

HISTORY

**TO UNDERSTAND WHY THE REFORMATION
OCCURRED**

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT HENRY'S FIRST WIFE?

- Catherine of Aragon
- Married for 25 years
- Why did he want to divorce her?
- Why did the Pope say no?

How do we know these things?

THE REFORMATION

- The English Reformation started in the reign of Henry VIII. The English Reformation was to have far reaching consequences in Tudor England. Henry VIII decided to rid himself of his first wife, Catherine of Aragon, after she had failed to produce a male heir to the throne.
- He had already decided who his next wife would be – Anne Boleyn.
- By 1527, Catherine was considered too old to have anymore children.
- However, a divorce was not a simple issue. In fact, it was a very complicated one. Henry VIII was a Roman Catholic and the head of this church was the pope based in Rome.
- The Roman Catholic faith believed in marriage for life. It did not recognise, let alone support, divorce.
- If he went ahead and announced that as king of England he was allowing himself a divorce, the pope could excommunicate him. This meant that under Catholic Church law, your soul could never get to Heaven.

THE POPE REFUSED!

- The pope refused to grant Henry this and by 1533 his anger was such that he ordered the Archbishop of Canterbury to grant him a divorce so that he could marry Anne Boleyn.
- The Archbishop granted Henry his divorce – against the wishes of the pope. But what else could the archbishop do if he wanted to remain on good terms with Henry?
- This event effectively led to England breaking away from the Roman Catholic Church based in Rome.
- Henry placed himself as head of the church and in that sense, in his eyes, his divorce was perfectly legal.
- In 1533, few were brave enough to tell him otherwise!
- Henry was made Supreme Head of the Church by an Act of Parliament in 1534. The country was still Catholic but the pope's power had been ended.

HENRY'S OPINION OF THE MONKS

- Henry wanted to make the Dissolution appear to be backed by law.
- He sent round government officials to check up on what the monks were doing. This was organised by his chief minister, Thomas Cromwell.
- The officials knew what the king wanted in their reports – information that the monks were not working, were not saying their prayers etc. Anything to discredit the monks was considered useful.
- Sometimes, the monks were asked trick questions. “Do you keep all of your vows?” If the monks answered “yes”, but had taken a vow of silence, they had not kept all of their vows. If they refused to answer because of their vow of silence, they would be accused of failing to help the king. Or worse, were they trying to hide something?
- This was all that Cromwell needed to shut down the monasteries.

THE DISSOLUTION

- The smaller monasteries were shut down by 1536 while the larger and more valuable ones were shut by 1540.
- Few people in England were sorry to see them go.
- Few monks protested as they were given pensions or jobs where their monastery was. The abbot of Fountains Abbey in Yorkshire, Marmaduke Bradley, was given a £100 pension a year for life – a considerable sum of money then.
- Some monastery buildings were reduced to ruin as the local population was allowed to take what they wanted as long as the silver and gold in the monastery went to the Crown.
- This meant that expensive building bricks etc. could be acquired for free. This alone made the Dissolution popular with the majority of the people who tended to dislike lazy monks anyhow.
- However, the vast bulk of the wealth of the monasteries went to Henry. Some was spent building defences against France on the south coast around Portsmouth; a small amount went on paying pensions to monks and abbots.

THE REFORMATION

- To reform means to change.
- This is why this event is called the English Reformation as it did change the way the church was run throughout England.
- The Reformation went on for over 100 years and lead to several wars.
- All because Henry wanted an annulment?



YOUR TASK...

Use sources of evidence to create questions to answer yourself in as much detail as possible about the below:

- Henry VIII's quarrel with the Pope
- Raiding the Monasteries
- Dissolution of the Monastries

SUCCESS CRITERIA

- Use sources to collect and interpret information from a point in history.
- Explain what happened in the past using primary and secondary sources.
- Analyse information given to express an opinion.

