

King Henry VIII



Remembered as one of the most famous monarchs in history, Henry VIII is probably most known for his many wives and his incredibly bad temper. In fact, Henry is responsible for significant changes in England and across Europe, many of which have influenced the world around us today.



Childhood

Henry was born on 28th June 1491 in London. He was the second son born to King Henry VII and Elizabeth of York. His older brother, Arthur, was born five years earlier and Henry was second in line to the English throne. As well as a brother, Henry had two sisters; Margaret, who was two years older, and Mary, who was born five years after Henry.

In 1502, Arthur died aged only 15. This meant that Henry, at only ten years old, was heir to the throne. His father kept him well supervised and he had very little training as to what a king's role involved.

Henry VII died on 21st April 1509, and 17-year-old Henry was crowned. Soon after, Henry married his brother's widow, Catherine of Aragon.



Did You Know...?

Henry VIII was also an author and composer. He also enjoyed jousting and playing tennis.



Church of England

Henry wanted a son to carry on his legacy. As Catherine had only given him a daughter, Henry decided to divorce her and find another wife. In 1525, he fell in love with Anne Boleyn and chose her to be his next queen. However, the head of the Catholic Church, the Pope, would not allow him to divorce. This made Henry furious, so much so that he decided to break England away from the Catholic Church and create the Church of England, of which he would be the head. This was known as the English Reformation and shocked much of Europe.

Henry's Six Wives

 Catherine of Aragon	Born: 16 th December 1485 Married: 11 th June 1509 Divorced: 23 rd May 1533 Died: 7 th January 1536	• Born in Castile, Spain. • Married to Henry's brother Arthur for six months before his death. • Gave birth to a daughter, Mary. • Henry divorced Catherine after she failed to give him a son.
 Anne Boleyn	Born: 1501 Married: 25 th January 1533 Died: 19 th May 1536	• Lady-in-waiting to Queen Catherine. • Gave birth to a daughter, Elizabeth. • Executed after being accused of being unfaithful to Henry.
 Jane Seymour	Born: 1508 Married: 30 th May 1536 Died: 24 th October 1537	• Lady-in-waiting to Queen Anne. • Gave birth to a son, Edward. • Died a few days after Edward was born due to complications from childbirth, leaving Henry devastated.
 Anne of Cleves	Born: 1515 Married: 6 th January 1540 Divorced: 9 th July 1540 Died: 16 th July 1557	• German princess born in Dusseldorf. • Henry agreed to marry Anne after seeing her portrait but did not like her when he met her in person. • After six months of marriage, Anne agreed to Henry's request for a divorce. Henry was grateful and referred to her as his 'beloved sister'.
 Catherine Howard	Born: 1523 Married: 28 th July 1540 Died: 13 th February 1542	• Born in Lambeth, London. • Catherine was only 17 years old when she married the King. • Executed in 1542 after being unfaithful to Henry.



Catherine Parr

Born: 1512**Married:**
12th July 1543**Died:**
5th September 1548

- Had been married and widowed twice before marrying Henry.
- Helped to restore Mary and Elizabeth to the line of succession.

Death

Henry began to grow frailer due to his weight and many leg ulcers and, in 1547, Henry died at the age of 55. His son, Edward, succeeded him as King. He requested to be buried next to his third wife, Jane Seymour, who he referred to as his 'true wife'.

Did You Know...?

Henry VIII is thought of as the 'father of the British Navy'. During his reign, he ordered several new warships to be built and increased the strength of England's armies on the seas.



