

Week 5 Palaces: Henry VIII- Biography Notes.

Occupation: King of England

- **Born:** June 28, 1491 in Greenwich, England
- **Died:** January 28, 1547 in London, England
- **Reign:** 1509-1547
- **Best known for:** Marrying six times and splitting the Church of England from the Catholic Church

Early Life

Prince Henry was born on June 28th in Greenwich Palace. His parents were Henry VII the King of [England](#) and Elizabeth York the Queen of England. Henry had an older brother, Arthur, and two sisters, Mary and Margaret.

Unlike his sickly older brother Arthur, Henry was a healthy and athletic boy. He loved to play sports and ride horses. However, it was Arthur who, as the oldest son, was being raised to be king. Henry was being raised to enter the church. He received an excellent education and learned how to speak Latin, French, Spanish, and Greek.

When Henry was ten years old, his life was dramatically changed. His older brother Arthur died and Henry was named the crown prince. He would be the next king of England.

Becoming King

In 1509, when Henry was seventeen years old, his father Henry VII died. Henry decided at that point to marry his brother's former wife, Catherine of Aragon the Princess of [Spain](#). They were quickly married and then were crowned king and queen of England.

A Renaissance Man

Henry VIII is often described as a true Renaissance Man. He was athletic, good looking, intelligent, and educated. He was also an accomplished musician and both played instruments and wrote his own songs. He spoke many languages fluently and loved to read and study. Henry loved art and culture bringing many of the top artists, writers, and philosophers from mainland Europe to his court.

Catherine of Aragon

Since Catherine had been married to Henry's brother, he needed special permission to marry her from the pope called a "dispensation". This was because the Bible said that a man should not marry his brother's wife.

Although Catherine became pregnant several times, she only had one healthy baby, the princess Mary. Henry became worried that he would never have a male heir to the throne. He asked the pope to annul the marriage based on the fact that they were never legitimately married. However, the pope refused.

Anne Boleyn

At the same time Henry was becoming increasingly frustrated with Catherine for not producing a male heir, he fell madly in love with one of her ladies in waiting, Anne Boleyn. Henry was determined to marry her and did so in secret in 1533.

English Reformation

In 1534, Henry decided to split from the Catholic Church. He declared himself the Supreme Head of the Church of England. He even passed a law called the Treasons Act that made it punishable by death to those who didn't accept Henry as the head of the church. He also annulled his marriage to Catherine.

More Wives

Henry was determined to have a male heir. When Anne Boleyn did not have a son, he had her executed. Then he married Jane Seymour. Jane finally gave Henry what he wanted and had a son named Edward. However, Jane died during childbirth.

Henry married three more times including Anne of Cleves, Catherine Howard, and Catherine Parr.

Death

Henry suffered a leg wound in a jousting accident in 1536. As a result, he found it difficult to move about. He became extremely overweight and his skin was covered with painful infections called boils. He died at the age of 55 in 1547 and was succeeded by his son Edward who became King Edward VI.

Interesting Facts about Henry VIII

- Anne Boleyn did not have a son, but she did give birth to a daughter [Elizabeth](#) who would become one of the greatest monarchs in English history.
- Not only was his son Edward VI king, but his daughters Mary and Elizabeth would also be monarchs of England.
- Henry VIII established the permanent navy of England.
- He spent lavishly as king, building over 50 palaces. He spent the entire fortune his father had left him and died in massive debt.