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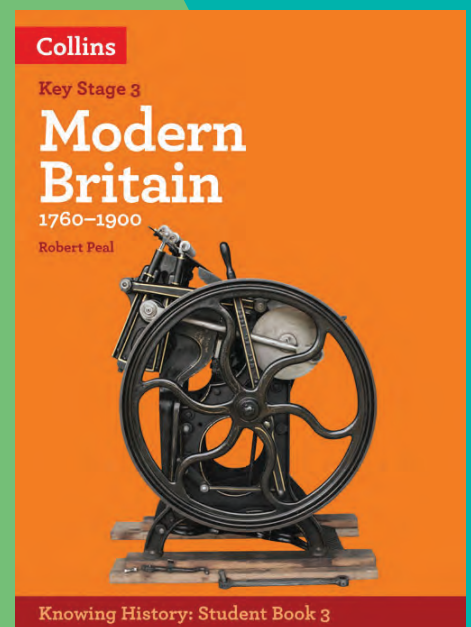
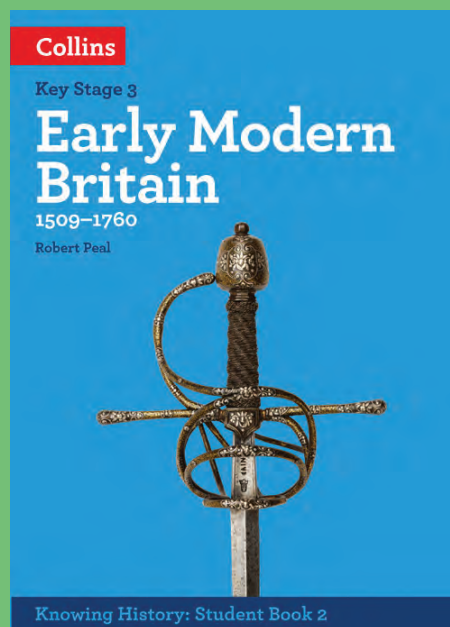
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Check your understanding sections ensure that key points in the narrative are understood

The Young Henry VIII

When Henry VIII was crowned king in 1509, he was already the hero of Tudor England.

He was tall, fit and handsome, and a keen joustier, wrestler, archer, hunter and tennis player. He was taught by some of the greatest philosophers of the age, and could write poetry, compose music and speak French and Latin fluently. The scholar Thomas More, wrote of Henry’s coronation: ‘This day is the end of our slavery, the fount of liberty, the end of sadness, the beginning of joy.’ High hopes rested on the young King’s shoulders.

Henry’s father was Henry VII. He had an older brother named Arthur, but in 1502 he died unexpectedly, making Henry heir to the throne at the age of ten. Once King, Henry married his brother’s widow Catherine of Aragon, a pretty and intelligent Spanish princess six years his senior. This secured England’s alliance with Spain.

As king, Henry ruled over a magnificent court, with continual pageants, parties, feasts and entertainment. Henry ordered jousting tournaments twice a week, which he often took part in himself. All of this jousting had a serious purpose: Henry VIII was training his noblemen for war. He dreamed of conquest, transforming England into a great European empire, ruling over Wales, Scotland, Ireland and France.

War with France

In 1511, England allied with Spain and the Holy Roman Empire, and together they declared war on France. In 1513, Henry invaded northern France from Calais. The small English army captured two towns, and won a victory against the French army. It was little more than a skirmish, but the English gave it a grand name: ‘The Battle of the Spurs’.

However, Henry’s allies decided not to invade and he could not advance any further. So he signed a favourable peace treaty with France, securing land and an annual payment.

During the invasion of France, the Scottish King James IV (who was allied with France) took the opportunity to invade northern England with a large army of 60,000 men. With Henry absent, Queen Catherine was left to defend England. She sent an army north, to meet the Scottish forces. The Scottish were soundly beaten at the Battle of Flodden, with thousands killed including the Scottish King James, who was found buried under a pile of corpses.

The Field of the Cloth of Gold

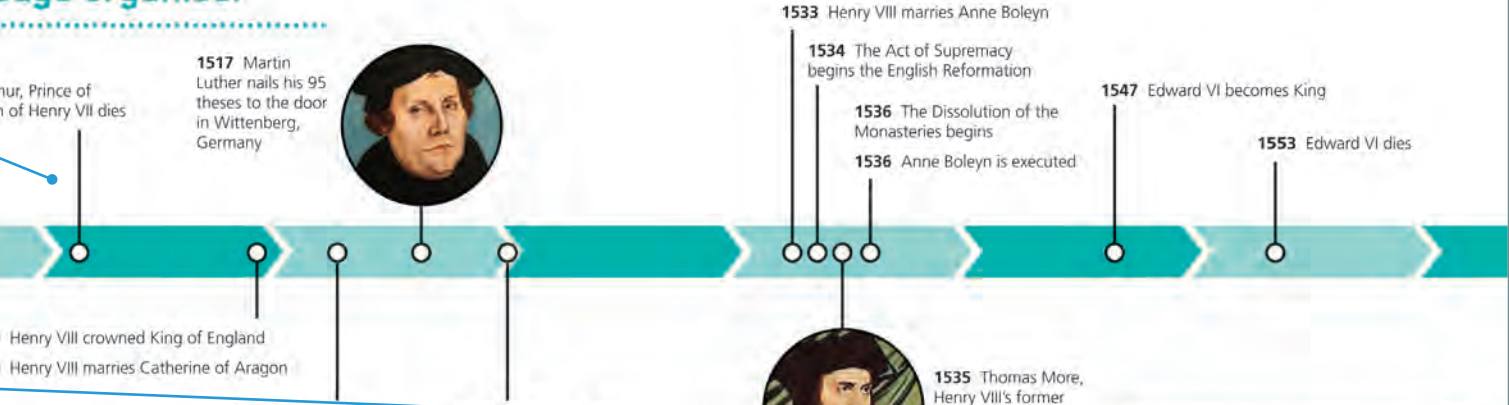
Henry’s victories over the French and Scottish in 1513 confirmed England’s new role as a major European power. His dream of Empire was edging ever closer. However, events took a bad turn in 1516 when France gained a new king, the warlike and shrewd Francis I. Henry VIII’s great chancellor, Thomas Wolsey (see below), persuaded Henry to make peace with France.



