

Religious and Political changes
in Tudor Times

Have people always agreed on who the most significant Tudor monarch was?

Tudors reigned 1485-1603 - An historical event, issue or person can be identified as significant if it affects many people at the time or in the future.



Henry VII
1485-1509

Henry VIII
1509-1547

Edward
1547-1553

Mary I
1553-1558

Elizabeth I
1558-1603

Historical periods occur around the world at the same time.

- For 118 years, The Tudors ruled Britain during a fascinating and fast-changing century.
- A time when European explorers such as: Francis Drake, Christopher Columbus began sailing across the Atlantic Ocean for the first time, searching for new routes to China and the East. The New World: Caribbean islands, and the Americas were discovered.
- The result was a shift in the distribution of power and wealth from the East to Europe and Western supremacy that we still see today.
- Change in power resulted in clash of cultures, the establishment of European empires as well as rivalry, piracy, and many wars.
- Renaissance period: paintings such as the Mona Lisa and The Last Supper by Leonardo Da Vinci.
- Scientific developments: Copernicus discovered the Earth and planets orbit the sun, before then people thought Earth was flat!

There are differing perspectives and relationships between different groups.

The great religious split in the Christian Church, where new Protestant beliefs challenged the authority of the Pope and the practices of the Catholic Church. Both Europe and Britain saw fierce conflict between the Protestant reformers and the power of the traditional Church. The Catholic vs Protestant struggle continued throughout the 16th century and well beyond. During the period a radical Protestant movement emerged - the Puritans.

Henry VII restores stability uniting house York and Lancaster through marriage ending the War of the Roses.

The Wars of the Roses is the name given to the period from 1455-1485 when the House of Lancaster and the House of York fought one another for the English throne.

There were Several Causes of the conflict

- 1) Claims to the throne — both houses had a legitimate (legal or rightful) claim to the English throne because they were both descended from Edward III (see the family tree below).
- 2) Powerful nobles in England — lots of lords and nobles had their own private armies. Arguments between them often led to battles.
- 3) Henry VI's failings in France — Henry lost most of England's lands in France (see p. 31), which upset lots of the English nobles and they started blaming one another.
- 4) Henry VI's health — Henry also suffered from mental illness. From 1454-5 Richard, Duke of York, ruled for him as Protector. When Henry recovered, Richard didn't want to give up his power, and the Wars of the Roses began.

A 'house' is a noble family and all its descendants.

Henry VII tried to Restore Stability

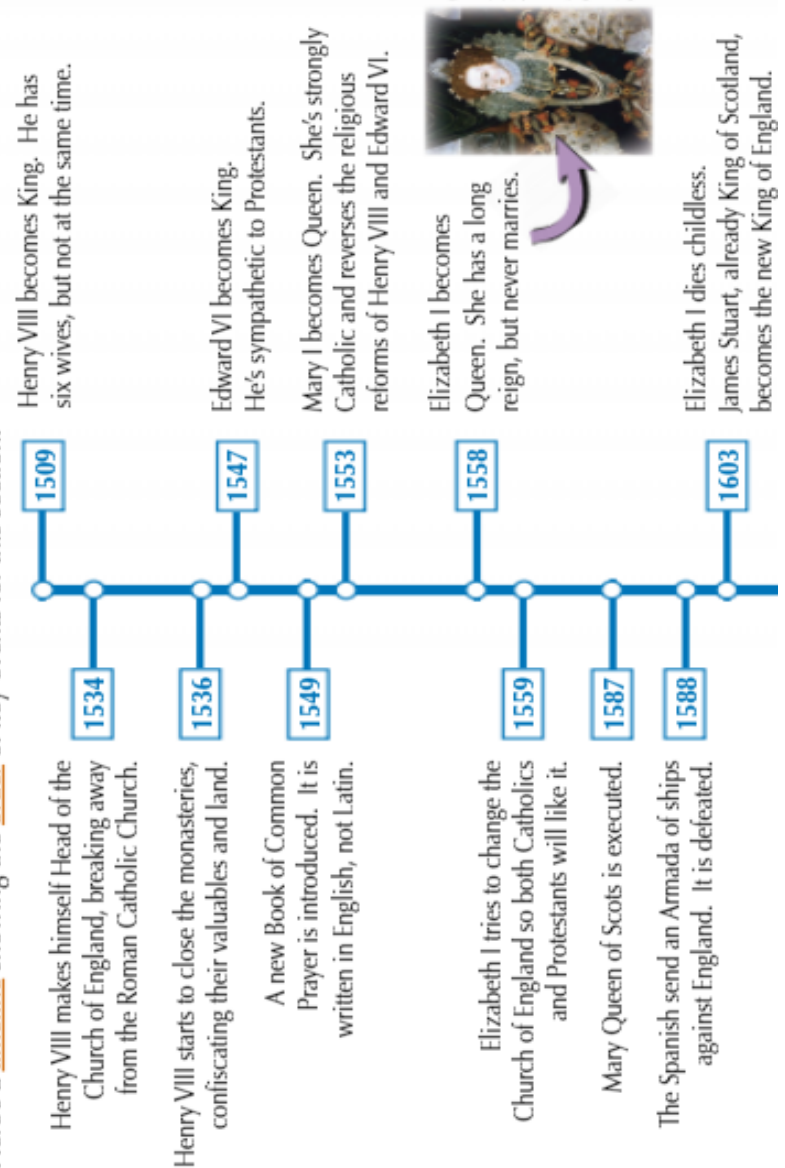
Henry VII made several moves to stabilise (bring peace to) England after the Wars of the Roses and protect the throne for his descendants.

