

A Level History

OCR History A H505

(AS H105)



Unit Y136

British Period Study and Enquiry.

1485-1558: The Early Tudors

Booklet 2: Henry VIII: 1509-1529



Achieving Excellence Together

Groby Community College



TARGETS

Aspirational

Target Grade:



Journey Through the Early Tudors 1485-1558



Topic	Booklet section completed	Assessment marks/ grades	Revision materials created	Confidence? ☺☹☹
The government of Henry and threats to his rule				
Henry's claim to the throne.				
Yorkist opposition; Lovell, Stafford and Suffolk, the Pretenders, Simnel and Warbeck.				
Relations with the nobility; rewards and punishments.				
Royal finances and their administration, opposition to taxation in Yorkshire and Cornwall.				
Administration, the personnel, Councils, local government and parliament.				
Henry VII's Foreign Policy				
England's position in Europe in 1485 and Henry VII's aims.				
Relations with Burgundy, France, Scotland and Spain.				
Treaties of Medina del Campo, Redon, Etaples, and Ayton.				
Marriage negotiations; trade agreements, including Magnus Intercuses and Malus Intercuses.				
Henry VIII and Wolsey				
Henry VIII's personality				
Henry VIII's role in government to 1529.				
Aims and policies in foreign affairs to 1529.				
Wolsey's administration of government, finances, law and social reforms; the church and its condition under Wolsey, the divorce and Wolsey's fall.				
The Reign of Henry VIII after 1529				
Religious change and opposition				
Religious legislation in the 1530s and 1540s, the Dissolution of the Monasteries and the Pilgrimage of Grace.				
The rise and fall of Thomas Cromwell.				
The extent of Henry VIII's role in government in the 1540s.				
Faction in 1540s.				
Foreign policy in the 1540s; war with France and Scotland and its impact.				



Henry VIII and Wolsey


Section 1: Henry VIII's personality

Task 1: The Legacy of Henry VII and Henry VIII's Break from the Past

"This day is the end of our slavery; the fount of our liberty; the end of sadness, the beginning of joy..."

Sir Thomas More's poem at the accession of Henry VIII. Sir Thomas More was a Member of Parliament from 1504, who later became a councillor of Henry VIII and Lord High Chancellor. Executed 1535.

a) Does this indicate that Henry VII had left the country in a good state?




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b) What does this this quote indicate? (It is less fancy so it doesn't get a fancy box) It was written by J.J. Scarisbrick.

"Henry VIII ascended the throne which his father had made remarkably secure, he inherited a fortune which probably no English king had ever been bequeathed he came to a kingdom which was the best governed and most obedient in Christendom."




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CHALLENGE: Is that true?



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The decoration of Sir Thomas More's coronation suite of poems presented to Henry VIII on his accession. To read the whole thing (and see it in its original Latin!) scan the QR code or visit this website: http://thomasmorestudies.org/docs/Mores_1509_Coronation_Ode.pdf



"Oh... if you could see how all the world is rejoicing in the possession of so great a prince."

Lord Mountjoy (a noble given 23 recognisances under Henry VII) writing on the accession of Henry VIII

c) Using your knowledge of Henry VII, how useful is Sir Thomas More's poem as evidence of how the people of England felt about the end of Henry VII's reign? Answer this on lined paper.

This is the kind of source question that you could get in the Tudor exam- although it is unlikely that it would be on such a simple source.

Things to remember when you are doing source questions on **utility**.

- **Knowledge** is the **most important** way of assessing the utility of a source. All other considerations are secondary.
- Comment on **what the source does tell you**, and comment on **how that fits in with what you know**. (E.g. this source tells us x, which was probably a typical opinion about that from that kind of person because of y).
- You can comment on where the source comes from (the **provenance**) as long as it is applied to the question.
- Ensure that your knowledge is applied to the question.
- Avoid **stock evaluation**: this is when the kind of comment that you make about a source could apply to any source (e.g. its utility is lessened because it is a diary and therefore it is only his personal opinion which is biased).
- In fact, avoid any mention of the word **bias**. All sources are biased. Get over it.

So, what was the legacy of Henry VII?

David Rogerson, Samantha Ellsmore and David Hudson: The Early Tudors, England 1485-1558

On 21 April 1509, Henry VII died at Richmond. The new king, Henry VIII, was only seventeen years old. He married Catherine of Aragon on 11 June, and the coronation followed on 24 June 1509 at Westminster Abbey.

How had Henry VII left the realm for the young king to take over? Certainly we can assume that Henry VIII was used to a Crown with a lot of surplus money. This money had been used in the past to help fund the magnificence that supported his father's reign, as evidenced by the Henry VII funeral chapel at Westminster Abbey and the Garter Chapel at Windsor.

Unlike his father, Henry VIII did not usurp the throne, but did this necessarily mean that he had a more secure start to his reign? The young king did inherit a financial surplus, albeit a small one. One reason for this was his father's avoidance of war, but another was the extent of bonds and recognisances imposed on the nobility, which were vigorously pursued by Empson and Dudley. To get rid of these men would gain the new king a lot of points in the popularity stakes. The nobility had been controlled, but almost at too high a price. As far as Europe was concerned, other countries had clearly accepted the Tudor dynasty, as illustrated by the marriage of Prince Arthur to Catherine of Aragon.

Using this reading and pages 52-53 of your textbook, explain how Henry was demonstrating a break with the past. Write on lined paper, and ensure that you find evidence to support your conclusions.



Task 2a: Complete the diagram on the next page with evidence from the sources to answer the question "What was Henry VIII like?" Don't forget the pictures. Three are from/ of the time around his coronation- one is the famous Holbein portrait (or a copy of it at least!).

A description by the Venetia diplomat in 1515

“His majesty is the handsomest potentate I ever set eyes on; above the usual height with an extremely fine calf to his leg, his complexion very fair and bright, with auburn hair combed straight and short in the French fashion, and a round face so very beautiful that it would become a pretty woman... He speaks French, English and Latin, and a little Italian, plays well on the lute and the harpsichord, sings songs from book at sight, draws the bow with greater strength than any man in England and jousts marvellously. Believe me, he is in every respect a most accomplished Prince...”



LB Smith, Henry VIII: The Mask of Royalty

“Emotional imbalance may have been intensified by the opportunities for self-indulgence inherent in kingship, but the real responsibility lay less in the office than in the man, for Henry invariably over-reacted to any stimulus. He sealed his senses against bad news and exulted at good... Word of Catherine of Aragon’s death was celebrated with a masque, banquet and ball where Henry, cross-gartered in yellow hose, danced the night away with Anne Boleyn... Unfortunately, the English King rarely looked before he leaped, and never saw the dark consequences for the pleasure of immediate relief”.

