wives and had two executed! What questions do you want to ask him about any of his past marriages? Think about all the information you have seen in the animation, and ask key questions in order to get to the bottom of how he has treated his wives and how he plans to treat his next wife. Tread carefully though; you wouldn't want to irritate the king!



Key questions to ask Henry:

What did you find out?

Catherine's Conscience Alley

Should I, Catherine Parr, marry Henry VIII?

A member(s) of the class is going to take on the role of Catherine Parr. They're in a quandary about whether or not they should marry Henry VIII (*like they even have a choice...*). Your job is to think of different reasons as to why or why not Catherine should marry Henry. You can use some of the question prompts to help.

Marrying Henry? Put a ring on it!

What does Catherine stand to gain from marrying Henry? What would life be like if she is married to the king? As a woman in Tudor times, does she even have a choice?

Not a chance!

Really, how is it likely to end? Is it really worth it?
What other reasons might you give to not wanting to marry Henry?



The Final Decision

Catherine Parr is still debating whether or not she should marry Henry VIII. You worry for her safety, given Henry's past exploits (and realise that she doesn't have much choice), but you also accept that if you say too much, you too could be for the gallows.

Write a balanced argument to Catherine on the pros and cons of marrying Henry VIII. Remember to use the information you have collected and any information you have gathered from the animations, as well key punctuation and language techniques, such as conjunctions and fronted adverbials.



My writing checklist

Handwriting practice lines for the writing task.

Mint Your Own Tudor Coins



"Like modern times, the Tudors also used coins to buy and sell goods. Often, archaeologists uncover hoards of coins that we can use to work out interesting details about the time. For example, some Tudor coins have been found with the initials of three of Henry's wives, but none with the initials of the other three! What does that say about them!? The Tudors used a mix pounds, crowns, shillings and pennies, based on weight. Using your sculpting skills and the details below, it's time to mint your own Tudor coins."

Rex was used for king.

Regina was used for queen.

The name of the king or queen was written around the rim.



A coat of arms and the year was often minted onto the front or back.

The face of the king or queen is etched on the front.



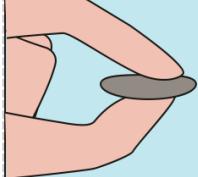
First, roll out a piece of modelling clay.



Next, chop clay into pieces and roll into balls.



Squash ball between fingers and round.



Use the images of the king/queen to create the centre of the coin.

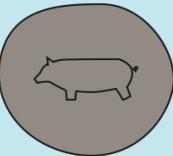


Use a tool to etch the image onto the modelling clay.



Around the edge, etch letters that correspond to the person you have chosen.

Create image for 'tails' side of the coin (coat of arms, animal etc.).



Leave to dry and harden. You've created a Tudor coin!