- 1) He married Edward IV's daughter Elizabeth, uniting his family with the House of York. This is why the Tudor Rose is a combination of the white and red roses of York and Lancaster.
- 2) Henry married his daughter to James IV of Scotland, and his eldest son to Catherine of Aragon, daughter of the Spanish King. The marriages strengthened relationships with these countries.
- 3) He chose good advisors based on their own talents.
- 4) He was very good with money. England was almost bankrupt in 1485, but he restored its fortune, getting as much money as he could from royal land and introducing a tighter taxation system for the nobles.
- 5) He recruited Justices of the Peace, to enforce law and order throughout England.
- 6) Henry VII died in 1509. His son, Henry VIII, inherited the throne.



Portrait of Henry VII.

Here's a timeline showing the order of key events for this section.



Henry VIII's breaks with Rome, the Reformation and the Dissolution of the Monasteries had profound and long-lasting effects. 1534 sees the Act of Supremacy.

Religion was a hot political potato for the Tudor kings and queens. The big changes started when **Henry VIII** broke away from the Roman Catholic Church and put the **English Church** under **his control**.

Religion was Important because it was linked to Politics

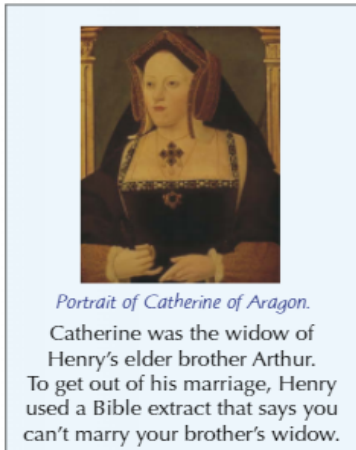
- 1) **Today** people are mostly **free** to worship however they want. In the **1500s** it was different — religion was tied up with **politics** and there was very little **religious tolerance**.
- 2) Rulers wouldn't allow their subjects to follow other faiths. This was believed to be **disloyal** and **disruptive**.
- 3) For example, Elizabeth I decided on a middle ground of very **mild Protestantism** and wanted **all** her subjects to follow it. People who continued to support other faiths were **punished**.

The Jesuit (Catholic) priest Edmund Campion was executed as a traitor during Elizabeth's reign.

Some extreme Protestants, called Puritans, wanted more reforms than Elizabeth was prepared to allow. John Stubbs had his hand cut off for printing a book that supported Puritanism.

Henry VIII broke Away from the Roman Catholic Church

- 1) Henry VIII followed the Catholic Church at first and was called **Defender of the Faith** by the Pope. But his Catholic wife **Catherine of Aragon** didn't give him a **son**.
- 2) Henry decided he wanted to marry **Anne Boleyn** instead, but the Pope in Rome wouldn't let him get divorced.
- 3) Henry was still basically Catholic, but he broke away from Rome and got rid of the Roman Catholic monasteries because:
 - he wanted a **son** to follow him
 - he fancied **Anne Boleyn**
 - he was short of **money**
 - he wanted the extra **power** of controlling the Church
 - he could keep the **nobles happy** by giving them church lands.



Henry Destroyed the power of the Catholic Church in England

How Henry split from the Roman Catholic Church

- 1532 Henry stopped all payments going from the Church in England to Rome.
- 1533 His marriage to Catherine was ended and he married Anne.
- 1534 Henry made himself Head of the Church in England and the Act of Supremacy made this official.
- 1536 He closed the Catholic monasteries and took their valuables and land.
- 1539 The Bible was translated into English. The Act of Six Articles was passed, making the Church of England's beliefs more Catholic.