J.J. Scarisbrick said *“Henry ascended the throne of England- so it seemed- unseasoned and untrained in the exacting art of kingship”*, but a book he read as student (written for him by his tutor) stated that *“he could never rest easy with his status and should remember many of this ancestors had met a terrible fate”*.

J.J. Scarisbrick: Henry VIII
“He was a formidable, captivating man who wore regality with splendid conviction. But easily and predictably, his great charm could turn into anger and shouting. When (as alleged) he hit Thomas Cromwell round the head and swore at him, or addressed a Lord Chancellor as ‘my pig’, his mood may have been amicable enough but More knew that the master who put his arm lovingly around his neck would have his head if it ‘could win him a castle in France’. He was highly strung and unstable; hypochondriac and possessed of a strong streak of cruelty. Possibly he had an Oedipus complex: and possibly from this derived desire for, yet horror of, incest, which may have shaped some of his sexual life”.

Appearance

Personality



Attitudes to being a King

Skills and attributes

J. Guy: Tudor England
“Henry’s character was fascinating, threatening and sometimes morbid. His egoism, self-righteousness, and capacity to brood sprang from the fusion of an able but second rate mind... As his reign unfolded, Henry VIII added ‘imperial’ concepts of kingship to existing feudal ones... He was eager too, to conquer; to emulate the glorious victories of the Black Prince and Henry V, to quest after the golden fleece that was the French Crown”.



Task 3: The aims, the war and glory of Henry VIII

Using pages 52-55 of your textbook, complete the following table.

Henry VII's aims	Evidence of Henry VIII's success in meeting those aims.	Evidence of Henry VIII's failure in meeting those aims.	Overall judgement. Was Henry VIII successful?
To demonstrate a break with the reign of his father.			
To lay claim to the French throne.			
To display his prowess (strength/skill) as a warrior and gain glory through war.			
To develop England as a well-respected power within Europe.			

Henry VIII and Wolsey

Section 2: The significance, influence and impact of Wolsey

Task 1: Who was Wolsey? His career until 1515

a) Use the text below and page 55 and 56 of your textbook to annotate your image of Wolsey with the required information. Don't forget to include specific examples of when he did these things.

Wolsey's CV (and how he got there)

Wolsey's attributes and skills

Wolsey's relationship with Henry VIII

Wolsey's other relationships

Wolsey was a cardinal (is a senior ecclesiastical leader, an ecclesiastical prince, and usually an ordained bishop of the Roman Catholic Church) and statesman, Henry VIII's Lord Chancellor (closest advisor to the king) and one of the last churchmen to play a dominant role in English political life.


Thomas Wolsey was born in Ipswich, Suffolk, around 1475. His father, who is thought to have been a butcher, provided a good education and he went on to Magdalen

College, Oxford. Wolsey was ordained as a priest- as the Church would provide career opportunities and the possibility of advancement for those of lowly origins to move up the strict social hierarchy. By 1498, Wolsey had been chaplain to Thomas Grey, Marquess of Dorset and Sir Richard Nanfan, the deputy governor of Calais. He became chaplain to the archbishop of Canterbury and later chaplain to Henry VII, who employed him on diplomatic missions. When Henry VIII became king in 1509, Wolsey's rapid rise began. On Henry VIII's accession, he was appointed the new king's almoner (a priest in charge of distributing assistance (alms) to the poor on behalf of the king. Wolsey made a name for himself as an efficient administrator, both for the Crown and the church.

In 1512-13, Wolsey volunteered to organise the expeditionary force to France under Henry's leadership in the summer of 1513. He knew that the preparation, organisation, arming, feeding, supplying, transportation and paying of an army was a huge task and fraught with problems- especially as he was dealing with a king who expected nothing less than success. More senior and experienced officials were concerned about taking this task on, fearing the consequences of failure. Wolsey would ignore others in authority to get things done, arguing that the king's wishes must take precedence over all other considerations. When people complained about this, the king was pleased with Wolsey's tactics!

In 1514, he rewarded Wolsey by appointing him to Bishop of Tournai in France (an area he had helped to capture), Bishop of Lincoln and Archbishop of York (second only to the Archbishop of Canterbury in terms of importance to the Church in England). Because Wolsey knew that he was never going to get Archbishop Warham away from the archbishopric of Canterbury, he put pressure on Pop Leo X to appoint him to a be a cardinal, so that Wolsey would be the most senior churchman in England (as cardinals were second only to the Pope in terms of importance to the Catholic church- it actually made Wolsey a Prince of the Church). The Pope agreed and Wolsey became a cardinal in 1515. Soon afterwards the king appointed him Lord Chancellor.

b) Why do you think Wolsey was so successful during this period?



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Task 2: Wolsey's later career

a) Read the text below and then annotate the statue of Cardinal Wolsey (that can be found in Abbey Park) with the information required.

From 1515 to 1529, Wolsey's rule was undisputed. Henry VIII delegated more and more state business to him, including near-complete control of England's foreign policy. Wolsey's finest hour was arranging the Field of the Cloth of Gold, the Tudor equivalent of a summit meeting, which he devised for Henry to meet the Francis I, King of France.

Wolsey, in 1518, was also appointed to the highest category of papal representative- a *legatus a letere* or papal legate. This gave Wolsey full papal powers (making him able to make decisions with the same powers as the Pope- it gave him specific authority to represent and act on behalf of the Pope in England). This was normally a temporary position for a specific period or task- to end when that particular task was finished, but Wolsey (through skilled diplomacy and royal influence) was able to get an extension, followed by confirmation of these powers for life in 1524. This was possible because of the support from Henry VIII, who saw the benefit of having one of the most powerful churchmen in the continental Catholic Church within his own court.

During this time, Wolsey used his great wealth to indulge his passion for building - at his London home, York Place in Whitehall, and at Hampton Court, 20 miles south west of London (both of which were extended or built with the idea of being fit for a king and in that, Wolsey was successful- both were taken over by Henry VIII after Wolsey's death). He also founded Cardinal College at Oxford (later King's College, and now Christ Church), but his haughtiness and grand style of living made him increasingly unpopular. Other things made him unpopular: Wolsey's position in power relied solely on maintaining good relations with Henry and less so with anyone else. He grew increasingly suspicious of the "minions"—young, influential members of the Privy chamber—particularly after infiltrating one of his own men into the group. He attempted many times to disperse them from court, giving them jobs that took them to the Continent and far from the King. He failed and the minions began to undermine him once again. Consequently, Wolsey devised a grand plan of administrative reforms, incorporating the notorious Eltham Ordinances of 1526. This reduced the members of the Privy Council from twelve to six, removing Henry's friends such as Sir William Compton and Nicholas Carew.



