

The Tudors were a royal family that ruled England from 1485 to 1603. The Tudor family rose to power after the War of the Roses , in which Henry Tudor was able to unite the houses of York and Lancaster.

### Tudor Monarchs

Henry VII—He became king in 1485 following the Battle of Bosworth. He ended the wars of the Roses and united the rival houses of York and Lancaster by marrying Elizabeth Woodville, the daughter of Edward IV, a Yorkist.

**Henry VIII** - probably the most well-known Tudor monarch. He brought religious upheaval to England. When he became king, most people belonged to the **Catholic Church**, which was headed by the Pope. In **1534**, Henry broke away from the Catholic Church and proclaimed himself head of the Church of England. The land riches became Henry’s property and he sold most of this to dukes and nobles. Henry wanted a son to rule after him. He first married his brother’s widow, Catherine of Aragon but divorced her when she did not produce a male heir to the throne. He married three times before a son was born. In total he married six times!

**Edward VI** - Was the only son of Henry VIII and his wife Jane Seymour (Henry VIII’s third wife). **He** became king at the age of nine upon the death of his father. He was known as 'The Boy King'. Edward was a sickly child and the country was run by his protectors: firstly, the Duke of Somerset then by the Duke of Northumberland.

**Jane Gray** - granddaughter of Henry VII ,Henry VIII had specified that in the event of Edward dying early that firstly his daughter Mary should reign and secondly his daughter Elizabeth, but Edward changed it on his deathbed. She became known as the ‘nine day queen’.

**Mary I**—Reigned from 1553 to 1558.Mary I was a Roman Catholic. As Henry VIII’s eldest daughter she had a stronger claim to the throne of England than Lady Jane Grey. Mary imprisoned and then executed her. Mary was nicknamed ‘Bloody Mary’ as she was responsible for signing the death warrants of 300 Protestants who did not support her beliefs.

**Elizabeth I** - The younger daughter of Henry VIII and his second wife, Anne Boleyn. When Elizabeth came to the throne, she was 25. She succeeded to the throne on her half-sister's death in November 1558. Elizabeth was the last Tudor Monarch as she had no children and therefore no heir to succeed her.

### Key people

**Francis Drake**  
**Philip II of Spain** - King of Spain from. He was married to Mary I. He considered himself a defender of the Catholic faith. When Elizabeth became Queen, he vowed to return England to Catholicism and sent his Armada to invade England.

**Thomas Cromwell**—replaced Wolsey as Henry’s chief minister in 1532. He helped the King in breaking from Rome and establishing his own Church in England, with Henry as Supreme Head of the Church. He had a large role in the Dissolution of the Monasteries from 1536 onwards. However, he fell out of favour following the disastrous Anne of Cleaves marriage and was executed in 1540.

**Cardinal Wolsey**—Henry VIII’s most powerful minister. But he fell out of favour for not being able to get the Pope to grant Henry’s divorce from Catherine of Aragon.

**Sir William Cecil** - He was Elizabeth’s Chief Advisor.

**Sir Francis Walsingham** - He was Elizabeth’s Chief Spy Master (Head of her Secret Service). Walsingham kept a close eye on Catholic attempts to take the throne of England

### Church

In 1517, a German priest and former monk named Martin Luther published a series of criticisms of the Catholic Church. This was the beginning of a new branch of Christianity, which became known as Protestantism, as it began as a protest against the Catholic Church. In the 1520s, Henry VII tried to end his first marriage to Catherine of Aragon by seeking an annulment. Henry wanted a male heir to his throne, but he and the queen's only surviving child was his daughter, Mary.

To try and keep Henry happy, in June 1529 Pope Clement VII allowed Henry to have his marriage put on trial in England. The Pope allowed a representative called Cardinal Campeggio to come to England. Henry and Catherine gave evidence, with each sharing their different perspective: Catherine wanted to remain married to Henry. Their marriage was discussed by people with a huge amount of knowledge of the law and the Bible. After months of debate and delay, the court did not grant Henry his annulment. In 1533, after years of waiting, Henry decided to act. He was confident that he had enough support to break with Rome, and become head of the Church of England. In 1534, Henry used Parliament to grant the Act of Supremacy, which allowed him to annul his marriage to Catherine as it made the monarch the head of the English Church. The Treasons Act followed in 1534. Anyone who questioned Henry’s power over the Church, or even thought badly of him, could be punished by death.

Henry and Cromwell sent men to strip the monasteries of their treasures, and established a new part of the government called the Court of Augmentations. Its job was to organise the selling of the monasteries and their land to noblemen and the gentry. The profits went to the king. It was one of the largest changes of land ownership in English history. Henry gained immense wealth, and his nobles bought up monasteries and their lands, converting them into grand homes.

The Tudor period would continue to be dominated by religious tension as Tudor monarchs attempted to change the religion of the country, causing conflict between Catholics and Protestants. Queen Elizabeth attempted to solve this conflict by giving more religious freedom and promoting a ‘middle way’.

### Key events

**1485:** Henry VII becomes the first Tudor Monarch after defeating Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth Field  
 1486 Henry VII marries Elizabeth of York, uniting the two houses and ending the War of the Roses  
**1509:** Henry VIII succeeds to the throne after the death of his father.  
**1534:** Henry VIII splits from the Catholic church and begins the English reformation.  
**1536:** Dissolution of the Monasteries  
 1547: Henry VIII dies and is succeeded by Edward VI  
 1553: Edward VI dies and is succeeded by Jane Grey, her reign only lasted nine days  
 1553: Mary I becomes Queen after Jane Grey is executed for treason  
 1554: Mary I marries Philip II of Spain  
 1558: Mary I dies and is succeeded by Elizabeth I  
 1588: King Philip II of Spain sends to Spanish Armada to invade England  
**1603:** The Death of Elizabeth I and the end of the Tudor Dynasty

### Key Terms

Heir—a person who will inherit the crown after the current King or Queen di

Annul - To cancel a marriage

Treason - a crime of betraying your country

Monarch - a leader of a country e.g. a King or a Queen

Execution - to be put to death

Divorce - the legal end of a marriage

Catholic - a form of Christianity under the control of the Pope

### Spanish Armada

In 1588, King Philip II of Spain attempted to invade England to replace Elizabeth I with a Catholic monarch. He created a huge Armada (Fleet of ships) to lead the invasion. The Armada was unsuccessful, being surprised and defeated by the English using burning fire ships at Calais to cause the armada to panic and flee. The English finally defeated the Spanish at the Battle of Gravelines and the Armada is forced to sail back to Spain by sailing round Scotland and Ireland. Many ships are wrecked in storms and thousands of sailors drown, almost half of the fleet is lost.

### Mary Queen of Scots

Mary, Queen of Scots was Elisabeth’s cousin, she had become Queen of Scotland in 1542 when she was just six days old. Her first two husbands died and she was implicated in the second one’s murder. She was forced to **abdicate** and was imprisoned. She managed to escape and fled to England where she sought **refuge** from Elizabeth in 1568. Many Catholics believed Mary had a better claim to the throne and plotted to replace Elizabeth. Elizabeth decided that she could not allow Mary to live. Mary was put on trial, found guilty of **treason** and was executed on 8 February 1587 at Fotheringhay Castle.