

TUDORS

Aimed at Key Stage 3, around year 7/8

1485

Henry VII, becomes king;
start of Tudor period

1485

Gold cloth
and jewels
were sewn
into his
garments



Henry VIII
becomes king

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1533

Henry VIII
divorces
Catherine of
Aragon

Henry VIII
died

1547

1603

Elizabeth I
died; end of
Tudor period

1603



National Curriculum subject links

The development of Church, state and society in Medieval Britain 1066 – 1509

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

- The Wars of the Roses; Henry VII and attempts to restore stability
- The English Reformation

Coverage and links

Whilst the Tudors loom large over our national story, focus, in Key Stage 3 at least, is often of Henry VIII and his children. Whilst those stories are important, so often ignored is the first Tudor monarch, Henry VII, who defeated Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth Field and ended the Wars of the Roses. Indeed, that date – 1485 – is often marked as the ending of the Medieval period in England and the start of a new age.

This sequence of lessons briefly examines the Wars of the Roses and the chaos of the 15th century and looks at some of the consequences of the Yorkist victory under Henry Tudor. As pupils go through the reigns of Henry VII and Henry VIII, they will see that, though the wars ended, new divisions emerged. Indeed, some old wounds were never fully healed.

Suggested learning outcomes

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

- Give details about the Wars of the Roses and the reigns of Henry VII and Henry VIII
- Comment on the short and longer term consequences of the Tudors coming to power in England
- Make a tentative decision on the extent to which the Tudors united the country.

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Pre-lesson homework

To prepare for the lesson sequence, pupils could be asked to go back to their earlier work on Medieval kingship and write a short piece about what made a successful monarch in the middle ages. It could be turned into a 'Guide for the new King of England'. These can then be compared to The Tudors studied here.

Lesson 1 – How did Henry Tudor end the Wars of the Roses?

Films to use

- **Death of Richard III**
- **The beginning of the reign of Henry VII**
- **Henry Tudor: What did he look like?**

Begin the sequence by finding out what pupils already know. Display the words 'The Tudors' and ask for ideas. You'll probably get loads about Henry VIII and Elizabeth I – all of this is good stuff. Then introduce this enquiry; Did the Tudors unite the country? You might want to spend a few minutes thinking with the class about the question, especially the word 'Unite'. What does it mean? Why might the country need uniting?

Then skip to the end of this bit of the story by showing **Death of Richard III**. Get pupils talking about the death of the King and why it would be significant. Then explain that Richard III was killed at the Battle of Bosworth Field at the end of a series of civil wars that are known as the Wars of the Roses. The next part of this lesson will look those wars in a little more detail.

Pupils will need a copy of the **Royal family tree** below, as found at Source 1 below. Using this information, pupils will make a timeline of the Wars of the Roses that will run from 1422 (the accession to the throne of Henry VI) through to 1485 (Battle of Bosworth Field and the death of Richard III). To begin with, pupils should mark on their timelines the dates for each king, noting that Henry VI and Edward IV swapped over a few times in

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Lesson 1 – How did Henry Tudor end the Wars of the Roses? continued ...

the 1460s and 1470s. The activity could be extended with the addition of key battles of the Wars of the Roses, especially the Battle of Towton in 1461, the Battles of Barnet and Tewkesbury in 1471 and the Battle of Bosworth Field in 1485.

When the timelines are done, ask pupils to imagine what the people of England would be looking for in the new monarch, Henry VII? How was he different to the others? He certainly had a weak claim to the throne of England, much weaker than the King he killed in battle. They might notice that, though a Lancastrian, he was married to Elizabeth of York, thus uniting the two sides. Show **Henry Tudor; what did he look like?** which confirms this.

Then show **The beginning of the reign of Henry VII**, which describes the fact that the new King faced a continued threat from the Yorkist army, this time with the support of the Irish.

Then end the lesson with a short piece of writing; Did Henry Tudor unite the country?

Lesson 2 – How successful was Henry VII?

Films to use

- **Henry VII's children**

Start the lesson with a big question – what does a new king have to do to ensure he is successful? All ideas are good, but make sure you establish at least these points

- **He needed to secure his dynasty**
- **He needed support from his people**
- **He needed to keep England secure**

Show the class the film **Henry VII's children**. Ask them to think about at which of his aims he has already been successful? He has a secure dynasty, even with many of his children dying young, and by marrying off his children to foreign royalty, he is starting to ensure that he is building good foreign relations, thus keeping the country safe.

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Lesson 2 – How successful was Henry VII? ...continued

The next part of the lesson, is all about building a picture of Henry VII as a king through the words of his contemporaries and historians. Start by reading the description by Virgil out loud from Source 2. As you read – you may want to read it out several times – pupils should draw a picture of Henry. You can be as strict about words here as you like; you might allow pupils to annotate their emerging portrait or you might insist everything is drawn. Whichever way you do it, at the end ask the class to talk about what they have drawn. What kind of man was he? What kind of King was he?