Henry had all the monks thrown out of the monasteries, and in many cases the buildings were then burnt or destroyed.

Problems were Caused by breaking away from Rome

- 1) Many **Catholics** still felt **loyal** to the Pope.
- 2) People resented the **nobles** getting the Church lands and **wealth**.
- 3) Catherine of Aragon was the aunt of **Charles V** — one of the most powerful rulers in Europe. Henry was creating a **powerful enemy** by annulling his marriage to Catherine.
- 4) When the **monasteries** were closed **poor people** lost a source of charity.
- 5) The closing of the monasteries angered people and led to the **Pilgrimage of Grace** — a **revolt** of 40,000 people in the north of England.
- 6) The break away from Rome encouraged **Protestants** to **quarrel** more with the **Catholic Church**.



"If the Pope is unwilling, we are left to find a remedy [solutions] elsewhere. Some remedies are extreme ones, but a sick man seeks relief in any way he can find." *This extract is taken from a letter Henry had his bishops send to the Pope in 1530. Basically he is threatening the Pope, saying that if the Pope doesn't give him a divorce then Henry will take drastic actions to sort the situation out.*

Elizabeth I establishes The Religious Settlement and the “middle way”. 1559 sees the Act of Uniformity.

Mary I was a strict Catholic

Edward died young in 1553. His sister **Mary** became Queen and ruled until her death in 1558. She was **strongly Catholic** and tried to **reverse** the religious changes of the previous reigns.



- 1) She got rid of the Prayer books and the Act of Uniformity.
- 2) She **restored** the rule of the **Pope** over the Church in England in 1554 and married the Catholic Philip II of Spain.
- 3) She had about **300 Protestants burnt** — including famous churchmen like Cranmer, Latimer, and Ridley. This led her to be labelled '**Bloody Mary**' by Protestants like John Foxe.

During Mary's reign the **Counter-Reformation** (the Catholic Church fighting back against the Reformation) was happening in Europe — the **Catholic Church** was declaring its **power** and dealing out very **harsh punishments** to Protestants.

Elizabeth I tried to create a Moderate religious policy

- 1) **Elizabeth I** (1558-1603) tried to allow both Catholics and Protestants to worship — all under the **Church of England**. As long as people went to church she didn't ask too much about what they believed.
- 2) She called herself **Governor** of the Church of England, rather than Head, by an **Act of Supremacy** (1559). A new **Act of Uniformity** (1559) insisted that everybody used a new prayer book. It was worded in a way that wouldn't offend Catholics too much.
- 3) As time passed, there were **threats** to her life from Catholics and she became **harsher** in her treatment of them. **Catholics** found themselves having to worship in **secret**.



Portrait of Queen Elizabeth I.

The Puritans were extreme Protestants who thought hard work and worship were really important. They strongly opposed frivolous things like theatre, dancing and alcohol. They wanted more reforms than Elizabeth was prepared to allow.

Since the reign of Henry VIII, Elizabeth's father, religion had been a point of conflict. In order to marry Elizabeth's mother, Anne Boleyn, Henry had divorced Catherine of Aragon which meant that *Catholics* did not see Elizabeth as a rightful queen. They believed that Henry had been lawfully married to Catherine of Aragon when Elizabeth had been born. Her sister, Mary, had made Roman Catholicism the official religion of the country, but most of the people were *Protestant*. There was also a growing number of *Puritans*. Elizabeth had to find a compromise to try to bring together these different groups and ease religious tensions. When Elizabeth had come to the throne in 1558, she sought a 'middle way' between Catholics and Protestants. The Elizabethan Religious Settlement of 1559 was deliberately vague and gave little direction on the way religion should be practised. This meant that as long as the people recognised Elizabeth's supremacy over the Church and used Book of Common Prayer, they were safe.

1588 Spanish Armada is defeated by the English lead by Sir Francis Drake

Relations between England and Spain got worse

Philip II (the King of Spain) got on well with Elizabeth to begin with, and even asked to marry her. But **relations** between the two countries **gradually** got **worse**.

- 1) Philip had been **married** to the English Queen **Mary**, and he wanted his power in England back.
- 2) Many people in **Catholic Spain** thought that the Protestant Elizabeth should not be on the throne.
- 3) Elizabeth was concerned about **Spanish support** for Irish rebellions.
- 4) Elizabeth had been secretly **encouraging attacks** on Spanish ships.
- 5) Elizabeth had been helping Spain's enemies in the **Netherlands**.
- 6) In 1587, she **executed** Mary Queen of Scots — a **Catholic queen**.