One of Wolsey's greatest impediments was his lack of popularity amongst the nobles at court and in Parliament. Their dislikes and mistrusts partly stemmed from Wolsey's excessive demands for money in the form of the Subsidy or through Benevolences. They also resented the Act of Resumption of 1486, by which Henry VII had resumed possession of all lands granted by the crown since 1455. These lands had passed onto his heir, Henry VIII. Many nobles resented the rise to power of a low-born man, whilst others simply disliked that he monopolized the court and concealed information from the Privy Council.

When mass riots broke out in East Anglia, which should have been under the control of the Dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk, Henry was quick to denounce the Amicable Grant, and began to lose faith in his chief minister.

The same can be said for Wolsey's legal reforms. By making justice accessible to all and encouraging more people to bring their cases to court, the system was

ultimately abused. The courts became overloaded with incoherent, tenuous cases, which would have been far too expensive to have rambled on in the Common Law courts. Wolsey eventually ordered all minor cases out of the Star Chamber in 1528. The result of this venture was further resentment from the nobility and the gentry.

Henry's desire to divorce Catherine of Aragon proved to be the end of Wolsey's career. Henry desperately wanted a son and argued that his marriage to Catherine of Aragon, with whom he had a daughter, was not lawful. He asked Wolsey to use his influence in Rome to get a papal annulment of Henry's marriage so that he could remarry. Wolsey was unable to accomplish this, partly because Catherine's nephew, the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, dominated the Pope at the time. Wolsey was widely disliked, particularly among those around Anne Boleyn, Henry VIII's prospective new bride who began whispering and suggesting that Wolsey didn't actually want to arrange the divorce. Wolsey's failure to arrange an annulment for Henry was quickly followed by his downfall. Wolsey was arrested near York in November 1530 and accused of treason. He died on 29 November of the same year at Leicester on his journey south to face trial. He was actually buried in Leicester Abbey (where Abbey Park is now) although his tomb has not been found...

Additions to Wolsey's CV (and how he got there)

Any further attributes and skills



Wolsey's changing relationships with Henry VIII

Changing relationships with others.

- c) Answer the following questions on lined paper. Full explanations with evidence are required!
- i. What is the main reason that Wolsey fell out of favour?
 - ii. What other factors may have caused him to fall out of favour?
 - iii. How important do you think Wolsey was to Henry VIII overall?

Henry VIII and Wolsey

Section 3: Henry VIII's role in government up to 1529

Task 1: The structure of Henry VIII's government

a) Read the following

The basic structure of the government of Henry VIII is below:



The Court

All persons who were in attendance on the King on any given day. The Court moved from place to place with the King. The size of the court was a sign of wealth and at times, numbered over 1000 people.



Key People

Wolsey
Cromwell
Duke of Norfolk

The Privy Council

People appointed by the King to give advice on affairs of state.



Key People

Wolsey
Cromwell

The Privy Chamber

Part of the Household. It had its own staff outside the jurisdiction of the Lord Chamberlain who looked after the rest of the household. The head of the Privy Chamber was the Groom of the Stool (responsible for the Tudor toilet). There were also Gentlemen of the Privy Chamber; who attended to the King's intimate requirements.




Key People

William Compton
Henry Norris.

This diagram suggests that the Court, the Council and the Chamber were of equal status and separate entities, but you can tell by looking at the key people in each that people could be in more than one of these groups. The Gentlemen of the Privy Chamber would always be members of the court, for they were constantly at Henry's beck and call. They also moved from place to place with Henry, who had over 30 houses of his own (mostly within 18 miles of London) and travelled frequently, in 1526 spending 113 nights outside royal palaces. The Privy Council, which had about twenty members, handled the routine matters of state. Although Henry himself drew up its agendas, he never attended its meetings. The Lord Chancellor, or Sir William Paget, the Comptroller of the King's Household would seek the King's approval on the various matters under discussion.

b) Answer this question

Which of these groups do you think would have the greatest degree of influence over Henry?




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c) Now, answer this question, looking at the picture of the King dining in the Privy Chamber by Hans Holbein.

Why would having access to this chamber increase your chances of influencing the King? (can you spot any instances of this happening?)



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Compare the diagram of Henry VIII's government to that of Henry VII (in your Henry VII booklet)? Do you think it shows many differences? What do you think they reveal about Henry VIII's regime? (Note: just because a group is absent, it doesn't mean that it doesn't exist any more!)



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d) Do you think that Henry VIII would be in control of his government? Why? Why not?



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Task 2: Specific issues in government up to 1929

Read the following information and answer the questions as they arise.

Note: It might help to highlight Henry VIII and Henry VII as different colours within the text- as they have been inconsiderate enough to have the same name!


1509-14: The Early Years

Because Henry was so young (17) when he became king in the summer of 1509, Henry VII had put in place arrangements to govern the country while Henry was finding his feet. Henry VII had chosen a Council for his son, made up mostly of his own old councillors: Sir Thomas Lovell; Archbishop of Canterbury Warham; Bishop John Fisher; Thomas Howard, Earl of Surrey, the Lord Treasurer; Sir John Heron, Treasurer of the Chamber; and Bishop Richard Fox, the Lord Privy Seal (keeper of the King’s private seal used to show approval on documents or letters). Richard Fox was the one who paved the way for Wolsey’s acceptance into the Council in 1510, as he had made use of Wolsey’s administrative skills. This demonstrated continuity with Henry VII’s reign, much as he had intended.

The Council’s early policies did not show that same continuity- even in the early stages of the Henry VIII’s reign. The arrests of Empson and Dudley two days after Henry VII’s dead, and their execution sixteen months later showed Henry VIII was trying to break with his father’s reign and one way he was doing this was by courting popularity. However, the execution of Edmund de la Pole (nephew of Edward IV) in 1513 sent out a clear message of what would happen to perceived threats to the throne. Some bonds of Henry VII were cancelled as a gesture of goodwill, but the majority that would not expire until the 1520s, were maintained.

The king asserted his authority particularly when it came to war. Henry VII’s old council had much the same view as Henry VII- that war was to be avoided for financial and security reasons. Henry VIII wasn’t put off by this and (supported by other nobles) continued to pursue war with France.

a) Does Henry VIII’s government show more change than continuity? Explain your answer.



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Within Henry’s government, there were also many factions- groups of people who tried to advance shared interests, either positive or negative. Positive interests might include gaining or keeping privileges, grants or jobs for themselves or their associates; negative interests included denying such things to their rivals. However, they weren’t set groups, they often changed and merged at different times. This could have an impact on who had any degree of influence or enjoyed the patronage (someone who received favour or positions within the king’s court of household) of the king. An example of this is the case of Sir Ralph Egerton of Ridley.

having the king's authority and commandement doubted not to see all things sufficiently furnished and perfected, the which would first make the king privy of all such matters (as should pass through their hands) before he would proceed to the finishing and determination of the same, whose mind and pleasure he would fulfil and follow to the uttermost wherewith the king was wonderfully pleased".

