

Why do we describe religion in the Tudor period as a rollercoaster?

This unit in History will focus on the religious rollercoaster of Tudor England. We will evaluate how religion changed over the Tudor period starting with Henry VIII and his Reformation of the English Church. We will then look at the changes that happened under the reigns of his 3 children: Edward VI, Mary I and Elizabeth I.

Key words and definitions

Reformation	A time of change – Henry VIII changed the English Church from Catholic to Protestant
Protestant	A Christian who protested against the Catholic Church.
Catholic	A Christian who believes in the authority of the Pope.
The Pope	Bishop of Rome, Head of the Catholic Church
Puritan	Strict Protestants
Glastonbury Abbey	Religious building which provided work and housing for monks and nuns.
Dissolution	Henry VIII's closing down of the monasteries and abbeys.
noble	Someone of high rank with a title like a Duke or an Earl.
indulgences	Buying forgiveness from the Church
Annulment	Ending a marriage by the Church
Poor Law	Help for the poor
Mary, Queen of Scots	Queen Elizabeth I's cousin who was executed in 1587.

Utility of historical sources. Historical sources are only useful if you know what you want to use them for. This means that you must have an enquiry question. Sources which are unreliable (they don't tell you the truth) are still very useful. For example, if you as a historian wanted to find out about how the Tudors used paintings to show their power you would find lots of propaganda. So the paintings would be useful to show methods of control used by the Tudors even though the portraits may not be an accurate image of the person.

Tudor England

Tudor England lasted from the Battle of Bosworth in 1485 to the death of Queen Elizabeth I in 1603. It was a time of huge change in England especially in terms of religion. Make sure you know the chronology.

- 1485 Henry Tudor became **Henry VII** after **Battle of Bosworth**
- 1509 Henry VIII became king and married **Catherine of Aragon**
- 1533 Henry VIII married **Anne Boleyn**
- 1534 **Act of Supremacy** - Henry is now head of the Church of England; also called the **Break with Rome**.
- 1536 **Dissolution** of the **monasteries** began; execution of Anne Boleyn; Henry married Jane Seymour.
- 1539 Richard Whiting was executed in Glastonbury.
- 1547 Death of Henry VIII; succession of Edward VI
- 1553 Death of Edward VI; succession of **Lady Jane Grey** and then Mary.
- 1558 Death of **Queen Mary**; succession of Queen Elizabeth I.
- 1587 Execution of **Mary, Queen of Scots**
- 1588 The **Spanish Armada**
- 1603 Death of Queen Elizabeth I; succession of James Stuart

Why was Richard Whiting killed?

There were problems with the Catholic Church in England. Many Protestants complained about:

1. The Bible was in Latin – if it were in English then people could read it themselves.
2. The Church was too rich. The leader of the country needs the wealth more than the Church.
3. The Church sold indulgences. It was wrong to have to buy forgiveness.

Henry VIII wanted a divorce, money and power:

1. Henry VIII broke with the Catholic Church because the Pope refused to annul his marriage.
2. Henry needed money to fight wars. Having Church wealth would give him more money.
3. Henry wanted more power. He did not like that people listened to the Pope's orders.

Richard Whiting was a good man but did not approve of the king's annulment/divorce:

1. Thomas Cromwell found evidence against Richard Whiting.
2. Thomas Cromwell was an ambitious adviser to King Henry. He wanted to be seen as powerful and popular with the king.
3. King Henry VIII ordered the dissolution of the monasteries. Richard Whiting's Glastonbury Abbey was one of the last to be dissolved.

How did Elizabeth I deal with the challenges in her reign?



What problems did I face?
How did I solve them?

SPAIN

Elizabeth helped Dutch rebels raid Spanish treasure ships. This made the Spanish king, Philip send an Armada to attack England in 1588. This was defeated but war with Spain continued until 1603. There was no successful Spanish invasion of England but the war cost huge amounts of money.

RELIGION

She kept Catholics and Puritans (extreme Protestants) under control but neither really liked her Church of England. She sometimes ordered the execution of Catholics who plotted against her. By 1603 the Church of England was strong and stable.

MARY,
QUEEN OF
SCOTS

For 19 years, Elizabeth dithered about what to do. This just encouraged more Catholic plots which grew around Mary. She kept Mary imprisoned for 19 years before finally ordering her execution which ended a major threat to herself.

MARRIAGE

She would not let a foreign ruler or a powerful English noble control her. However, there was no heir and if she had died before naming a successor it may have caused civil war.

THE POOR

The number of beggars and poor people grew during Elizabeth's reign. She introduced a Poor Law in 1601 which lasted 250 years! This provided a little help, but Elizabeth didn't really understand why so many people were becoming poorer.