After this, go on to look at a larger set of sources about Henry VII. There are some at Source 3 below, though of course these can be added to in order to make the activity even richer. To begin with, ask pupils to read the sources to clarify meanings and iron out difficulties. After that they should begin to arrange them in some way:

- they might put them in order of most positive about Henry to most negative
- they could put them in chronological order to see if views of Henry changed
- they might group the sources together under headings of their own suggestion.

Whichever way this is done, as the activity finishes, ask your pupils whether Henry was successful in uniting the country during his reign. If so, how did he do it?

End the lesson with pupils writing a short pen-portrait of Henry VII in which they describe how he achieved the three points made at the start of the lesson. Alternatively, pupils could annotate a portrait of Henry VII or indeed add to/redraw the portrait done earlier in the lesson. At the end, go back to the enquiry and discuss 'Did the Tudors unite the country?'

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Lesson 3 – How successful was Henry VIII?

Films to use

- **The King is dead**
- **Henry VIII – part 1 | part 2**
- **Catherine of Aragon**

Start this lesson by asking pupils how secure Henry VII had made the Tudors on the English throne? After a little discussion, show **The King is dead**. What does Henry VIII do immediately to keep the throne secure? Now go back to the enquiry question: Did the Tudors unite England? Where is pupils' current thinking in relation to this? Has it changed since the last lesson? What are we expecting from Henry VIII?

Now show **Henry VIII – part 1**. Here his fool and friend, Will Somers, describes Henry's physical features and his passion for music and sport before issuing a warning about his bad moods. Ask pupils to consider what kind of king he might turn out to be based on all of this. They might start to make inferences about his sporting interests, perhaps meaning he might want to make war as well. Follow this quite quickly with **Henry VIII – part 2**. Ask why Henry might want to dress so extravagantly? How does he want to appear to his people?

Then some story telling. Talk to the class about how the early years of Henry's reign were indeed peaceful at home. He was married to **Catherine of Aragon**, thus securing an alliance with Spain, he won battles in France and Scotland and in the 1520s, through the efforts of his chief minister Cardinal Wolsey, he became an important force in European alliance making. His meeting with Francis, the French king, at the Field of the Cloth of Gold in 1520, was a grand celebration to mark a new alliance between the old enemies. His power and popularity were at their height. Yet he and Catherine still only had one child - a daughter - and he desperately wanted a son. Added to this, he really fancied Anne Boleyn, his wife's maid of honour. In the end, so desperate did he get that he divorced Catherine and married Anne, a series of events that would have serious repercussions for the country.

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Lesson 3 – How successful was Henry VIII? ... continued

This sequence of lessons can't do justice to the Reformation, but share the following with your pupils:

- The break with the Catholic Church in Rome meant that the people of England were forced to follow a new faith. Some accepted this but many were very angry.
- Henry dealt with dissent very fiercely. Bishop John Fisher, who had performed his father's funeral, was burned at the stake for refusing to swear an oath recognising Henry and Anne's children as heirs to the throne.
- In 1536, Henry faced a huge rebellion in the North, known as the Pilgrimage of Grace. Though the rebels were put down, the rebellion showed the strength of feeling in parts of the country about the changes.
- Henry's children all faced rebellions because of the ongoing religious upheaval in the country.

At the end of the lesson sequence, pupils should answer the enquiry question as a short essay: Did the Tudors unite England?

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Extension

There are opportunities in each lesson to extend pupils thinking.

- The timeline activity in lesson 1 could be made more complex with the addition of more events to mark on.
- Pupils could also be challenged to think about whether the timeline needs to be a straight line or whether giving it some shape, some ups and downs, might help explain what's going on.
- In lesson 2 some pupils could be given a wider range of sources to tackle.
- In preparation for their essay in lesson 3, pupils could be challenged by reading an account of the Pilgrimage of Grace, mentioned at the end. The threat that Henry saw in this rebellion would allow for greater depth in students' answers.

Scaffolding

- Some students might benefit from a pre-prepared timeline, meaning that they only have to mark on certain dates and events.
- They would also benefit from a simplified family tree.

Formative assessment opportunities

- In each lesson, use verbal questioning to ensure students have a secure factual knowledge – dates of reigns, etc.
- During the source exercise, there are opportunities to check pupils' understandings of key ideas.
- Throughout the sequence of lessons keep asking the enquiry question; Did the Tudors unite the country?

Reflection

The essay written at the end of lesson 3 acts as a final outcome activity for this enquiry. After writing it, students should discuss their answers.