The Amicable Grant of 1525 is an interesting case study of Henry VIII's role in government. Henry wished to invade France but there was no money to pay for such an invasion. Wolsey set about raising funds for the war by attempting to put through a tax, without the approval of Parliament. Both the clergy and laity were expected to pay this so-called Amicable Grant, but money that had been 'loaned' in 1522-3 had still not been repaid, and a subsidy of 1523 was still being collected. Not surprisingly, there was widespread dissent and the commissioners who were trying to collect the money met resistance. Full scale revolt erupted in Suffolk and spread to the borders of Essex and Cambridgeshire. The Dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk, having mustered the East Anglian gentry, negotiated the surrender of 10,000 rebels at Lavenham.

The question of Henry's role is difficult to ascertain. It is possible that Henry had decided on the broad outline of the policy, which Wolsey worked out the fine details of. Scarisbrick claimed that when Henry VIII realised what was going on, he claimed that he 'never knew of the demand' and then converted it into a benevolence, but that seems unlikely- perhaps he didn't know of the precise rate being demanded but it is unlikely that such an attempted collection of money could have completely escaped Henry's knowledge. Wolsey said that the plan was devised by the Council without Henry knowing the full details, but then, if Wolsey took the blame and Henry forgave him... everyone would be in the clear.

c) What evidence can you find that Wolsey was attempting to please Henry VIII with these policies?




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d) What evidence can you find that Wolsey was serving his own interests with these policies?




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e) How useful is George Cavendish's opinion of Wolsey's role within government to an historian studying Henry's role in government?



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Can you compare the usefulness of the George Cavendish source to the usefulness of this source below from John Skelton, to an historian studying the role of Henry in government. You may need to do this on lined paper.
 *It was written before standardised English spelling existed- so you may need to puzzle some bits out. It is better to try to sound out the word sometimes.

John Skelton, "Why come ye nat to courte?" 1922 (it is about Cardinal Wolsey)
 He is set so hye
 In his ierarchy
 Of frantycke frenesy
 That in the Chambre of Sterres
 All maters there he marres
 Clappyng his rod on the borde.
 No man dare speke a worde,
 For he hat all the sayenge
 Without any renayenge...
 Set up a wretche on hye,
 In a trone triumphantlye,
 Make him a great astate,
 And he wyll play checke mate
 With ryall majeste
 Count himself as good as he.

f) What does the following source by J. Guy indicate to you about the nature of the relationship between Henry and Wolsey? Do you think it is an accurate depiction?

"It is true that Wolsey enjoyed exceptional favour and for a while his position was different. Between 1515-1525 it can be argued that Henry treated him more as a partner than a servant. Wolsey enjoyed a uniquely privileged access to the king. They walked arm-in-arm together and were intimate confidantes to the exclusion of others".



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Scan the QR codes (or visit the Henry VIII section of the website) below for somfor some more reading- you have a choice between Henry VIII and his royal court, or Henry VIII and his ministers.



Task 2: Early Campaigns in France

Henry VIII's initial campaigns were not the most successful, although it is possible to view them in a couple of different lights. Complete this diagram of Henry VIII as how you might feel if you were Henry.

B How successful was Henry in the First French War, 1512–14?

- 1509 Henry VIII married Catherine of Aragon
- 1510 Anglo-French truce renewed
- 1511 Anglo-Spanish agreement to attack France
Holy League against France
- 1512 April: England declared war on France
June: Disastrous English campaign in the south west of France
- 1513 Army led by Henry departed for northern France
Siege and surrender of Therouanne and Tournai
August: Battle of the Spurs
September: Defeat of Scots at Flodden and death of James IV
- 1514 August: Anglo-French peace treaty

Although clothed in the dignifying language of 'honour', Henry's first campaign against the French was more reminiscent of a football hooligans' outing. Henry's desire for war was driven by xenophobia, a young man's need to 'prove' himself in fighting and the craving for conquest, victories and approval from his peers.

In his search for an active role in Europe against the French, Henry was drawn into the Holy League (Pope, Venetians, Swiss and Ferdinand of Aragon) in November 1511. Under the cover of the alliance, Henry agreed to attack south-west France with Ferdinand, with the intention of capturing Guienne (to which the English maintained a claim). The expedition in June 1512 was a catalogue of disasters and revealed Henry's naïveté in international diplomacy. Ferdinand had no intention of invading France and used the English troops in Guienne as a screen, behind which he seized Navarre, before withdrawing and making peace with the French. The English troops, meanwhile, returned home diseased and mutinous.

Allied to Ferdinand (ruler of Spain), Maximilian (ruler of the Holy Roman Emperor and the Netherlands) and the Pope, Henry personally led an army of 25,000 into northern France in 1513. His armies succeeded in seizing the towns of Therouanne and Tournai after sieges. His cavalry also won the much-hyped battle of the Spurs, when they chased after a detachment of French horse (who dug in their spurs to speed their escape) and captured some notable prisoners. Henry believed he had been draped in glory by the campaign, but a more sober assessment would suggest that he was again learning the cost of dealing with experienced international operators. The two captured towns were on the Burgundian/French border and it was Maximilian, not Henry, who gained strategically from their capture.

Maximilian and Ferdinand made peace with Louis XII of France, so Henry had to follow suit in August 1514. Under the agreement, Henry kept Therouanne and Tournai, was recognised as having a claim to the French throne and received pension arrears. His sister Mary married the toothless and lecherous Louis XII. One significant aspect of the First French War was the emergence of the brilliant new official, Thomas Wolsey, who had organised the campaign so effectively and had brokered the successful peace agreement in 1514. Although he may not have recognised it at the time, Henry had been convincingly shown that England was a third fiddle in Europe in terms of strategy.



Check your work against other people in the class. Have they got something you've missed? Add it in purple pen.

*Please note this is a picture of Jonathan Rhys Meyers playing Henry VIII- it is not a photograph of young Henry VIII for obvious reasons.



Form an overall judgement: so far, how successful as Henry VIII's foreign policy been? Make sure that you make specific reference to Henry VIII's aims. Answer this question on lined paper.

The Field of Cloth of Gold: A Painting, probably painted for Henry VIII, unknown artist.



Scan the QR codes or look on the website for some reading and interpretation of this painting.



Task 5: 'The King's Great Matter'

Read page 60 of your textbook: How did foreign policy affect Henry's attempts to get his marriage to Catherine of Aragon annulled?



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Task 6: How successful was Henry VIII's foreign policy up until 1529?

Decide on three of Henry VIII's aims that you will assess how successfully he met them.