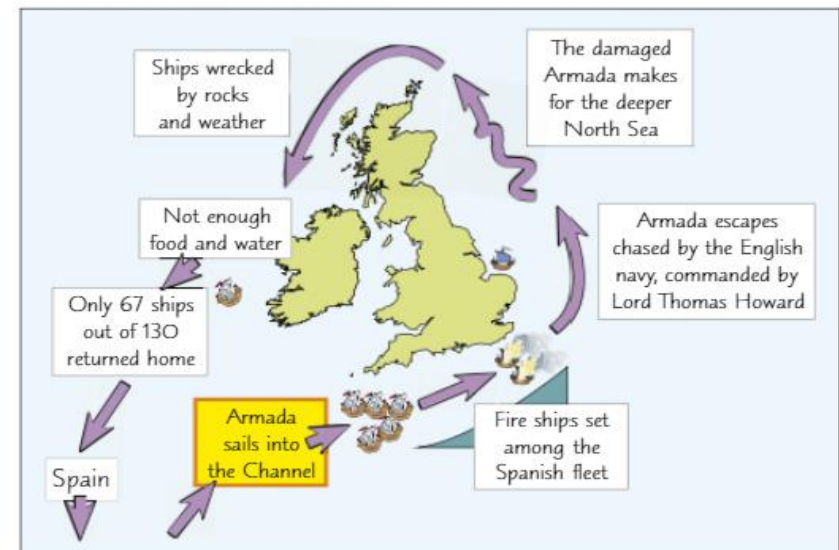
The greatest challenge to Elizabeth was first sighted in the English Channel on 29 July 1588. This was the Spanish Armada, a fleet of armed ships sailing towards England in a crescent formation. Partly because of religious differences, and partly because of English interference in Spanish affairs in the *New World* and the Netherlands, King Philip of Spain decided to invade England and attempt to overthrow Elizabeth.

"I know I have the body of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a king, and a king of England too, and think foul scorn that Parma or Spain, or any prince of Europe should dare to invade the borders of my realm... I myself will be your general, judge, and rewarder." Elizabeth's speech to her army at Tilbury in 1588, before they attacked the Spanish.

The Spanish Armada was Defeated

In May 1588 Philip sent the **Spanish Armada** (a fleet of boats) against England. Within a few weeks what was left of the fleet was limping home, by escaping round the top of Britain and back past Ireland. It was a **disaster** because —

- 1) The leader of the Armada, Medina Sidonia, was a **soldier** rather than a sailor.
- 2) The English had **faster ships** and **better sailors**.
- 3) The **Spanish soldiers** who were supposed to meet up with the Armada **couldn't get there**.
- 4) The English had crippled the Spanish fleet while it was in Calais harbour by sending in **fire ships**.
- 5) The Armada hadn't planned to sail all the way round Britain, but they were **forced to escape** that way. Ships were destroyed on rocks because of very **windy** weather.



TEST YOUR KEY KNOWLEDGE

1	Name the Tudor monarchs in order of their reign. Bonus point if you can state the total years of the Tudor dynasty.	1) Henry VII 2) Henry VIII 3) Edward VI	4) Mary I 5) Elizabeth I Bonus – 118 years 1485-1603
2	Name something else that was happening in the world during Tudor times.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Exploration by Europeans led to the discovery of the Americas. ✓ A shift in power and wealth from the East to Europe. ✓ Establishment of European empires. ✓ Renaissance period. 	
3	True or false? Conflict during Tudor times was mostly due to the differing perspectives and relationships between the Roman Catholics and Protestants.	True	
4	How and why did Henry VII restore stability?	He married Elizabeth York uniting House Lancaster with House York to end the War of the Roses.	
5	Why did Henry VIII sell the monasteries?	For land for his nobles and money from their valuables.	
6	Why did Henry VIII want a divorce that the Catholic Church denied him?	So that he could marry whoever he wanted and hopefully have a son with Anne Boleyn.	
7	Why was religion so important?	It was linked to politics and you had to worship the monarch's faith to be deemed "loyal".	
8	Which Tudor monarch tolerated both faiths and introduced the "middle way"?	Elizabeth I	
9	Who was victorious in the battle between Spain and England? Bonus, in what year?	Elizabeth I, England defeated the Spanish Armada. Bonus 1588.	
10	What is a Puritan?	An extreme Protestant who wanted stronger reforms against the Catholic way of life.	
11	What did the Act of Uniformity do?	Make everyone use the Book of Common Prayer in English and not in traditional Latin that the Catholics used.	
12	Which Tudor monarch was a devout Catholic?	Mary I (not be confused with her cousin Mary Queen of Scots).	