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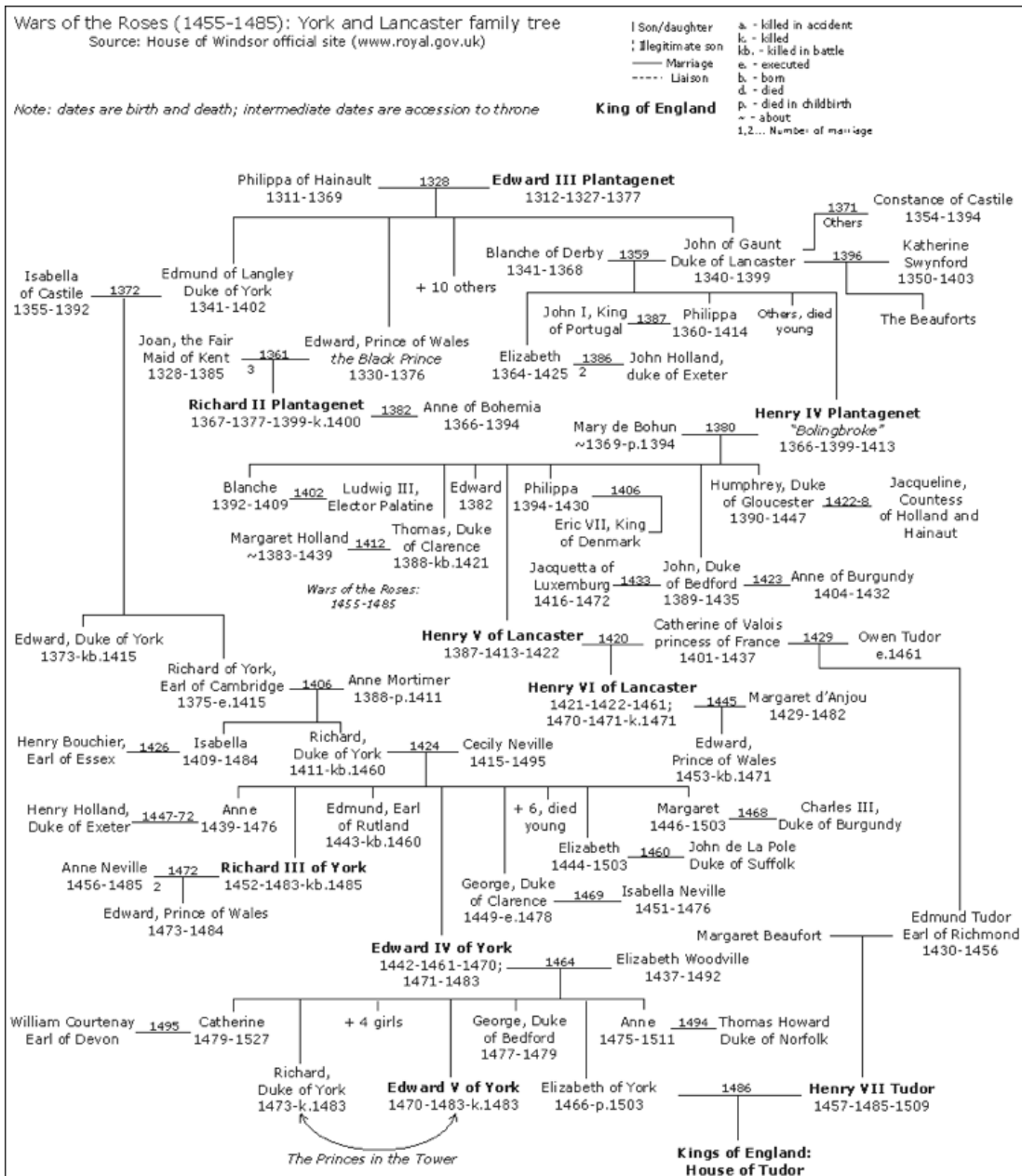
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source 1. Wars of the Roses family tree to use in lesson 1 of this enquiry



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source 2 – Description of Henry VII by Polydor Vergil, an Italian scholar, written after Henry's death.

“ His body was slender, but well built and strong; his height above average. His appearance was remarkably attractive and his face cheerful, especially when speaking; his eyes were small and blue, his teeth few, poor and blackish; his hair was thin and white; his complexion sallow. His spirit was distinguished, wise and prudent; his mind was brave and resolute, and never, even at moments of greatest danger, deserted him. He had a most pertinacious memory. With all he was not devoid of scholarship. In government, he was shrewd and prudent, so that no one dared to get the better of him through deceit and guile. He was gracious and kind and he was as attentive to his visitors as he was easy of access. His hospitality was splendidly generous; he was fond of having foreigners at court.... but those of his subjects who were generous only with promises he treated with harsh severity. He was most fortunate in war, although he was more inclined to peace. He cherished justice above all things. He was the most ardent supporter of our faith and daily participated with great piety in religious services. But all these virtues were obscured latterly by avarice. In a monarch it maybe considered the worst vice, since it is harmful to everyone. ”

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source 3 – Sources about Henry VII

“ He kept key functions (of government) in his own hands. When he had to delegate, he kept a firm rein on even the most trusted servants of his court and council. ”

David Starkey, 1985

(After the Battle of Stoke) Henry showed remarkable clemency to the surviving rebels: he pardoned Kildare and the other Irish nobles, and he made the boy, Simnel, a servant in the Royal kitchen

[Wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org)

“ Henry professed always to love and seek peace. For his arms, either in foreign or civil wars, were never unfortunate. He was of a high mind, and loved his own way; as one that revered himself, and would reign indeed. ”

Francis Bacon, 1622

“ His politic wisdom in government was singular; his reason pithy and substantial, his memory fresh and holding, his experience notable, his counsels fortunate and taken with wise deliberation, his speech gracious in diverse languages. ”

Bishop Fisher, speaking at Henry's funeral in 1509