Complete the table with evidence from your notes of Henry's success/ failure.

Aim	Success	Failure
1		
2		
3		

Task 6: Who was responsible for Henry VIII's foreign policy

Use the sources below and your notes and page 60 of the textbook, and annotate this image of Henry and Wolsey with any foreign policy they had direct responsibility for. Do you think that Wolsey was really running things?

Wolsey's own account

"For I assure you, I have often kneeled before him in his privy chamber on my knees the space of an hour or two to persuade him from his will and appetite; but I never could bring to pass to dissuade him therefrom."

Vergil,
contemporary
historian of
the Tudors
*"Wolsey
carried on all
business at
his own will,
since no one
was of more
value to the
King"*

Giustani, Venetian ambassador to England

"This Cardinal is the person who rules both the King and the entire kingdom."



Another section of John Skelton's poem:

*Why come ye not to court
To which court?
To the King's court,
Or to Hampton Court? [Wolsey's
palace].
Nay, to the King's court!
The King's court should have the
excellence
But Hampton Court hath the pre-
eminence.*

Crowson: Tudor Foreign Policy
*Henry was like the creator and
owner of a private business who
has decided to retire to the
Bahamas and leave his affairs
to a salaried manager.
Nevertheless, his mind is never
wholly detached from his
creation; three times a week he
is on the trans-Atlantic
telephone to be sure that his
manager is pressing forward
with the right policies. Three
times a year, whenever
particularly urgent or brilliant
opportunities seem to offer
themselves he flies into London
unannounced to take control.*

Scarbrick: Henry VIII, 1997

For much of his career as Chancellor, it was Wolsey who alone guided English affairs. His quick strong hands grasped everything because Henry seemed unable or unwilling to make the smallest decision himself... Yet the King, who so often seemed to want nothing more than to dance and to hunt, and to have only the feeblest grip on royal duties, was also the man who, time and again, could show a detailed grasp of foreign affairs... outdo foreign ambassadors; who could pounce on something Wolsey had missed, cut a proposal to ribbons with a few swift strokes... That he was the true source of the really important events of his reign- the wars, the divorce, the breach with Rome- is scarcely disputable.

Henry VIII and Wolsey

Section 5: Wolsey and Domestic Policy



Wolsey's domestic policy, like many of his achievements, has caused much debate amongst historians. Leading humanists (scholars who question the belief systems of the Church and who embrace free thinking and education) throughout western Europe were arguing the case for radical changes in both the aims and the methods of government. However, thinking back to the work we did at the very beginning on Henry VII, the role of government at this time was really to defend the realm from attack and to maintain law and order.

Make notes on the sections below on what Wolsey does in each area.

Highlight, or colour code your notes to show the following:

- Wolsey abusing his power and focusing more on his own position.
- Wolsey failing to reform those areas of government most in need of change, namely, the judicial system and the Crown's financial administration.
- Wolsey changing things for the better.
- Wolsey being a tyrant.

Use page 61-65 of your textbook and page 68-71 of *Access to History*, The Early Tudors reading.

Wolsey's Legal Reforms (the judicial system).

Administration

Relationships with the nobility.

Financial Reforms

Social Reforms

Wolsey and the judicial system

As Lord Chancellor, Wolsey was head of the judiciary. He was directly responsible both for the legal work of the King's Council and for the chief law courts, such as **Star Chamber**, **Chancery** and **Requests**. Wolsey seems genuinely to have desired to see justice better served in the kingdom by ensuring:

- That the courts were accessible to the poor. The common people stood little chance of challenging the rich and powerful in the local law courts, mainly because of the high legal fees which deterred many from pursuing cases. Thus, Wolsey often reviewed cases and if he found the complainant had been unfairly treated he transferred the case into one of his own courts, either Star Chamber or Requests, where a fresh hearing would take place. However, it is important to remember that Wolsey was determined to ensure that justice would be done. Whether rich or poor, the guilty would be punished.
- That the rich and powerful did not gain any legal advantage in the courts. The landowning class, the elites – the gentry and nobility – had long dominated proceedings in local courts either as judges or as the family and friends of those who presided over cases. With local justice firmly in the hands of the rich and powerful, Wolsey sought to ensure that the chief law courts would be fair and balanced to rich and poor alike. Court records reveal that Wolsey was not afraid to prosecute members of the nobility, especially for breaches of the laws against maintenance and affrays.

However, as historian Keith Randell (writing in 1993) has pointed out, Wolsey was 'unscrupulous in using the system to further his own interests, especially by overturning legal decisions that adversely affected him and by using the law to harry those against whom he had a grudge'.

Failure to reform the judicial system

According to S.T. Bindoff (writing in 1969), 'Wolsey's administration was a period of much promise [but] little performance.' The fact that Wolsey started a number of schemes to reform the law but failed to see them through suggests that he intended to do more than he achieved. It is important to stress that Wolsey attempted no institutional changes and he was quick to abandon his support of the commons whenever matters affected him personally or threatened his power.

The author and historian John Stow, best known for his 1598 *Survey of London*, later commented that 'It was a strange matter to see, a man not trained up in the laws, to sit in the seat of judgement, to pronounce the law.' Wolsey's lack of training in either canon (Church) or civil law is sometimes cited as a reason to explain why he failed to reform the judicial system.

Wolsey and the financial system

It has been suggested that Wolsey's attempts to reform the king's Privy Chamber show that he tried to make permanent improvements in the system of financial administration he inherited. However, to suggest that Wolsey's interest in finance was confined to the king's household is unfair. In the opinion of John Guy, 'in the mainstream of finance Wolsey made a permanent contribution to government'. Guy believes that Wolsey innovated a more efficient system: 'the Tudor subsidy'.

The subsidy required Parliament to calculate its tax on property and income in a more accurate and realistic assessment of the wealth of individual taxpayers. In the preamble to the Subsidy Act of 1512 Wolsey justified the legislation by highlighting the necessity of

devising a more efficient tax and one that could be levied 'as well in shorter time as in more easy, universal and impartial manner than the common tax of fifteenths and tenths'. The subsidy was flexible enough to accommodate changes. For example, in the subsidy of 1513 a tax was levied on the rank of individual noblemen together with a tax on the property of commoners. In 1514 the subsidy taxed wages as well as landed property without distinguishing between nobility and commoners.

Wolsey followed up the subsidy with the **Eltham Ordinances** of 1526 which attempted, in part, to reduce the cost of running the royal household. By making the household's financial administration more efficient and flexible, Wolsey hoped that he might need to rely less on Parliament to raise funds to finance government. Historians have accused Wolsey of wasting an opportunity to overhaul the Tudor financial system but this is unfair given the opposition to his plans from powerful vested interests and the sheer scale of the reforms that would be needed. The Tudor financial system was vast and complex and would require more than the decade and a half of Wolsey's service to change it.