Fact

In 2004, a historian looking through an inventory of Henry VIII’s royal wardrobe made a surprising find: the king, who loved sport, owned a pair of leather football boots.

Knowledge organiser



1513 Henry VIII's first invasion of France

1520 The Field of the Cloth of Gold

1517 Martin Luther nails his 95 theses to the door in Wittenberg, Germany

1533 Henry VIII marries Anne Boleyn

1534 The Act of Supremacy begins the English Reformation

1535 Thomas More, Henry VIII's former Lord Chancellor, is executed

1536 The Dissolution of the Monasteries begins

1536 Anne Boleyn is executed

1547 Edward VI becomes King

1553 Edward VI dies

Monk: Someone who dedicates their entire life to God, and lives outside of normal society.

Pilgrimage of Grace: The most significant uprising that took place against Henry VIII's Reformation.

Pope: The head of the Catholic Church, he lives in the Vatican City in Rome.

Protestantism: A form of Christianity which emerged during the 1500s in protest against the wealth and corruption of the Catholic Church.

Henry was reluctant to let go of his ambitions. To make peace seem more honourable, Wolsey organised a magnificent peace conference, and on 6 June 1520, the two young kings met in France. For two weeks they tried to outdo each other with displays of wealth and flamboyance, jousting, feasting, playing games and throwing parties. Henry and Francis even met each other in the wrestling ring, where Francis I won, much to Henry's anger. The meeting was called the 'Field of the Cloth of Gold'.



'The Field of the Cloth of Gold', painted for Henry VIII in 1545. Can you spot the king on his horse?

Thomas Wolsey

Masterminding Henry VIII's early successes was a priest named Thomas Wolsey. The son of an Ipswich butcher, Wolsey rose from his humble origins to become the most powerful man in England, aside from the King.

In 1514 Wolsey became Archbishop of York, and in 1515 the Pope made him a Cardinal and Henry VIII appointed him Lord Chancellor (the king's chief advisor). In 1518, he was made the Papal legate in England. Through sheer intelligence and ambition, Wolsey had gained complete control of English politics and the church. He worked tirelessly organising the affairs of state, so that Henry could enjoy himself. Whatever Henry wanted, Wolsey would deliver, be it war with France or a tray of freshly baked lemon cakes.

Wolsey became magnificently rich, and built the enormous Hampton Court Palace on the banks of the Thames. It was grander and larger than any of the king's palaces. Wolsey liked to show off his wealth, and would parade through London in a grand carriage with two servants bearing silver crosses.



Check your understanding

- Who had Henry VIII's first wife, Catherine of Aragon, previously been married to?
- Which country did Henry VIII invade in 1513?
- Why did Henry VIII's Lord Chancellor persuade him to make peace with France?
- What was the name of the peace conference between England and France in 1520?
- What was the name of Henry VIII's first Lord Chancellor?

Advanced vocabulary

Cardinal: A senior member of the Catholic Church. Some live in the Vatican with the Pope, and they wear distinctive red cassocks.

Indulgence: A forgiveness of one's sins which could be purchased for a sum of money from the Church.

Widow: A female member of the Royal Household working as a personal assistant to the monarch.

Supremacy: An oath swearing allegiance to a monarch as the supreme head of the Church of England.

Relic: An object of religious significance, often the body or personal remains of a saint.

House of York: The extended family and favoured dynasty of a monarch.

Key people

Anne Boleyn: Henry VIII's second wife, who was executed in 1536 for adultery.

Catherine of Aragon: Henry VIII's first wife, she was the daughter of the King and Queen of Spain.

Edward VI: The only son of Henry VIII, he died aged fifteen and is therefore known as the 'Boy King'.

Martin Luther: A German monk and later priest, said to have started the Reformation.

Pope Alexander VI: A Pope from the powerful Borgias family, his corruption was notorious.

Thomas Crammer: Archbishop of Canterbury from 1533 and a leading figure in the English Reformation.

Thomas Cromwell: Henry VIII's Chief Minister from 1532, and a leading figure of the English Reformation.

Thomas More: Henry VIII's Lord Chancellor from 1529, he was executed for refusing to renounce his Catholicism.

Thomas Wolsey: Henry VIII's Lord Chancellor from 1515, he was one of the wealthiest and most powerful men in Tudor England.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Robert Peal is a history teacher at the West London Free School. Having gained a double first in History from the University of Cambridge, he studied for his master's at the University of Pennsylvania. Robert qualified as a teacher through Teach First, and has worked as a 'Teacher in Residence' at the Department for Education.

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