

What changed because of the Reformation?

Aimed at Key Stage 3, around year 7/8

1527

The Pope says No to divorce

1521

Fidei
Defensor,
defender of
the faith



Henry VIII
divorces
Catherine

1533

1534

Henry VIII
breaks with
Rome

Dissolution
of the
monasteries

1535

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Thomas More
is executed

Pilgrimage
of Grace

1535



National Curriculum subject links

The development of Church, state and society in Britain 1509–1745

- The English Reformation and Counter Reformation

Coverage and links

The English Reformation was a pivotal moment in British history, perhaps the most important event since the Norman Conquest. It fundamentally changed what it meant to be a monarch at home and the relationship between England and the rest of Europe would for ever be different. Because of this, it remains a very important topic of study in the Key Stage 3 History curriculum.

Yet it would be very easy to study the Reformation as a mere change in the sort of churches the people of England went to. This unit aims to do rather more and asks pupils to consider exactly what changed for different individuals and for the country as a whole.

Before studying the Reformation, it would be really useful for pupils to have looked at the relationship between the Church and state in the Middle Ages. The story of Henry II and Thomas Becket would form a great foundation for this unit. Likewise, later work on the Civil War might refer directly to the learning done in this unit.

It is important to note that the causes of the Reformation are only dealt with briefly in the first lesson. It might be that you would want to expand on this over a short sequence of lessons, with this unit following. If so, the films used for that purpose in Lesson 1 could be used to recap that work.

Suggested learning outcomes

By the end of these lessons, pupils will be able to...

- Give examples of how the Reformation changed the country
- **Explain the extent of change for different people and groups**
- Suggest the sort of change that the Reformation brought about.

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Pre-lesson homework

Pupils might prepare for this unit by learning the story of how Henry VIII came to be king. They could learn the background of the Wars of the Roses, Henry's father winning the throne at the Battle of Bosworth Field, the death of his older brother, Arthur, and his marriage to Arthur's widow, Catherine of Aragon. Indeed, the Sixty-second histories series of films about the Tudors could be set up for pupils, using the Virtual Classroom app on the Squaducation website. The teacher notes for that set of films would also be useful here.

Lesson 1 – What changed for Henry VIII?

Films to use

Henry VIII wants a divorce

Henry VIII the Pope says 'No'

Henry VIII breaks with Rome

Thomas More: The Oath of Supremacy

Dissolution of the monasteries – part 1

Pilgrimage of grace – part 1

In the first part of this lesson, it will be really important for pupils to have a clear sense of the narrative of the Reformation, so that the analysis of the change that took place has something to hang on to. This could be achieved in several ways, but several of the films in this series could be played at the start of the lesson with pupils making a timeline of the events. Other resources – textbooks or cardsorts, for example – could be used to add to this if necessary. Certainly here pupils should be aware of the range of causes of the Reformation, as outlined in **Henry VIII wants a divorce**.

After this, the films should be shown in the order above. At the end of each, pupils should record what this means for Henry alone. It might be positive changes, negative

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Lesson 1 – What changed for Henry VIII? continued ...

changes or even neutral ones, the important thing here is to keep the focus on him. So, for example, at the end of **Henry VIII breaks with Rome**, it is important to note that he is now the head of the Church in England. But pupils should be pushed further: what did that mean for him every Sunday? What extra burdens did it give? What are the likely fringe benefits for him?

Likewise, Thomas More: The Oath of Supremacy and Pilgrimage of grace

– **part 1** should be used to show that Henry was now facing opposition to his actions, from friends and from large sections of the population. Again, keep asking questions about what this means for Henry. What might it mean that one of his closest allies is turning against him? How would he react to 40,000 Northerners rising up to challenge his policies?

At the end of the lesson, pupils should write a summary paragraph that outlines the different types of changes for Henry personally. Here the focus should be on encouraging pupils to think about the type of change that he went through, rather than simply describing what happened.

Lesson 2 – What changed for the country?

Films to use

Henry VIII: Supreme head of the Church of England

Thomas More: The Oath of Supremacy

Dissolution of the monasteries – part 2

Pilgrimage of grace – part 2

This lesson is about widening the focus onto what the Reformation meant for the people of England. At the start of the lesson, remind your pupils about what it meant for Henry. What do they think these things would mean for others in the country? The first film here – **Henry VIII: Supreme head of the Church of England** – outlines the biggest change for most: the Pope is no longer the head of the Church, but instead it is now the King. The full impact of this could easily be missed, which is why it is important to start this unit with a review of the work on the medieval Church done earlier in the

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Lesson 2 – What changed for the country? ...continued

Key Stage. But also question them on other parts of the film. For example, English people might well now be scared of an invasion or what this might mean for their souls after they have died. This new Church will lead to fear.

The next film, Thomas More: The Oath of Supremacy – was shown in the last lesson, but here pupils need to think about what the Oath of Supremacy would mean for the people of England. Now anybody who wanted to hold any official office had to swear the Oath, which meant that those who remained Roman Catholic either now had to convert, to lie under oath or to refuse to swear it. The new Church, in other words, was making new demands on them.