The 'general proscription' and Parliament

In 1522 Wolsey organised a national survey, the so-called 'general proscription', to assess the population's taxable wealth. Armed with the information provided, he was able to levy some £200,000 by two forced loans in 1522–3. But still more was needed, and it became apparent that adequate finance required a Parliament. Wolsey made no secret of his dislike for Parliament, which may explain why, during his fifteen years in office, the institution was only summoned by the king twice, in 1515 and 1523. To Wolsey, Parliament seemed to be designed to stir up trouble for the government, and its members appeared never to understand that their prime function was to carry out the king's wishes.

Reluctantly, Wolsey allowed a Parliament to be summoned in 1523 because it was obvious to him that there was no other way of raising the large sum of money that the king needed to implement his

interventionist policy in Europe. If he could have found some way of avoiding the necessity he would have done so, but his subsequent experience with the Amicable Grant confirmed that a vote from Parliament was the only practical way of securing the additional funds required to pay for a large army.

Thus, in April 1523, Wolsey sought a much larger grant from the Commons than had ever been demanded before – a subsidy to be levied at the rate of 4s. in the pound on property (20p in modern money) – to bring in as much as £800,000. In reality the Amicable Grant raised around £300,000, so Wolsey sought to make up the shortfall by taxing the Church, which brought in nearly £250,000. It is to Wolsey's credit that for the first time since 1334 the Crown was attempting to raise more realistic taxation.

Wolsey and the nobility

Wolsey knew that control of the nobility was essential for efficient and effective government. The Crown depended on the authority they possessed and Wolsey made it his duty to ensure that noble power, particularly in the localities, was used in the service of the king. The nobility had been strictly controlled by Henry VII, but this had been relaxed following his death. Wolsey's first use of his authority as chancellor was therefore to announce a stricter monitoring of the nobles' behaviour.

In 1516 Wolsey attended a meeting of Star Chamber in which he took the opportunity to announce what he termed the new law of Star Chamber. This stated that those responsible for administering justice and governing the localities, be they nobleman or gentleman, should not see themselves as being above the law. And as if to emphasise the point, on that same day the Earl of Northumberland was summoned into court for contempt of the council's jurisdiction and was subsequently committed to prison. Wolsey was making plain his intention to develop a system of centralised royal authority.

Wolsey the tyrant?

This led some to question Wolsey's motives, while others accused him of being a tyrant protected only by the trust and influence of the king. There is some truth in these accusations; for example, when Thomas Lucas, formerly Henry VII's solicitor-general, slandered the chancellor he was sent to the Tower without trial. Indeed, there is evidence to show that Wolsey also attempted to interfere in the marriage arrangements of the aristocracy, something they bitterly resented. Amid simmering noble discontent, shadowy rumours of a plot against Wolsey circulated.

The most spectacular clash between Wolsey and a nobleman was that involving the Duke of Buckingham. According to Sybil M. Jack (writing in 1996), Buckingham was no friend to Wolsey: 'The duke's royal blood, touchy personality, and penchant for wild talk were all likely to bring him under suspicion, even before it emerged that he had been speculating about what might happen should the king die.'

The duke was warned to conduct himself more discreetly, but he failed to do so. Buckingham was summoned to London in April 1521, charged and convicted of treason, and executed the following month. Foreign ambassadors reported that Buckingham lost his head because he 'murmured against the chancellor's doings'.

On the other hand, there is no clear evidence that Wolsey, any more than the king, was hostile to the nobility. In fact, the Earl of Worcester considered the chancellor to be a good friend. In general terms Wolsey's policy towards the powerful can be described as one of offering carrots as well as sticks. By holding out the prospect of desirable appointments he hoped to encourage them to become his clients. In the final analysis, the fact remains that as long as Wolsey had the king's backing most nobles worked well enough with him, and some of them accepted his authority.

Henry VIII and Wolsey

Section 6: Wolsey and the King's 'Great Matter'

There are a number of important questions about Wolsey's fall; the need for reforming the Church; the desire the King had to divorce Catherine of Aragon; and the role they all had within the Reformation (when Henry broke with the Catholic Church in Rome and created his own Church of England). There is debate about whether the Reformation happened because the Church genuinely needed reform, or whether it was about Henry's desire for a divorce).

We will, therefore, return to many of these ideas when we look at the reform of the Church in more detail. For now, the questions we will focus on are:

1. What was the condition of the Church, and Wolsey's part in it, before 1529?
2. Why did Henry VIII want a divorce from Catherine of Aragon?
3. Why did attempts to obtain a divorce fail?
4. Was Wolsey's failure to obtain a divorce the main reason for his fall?

The Church

The pre-Reformation Church appeared to be powerful, stable and popular. The Church was a huge organisation that had a presence in virtually every village, town and city throughout the kingdom. It ministered to the needs of its parishioners on a daily basis and provided essential services such as burials, marriages and christenings. Its parish priests offered advice, guidance and community leadership while its monks provided charity, education and employment. Unlike in Germany, where the Reformation began under Martin Luther and where the Church appeared weak, corrupt and neglectful of its parishioners, the English Church was generally well regarded. The English Church was not free of corruption and abuses such as **pluralism**, **nepotism**, **non-residence** and simony, but these were not as widespread, and the Church was not as unpopular, as to produce a ruthless reformer like Luther in Germany. Apart from the Lollards, a radical dissenting sect dating from the late fourteenth century, hard-core anticlericalism had little support in England. Most parishioners readily acknowledged their obligations to their Church and the majority seemed genuinely happy with the quality of their religious experience. However, it is important to note that the religious experience offered through the Church was not necessarily of a universally high quality and that the average parishioner did not think deeply about his or her religion.

This suggests that much of their belief and practice was of necessity imitative and unthinking; in short, habit rather than conviction.

Task 1: Wolsey and the Condition of the Church

Use page 65 of your textbook and the two sections from *Access to History* on this page to create a diagram of the condition of the Church on the next page of your booklet. You will also create a diagram of Wolsey and his relationship with the Church.

The relationship between the English Church and the Church in Rome

The relationship between the English Church and the Church in Rome was stable and generally harmonious. Indeed, the pre-Reformation Church enjoyed a fair degree of independence from Rome. Its senior leaders, archbishops and bishops, were chosen not by the Pope but by the monarch, often as a reward for loyal service. The Pope had the power to object to and block senior appointments in the Church, but this was rare. The good diplomatic relations established by Henry VII between the English Crown and the papal tiara served both parties well. Thus, the papacy could expect to receive regular payment of its clerical taxes and to receive the appeals of English litigants to its courts in Rome. The faithful took a great interest in events in Rome and when news of a papal election reached London it was celebrated by a procession to St Paul's, where a service of thanksgiving would take place.

Only gradually did the influence of Continental Humanism make its presence felt in England. The works of the Dutch humanist Erasmus (see page 63), the greatest scholar of his day, and Luther, began to impact on the thinking of the literate. The spread of literacy and the impact of the printing press provided greater access to religious literature, which encouraged debate and growth in dissension. The paradox is that the Church encouraged education, which promoted

free thinking and debate, but it steadfastly refused to accept criticism.

The Church was certainly ripe for reform but not of the kind initiated by Henry VIII. English kingship was, in part, a religious office. Through his anointment at his coronation Henry VIII received God's blessing. As king, Henry was expected to set an example of piety and to protect the Christian faith and Church. Unlike his father Henry VII, Henry was an amateur theologian who could not resist meddling in the affairs of the Church, which stemmed from his belief in the divine right of kings. Until the divorce the relationship between the Crown and the Church had been cordial and respectful but, thereafter, it deteriorated, becoming tense and fractious.

a) A diagram of the condition of the Church.

Your Church below is in good condition. Annotate the image of the Church with a review of the Church in the time of Henry VIII- both good and bad points. You can get more information from page 70-71 if you have time.

Beneath the Church is a picture of the Vatican. How is the relationship between the Pope in Rome and England?

b) Annotate your image of Wolsey with Wolsey's role in the Church (page 65-66).



Adapt the image of the Church so that it reflects its state: e.g. if it is corrupt, show a few broken windows...



Task 2: Why did Henry VIII want a divorce from Catherine of Aragon?

a) There were three possible reasons for Henry to want a divorce from Catherine of Aragon. Highlight the following different colours to show which reason each piece of evidence supports.

REASON ONE: Henry believed that his marriage was against God’s will.

REASON TWO: Henry needed a legitimate male heir to secure the succession and Tudor dynasty.

REASON THREE: Henry had fallen in love with Anne Boleyn.

<p>Henry VIII was very religious and therefore may have grown to consider his marriage to Catherine as illegitimate. He had got papal dispensation to marry her, but if her marriage to his brother was consummated, then the Pope couldn’t issue that dispensation.</p>	<p>If Henry’s marriage to Catherine was not legitimate, then Mary was illegitimate and this would have made her claim to the throne easier to contest. Henry was also concerned that (as she was female) people may not regard her as eligible to take the throne.</p>	<p>Henry had fallen in love with Anne Boleyn. He wrote her love letters and Anne, for her part, refused to give in to his advances without marriage being certain.</p>
<p>There were descendents of Edward IV still alive and could claim the throne in the event of a weak claimant. This would undo all Tudor achievements which worried Henry. It seemed possible that he might be able to make his illegitimate son, Henry Fitzroy, his successor.</p>	<p>Henry VIII’s Bible was heavily annotated and there was evidence that he thought carefully about theology. Therefore he may have genuinely been concerned his marriage to Catherine was a sin.</p>	<p>The lack of son from the marriage with Catherine was seen by Henry to be a punishment for marrying his brother’s wife- for which Henry used the Hebrew translation of Leviticus, stating that a man who takes his brother’s wife shall be without sons.</p>
<p><i>“I send you this letter, beseeching you to apprise me of your welfare, which I pray to God may continue as long as I desire mine own. And to cause you yet oftener to remember me, I send you, by the bearer of this, a buck killed late last night by my own hand, hoping that when you eat of it you may think of the hunter”</i> Letter from Henry VIII to Anne Boleyn.</p>	<p>Henry did pick and choose which sections of scripture he paid attention to. Under the Latin translation of Leviticus, it stated that a man who takes his brother’s wife shall be without children. That didn’t work as Henry and Catherine had a daughter (Mary). He had to use the Latin translation.</p>	<p>It was unlikely that Catherine would produce any more children. Catherine was over 40, her last pregnancy had been in 1518 and Henry had stopped sleeping with her in 1524.</p>
<p>In 1528, when Henry visited France to negotiate Mary’s possible marriage to the French heir, questions were raised over the legitimacy of Mary.</p>	<p>The evidence of Cardinal Campeggio, sent to England to hear the divorce case. <i>“[Henry’s love] was something amazing and in fact he sees nothing and thinks nthing but Anne. He cannot stay away from her an hour; it is really quite pitiable”.</i></p>	<p>Henry believed strongly that <i>“God had spoken directly to his condition: Henry had no option as a devout Christian but to obey, to construct a legal marriage and a son would be the reward”.</i></p>

b) On lined paper, answer this question, comparing all three reasons and including evidence: “What was the most significant reason for Henry VIII wanting to get a divorce from Catherine of Aragon?”

Task 3: Why did attempts to get a divorce fail?

Read the following (and page 68 of your textbook) and answer the following questions.

The annulment

The annulment or, as contemporaries came to call it, the king's 'great matter', has helped influence and shape attitudes to and concepts of the Reformation. It is widely believed that the Reformation of the Church in England took place mainly because Henry VIII wished to obtain an annulment of his marriage to his Spanish wife, Catherine of Aragon, so that he could marry his English mistress, Anne Boleyn. The reason why this became such an issue is that only the Pope had the power to dissolve marriages and he appeared unwilling to do what Henry had requested. Given that the Catholic Church never granted divorce, only annulment, the Pope's reluctance is understandable. It was Wolsey's failure to get an annulment that left divorce (and a consequent break with Rome) the only option for Henry.

Despite years of debate, legal challenges and, ultimately, threats, it became clear to Henry that the only way in which he could obtain an annulment was to take over the Pope's powers within his own kingdom and arrange the separation for himself. This led to the Reformation, which was an unintended side effect of political necessity and personal desire.

Catherine's failure to produce a son and heir weighed heavily on

Henry's mind. He firmly believed that a female could never rule England and that, if Mary succeeded him as queen, the kingdom would be plunged into dynastic civil war such as had happened during the Wars of the Roses. Believing that his marriage was cursed, Henry turned to Anne Boleyn, who promised him an heir. Henry recognised that a son born to Anne out of wedlock would be likely to have a contested claim to succeed him. Annulment became an urgent necessity. The man given the task of securing this was the king's chief minister, Wolsey.