Dissolution of the monasteries – part 2 should lead to a discussion about the implications of the monastery closures. To do this it will be important to remind your pupils about what the monasteries did in the Middle Ages – provided hospitality for travellers, care for the sick and elderly, charity and food for the poor, education for some local boys, while at all times being a place of prayer and worship. Thus in a stroke, all this would be removed from a community. And yet, as the film says, their land might be given out for farming, so there would be people who benefitted, not just the King.

The final film in this sequence, **Pilgrimage of grace – part 2**, highlights the fact that there were large numbers of people who disagreed with the changes the King had made to the Church in England and that those who voiced this disagreement were punished very severely.

At the end of the lesson, your pupils should write a summary of what the Reformation meant for ordinary people, focusing on the type of changes they witnessed and experienced.

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Lesson 3 – What changed for other people?

Films to use

Catherine of Aragon: The King wants a divorce

Catherine of Aragon stands her ground

Catherine of Aragon banished from court

Thomas More's execution

Dissolution of the monasteries – part 1

Dissolution of the monasteries – part 2

The idea for this lesson is to see how this all played out for key individuals involved in the Reformation. The three Catherine of Aragon films tell a story of a woman scorned by the King, who has now lost her authority and power. After watching the films, discuss the impact Henry's actions have on Catherine. Ask the pupils how she would respond to the request for a divorce – she's a Catholic still and believes divorce is a sin, she's a woman who has been rejected by her husband and she has a daughter who is being mistreated by her father. Ultimately, she's been rejected and humiliated. At the end, pupils should record a short passage about what has changed for Catherine. It would certainly be worth discussing whether Catharine of Aragon's story tells us anything useful about the Reformation. Her story gives us an insight into Henry's desperation to have a son and marry the woman he was now in love with. Was the Reformation just about that?

After this, remind pupils of the story of Thomas More from the last lesson. At this point you might want to introduce a bit more of his background – he was a highly educated man who was one of Henry's closest allies, the Chancellor after Cardinal Wolsey. He was against the Reformation in Europe and wrote a book in defence of Henry against attacks by Martin Luther, the German reformer. Then show **Thomas More's execution** and ask pupils to think about what this means more widely. What has changed in Henry's mind that he would execute someone he liked so much for a seemingly small matter? What does it mean for others who might be following More's example? At the end, ask pupils to write a short paragraph about what has changed because More is executed.

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Lesson 3 – What changed for other people? ... continued

Finally, show the films **Dissolution of monasteries – part 1** and **Dissolution of monasteries – part 2**. You will need to remind your pupils of the importance of the monasteries to communities around the country. When they close, those communities lose a local hospital, a refuge for the poor and a school for some of the local boys. How big an impact would this have? Now ask them to think about the people who lived in the monasteries – the monks. What does the dissolution of the monasteries do to them? Is it all bad? Some will notice that some monks were given new jobs and even went and got married, beginning an entirely new life. Pupils should write one final passage about the impact on the monks and their communities.

At the end of the lesson sequence, either in this lesson or in a fourth lesson, pupils should write a short essay assessing the change brought about by the Reformation. Now you need to change the question to 'Was the Reformation a revolution?' Spend time discussing the word 'revolution' and come up with other alternatives. The essay should then use examples from pupils' work to support or challenge this idea and, if necessary, to say what it was if it was not a revolution.

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Differentiation, assessment and reflection

Extension

Some pupils could be stretched in each lesson by looking at other examples as they make their notes or write their passages. For example, in Lesson 1, pupils could look at a short passage of writing about Bishop Fisher and Elizabeth Barton as examples of people who opposed Henry to their deaths. Likewise, in Lesson 3, they could look at an extract about the Pilgrimage of Grace.

Scaffolding

Support could be provided for the final writing task through the use of a writing frame. This might take the form of a paragraph-by-paragraph structure to help support the explanation of whether it was a revolution. Pupils might also be helped with some definitions of the sorts of 'change words' that they might use instead.

Formative assessment opportunities

In Lesson 1, you might check pupils' learning by talking about their final piece of writing before they write it. Listen to their ideas, write a short plan on the board and then have them write it.

In Lesson 2, you will need to check and reinforce your pupils' understanding of some of these challenging concepts – 'Pope', 'oath', 'monastery'.

In Lesson 3 you might ask questions about how different people experienced the change in different ways. For example, Henry brought about the change and increased his power, whereas the people of England had the change thrust upon them.

Reflection

At the end of the unit, pupils might briefly consider what came next in the story of religious change. You could do a whole lesson mapping out religious change under Edward VI, Mary I, Elizabeth I and then finally the Gunpowder Plot in 1605.

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source 1 – Image of Tintern Abbey



Abbot Wyche surrendered Tintern Abbey and all its estates to the King's visitors on 3 September 1536. Valuables from the Abbey were sent to the Royal Treasury, lead from the roof was sold and the decay of the buildings began.

Tintern Abbey by Saffron Blaze

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=15358619>