Wolsey and the king's 'great matter'

Henry's confidence in a swift and painless resolution to his 'great matter' suffered a serious setback when negotiations in Rome for the annulment became mired in legal arguments. What had been expected to be a formality, lasting no more than a few weeks, dragged on for months without any prospect of being resolved in the short or medium term. It became clear that the Pope, Clement VII (1523–34), was deliberately stalling, which caused a frustrated Henry to blame Wolsey for the delay. In the opinion of historian J.J. Scarisbrick (*Henry VIII*, 1997), Henry believed 'that it was not only his right to throw away his wife, but it was also his duty – to himself, to Catherine, to his people and to God'. Encouraged by Anne Boleyn and her allies at court, Henry demanded that Wolsey pursue a more aggressive policy in dealing with the Pope. In these pressured circumstances Wolsey adopted a dual strategy to persuade the Pope to grant the annulment:

- The primary strategy: Wolsey asserted that the original dispensation, issued by Pope Julius II and accepted by both England and Spain, was insufficient in law. Henry's legal advisers claimed that no pope had the right to set aside divine law and nor could he simply ignore the biblical text of Leviticus.
- The secondary strategy: this was more straightforward and its success hinged on Wolsey's powers of persuasion. His intention was to persuade the Pope to transfer the case to England and delegate responsibility for the case to Wolsey.

As papal legate, Wolsey certainly had the status and power to preside over the case. Aware of the wider diplomatic situation, Wolsey sought to ease the pressure being brought to bear on the Pope by Charles V, by removing Clement from any personal involvement in the decision-making process.

After some delay in reaching his decision, Pope Clement appeared to favour this solution but he insisted that the case must be tried by two papal legates and he reserved the right to either accept or reject the judgement reached by the legates.

Campeggio and the Legatine Court at Blackfriars, London

It took seven months for the Legatine Court to finally meet at Blackfriars in May 1529. The delay was caused, in large part, by Campeggio's insistence that the case be tried according to the detailed procedures set out in canon law. As prescribed by law, Campeggio interviewed Henry and Catherine in turn before drawing up the necessary papers to conduct the case in open session. In his report to Pope Clement, Campeggio stated that Henry was so certain that his marriage was invalid that 'an angel descending from Heaven would be unable to convince him otherwise'.

Wolsey's attempts to speed up the process served only to antagonise Campeggio, who responded by delaying still further the legal procedure. An increasingly desperate Wolsey resorted to bribery and blackmail, both of which were resisted by the **cardinal protector**. By the time the case opened on 31 May, Henry had not only come to distrust Campeggio but also lost faith in Wolsey. It took nearly three weeks before Catherine was summoned to appear in court, and when she did, she refused to recognise its right to hear the case. Registering her right to appeal directly to Rome, Catherine then withdrew. After one further brief appearance on 21 June, Catherine refused to attend or acknowledge the authority of the court. Four days later, on 25 June, she was charged with contempt of court.

Urged by Henry to continue the case in her absence, Campeggio reluctantly carried on for a further three weeks, until late July, when he suspended proceedings. On Wolsey's insistence, Campeggio agreed to resume the case in October but it was a futile gesture. Henry realised that Campeggio would never reach a verdict. A month before the court was due to reconvene at Blackfriars Pope Clement recalled Campeggio and summoned the case to Rome.

e) Why did Henry begin to lose patience with Wolsey?



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f) Do you think Henry was right to lose patience with Wolsey?



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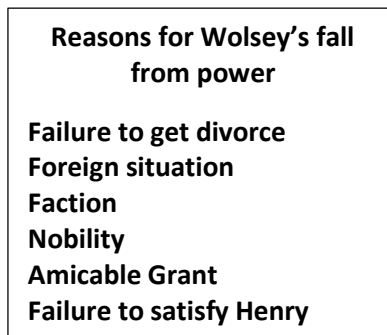
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Task 4: Was Wolsey's failure to obtain a divorce the main reason for his fall?

a) You have a useful diagram at the bottom of page 69 of your textbook. Using page 68-69 of your textbook, explain these reasons.



b) Which of these reasons were the most important?

c) Why do you think that Wolsey survived as long as he did?



Challenge Reading



Wolsey's fall from power

In truth, Wolsey's failure was due, in large part, to events beyond his control. Certainly the political situation in Europe did not work to his advantage. Queen Catherine was Charles V's aunt and the emperor would never accept the humiliation of a member of his family. In 1527 Charles sacked Rome and had Pope Clement at his mercy so that when Henry's annulment petition was received at the papal Curia, Clement was put in an impossible position. According to one English envoy, Clement was a weak, old man who was unlikely ever to come to a decision. Wolsey became frustrated by Clement's dithering but he could do little to persuade the Pope to act.

Clement dared not grant Henry's petition for the annulment of his marriage but, instead, he played for time. Time was against Wolsey, as were Anne Boleyn and her family, who brought pressure to bear on the king. The growing influence of the Boleyn faction at court did much to undermine Wolsey, contributing to his problems which in turn multiplied until he could no longer control events either at home or abroad.

Wolsey's failure

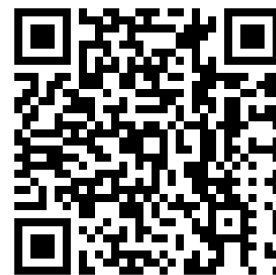
Wolsey's greatest failure was his inability to secure for Henry the annulment of his marriage to Catherine of Aragon. This lost him the king's favour and support. It seems that this was the issue at the forefront of the king's mind for the whole of the two years prior to Wolsey's fall. The minister had promised that this would be a matter easily resolved because of his influence with the papacy, from which all annulments of marriages must come, but every attempt had resulted in disappointment.

In the circumstances, Henry had been very patient. Anne Boleyn was refusing to have sex with him until he could guarantee to make 'an honest woman' of her by marrying her. It was obvious to everybody at court that this caused Henry great frustration. And Henry was increasingly aware that the passage of time was endangering his aspiration of passing his crown to an adult male when he died. It is an indication of the depth of Henry's faith in Wolsey and the skill with which the minister explained away the delays that the breakdown in their relationship was so long delayed. When the final failure of Wolsey's efforts to secure the annulment became apparent, the king turned on his once faithful and most trusted servant.

broken and he died at Leicester on 29 November 1530. During the period of his disgrace he had done all he could to engineer his reinstatement. He had sent a stream of pleading letters to the king and had attempted to gather support among his 'friends' throughout Europe. But all had been to no avail. Henry had slowly become convinced that his long-time leading servant must suffer the only fitting end to his period of dominance: death as well as disgrace. Wolsey's premature end at Leicester had in fact spared him from the show trial and execution that almost certainly awaited him in London.

That Wolsey managed to survive all attacks on his position for fifteen years is remarkable. This was due in large part to two factors: the minister's outstanding abilities and the king's trust in him. Thus, the relationship between Henry VIII and Wolsey was a real (if very unequal) partnership that depended on the achievements of both parties for its success. Wolsey's failure to deliver the one thing most desired by the king – the annulment – resulted in the dissolution of that partnership.

Henry's Love Letters to Anne Boleyn



An article about Anne Boleyn



An article about Catherine of Aragon



Two resources about Wolsey's fall from power

