



## Henry the Eighth: Defender of the Faith

<https://www.loc.gov/item/2002699959/>

### Overview/Prior Knowledge

Students should have background knowledge of the Catholic Church and the Vatican, heresy, and the roles of the English monarchs and Parliament. The tumultuous reign of Henry VIII has been the topic of study and entertainment for centuries. One labeled, Defender of the Faith, Henry's wish to end his marriage with Catherine of Aragon to marry another subsequently led to a separation from the Catholic Church and the foundation of a new, independent Church of England. This lesson explores the different perceptions of Henry VIII by those in his life by examining the writings of one of his wives, life-long friend, one of his own children, and Henry himself.

### Objectives

- The students will discuss the life of Henry VIII and his personal experiences that led to the foundation of the Church of England.
- The students will examine letters written from and to Henry VIII.
- The students will reflect on historical events from the perspective of historical figures.

### Time Required

Two 50-minute periods.

### Recommended Grade Range

6-8; 9-12

### Subject/Sub-Subject

World History, English Language Arts



## Standards

### ***Social Studies***

***Mississippi: HUM.5 Students will analyze the social, economic, and political changes and cultural achievements during the Renaissance in Europe.***

1. Identifying the economic infrastructure of the Italian Renaissance.
2. Trace the events related to the rise and political development city-states while examining the Humanistic movement impact on society

### ***English Language Arts***

CCSS ELA WRITING STANDARDS:

WHST.6-8.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCSS ELA READING STANDARDS:

RH.6-8.2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source.

CCSS ELA READING STANDARDS:

RI.6-8.3 Analyze in detail how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a text (e.g., through examples or anecdotes). (M)

## Library of Congress - Teaching with Primary Sources Skills:

- Read and examine primary sources
- Identify details when observing a primary source(s)
- Use primary sources to write first-hand accounts of events
- Make comparisons with primary sources
- Speculate about who created a primary source, when, and for what purpose
- Investigate issues of cause and effect, causality, context, and continuity and change

## Highlighted Strategies:

- Centers/Stations
- Multiple Perspectives

## Credits

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## Materials

- Primary Sources – See Resource Guide at the end of this document.
- Document Analysis Worksheet from the National Archives  
[https://www.archives.gov/files/education/lessons/worksheets/written\\_document\\_analysis\\_worksheet.pdf](https://www.archives.gov/files/education/lessons/worksheets/written_document_analysis_worksheet.pdf)
- Graphic Organizer for Historical Figures

## Procedures

### Introduction

- The teacher will show the students an image of Henry VIII of England. The students will be asked to give one word that describes the man in the image and write it down on a provided index card.
- After students have recorded their descriptive words, TTW ask that students give the man a name and title on the other side of the index card. After all students have completed the task, the teacher will ask the students to contribute some of the titles they have given the person in the image. The teacher will ask, “Why did you give that person that title? Were there any clues in the image that led you there?”
- TTW will introduce the man in the image as Henry VIII, King of England, Defender of the Faith, Head of the Church of England. The teacher will say, “Based on these titles, what do you think of Henry VIII?” The teacher will explain to students that all of these are titles that were given to Henry VIII, along with the title of tyrant.

### During

- The teacher will use a PowerPoint to discuss with students the sequence of events in the life of Henry VIII. The teacher will specifically discuss his marriage to and divorce of Catherine of Aragon, his marriage to Anne Boleyn, his decision to split from the Catholic Church, and the foundation of the Church of England all in pursuit of having a male heir to the throne. As the teacher is doing this, the students will record each historical figure/wife that is introduced during discussion on a graphic organizer providing a brief description.
- To investigate the relationships in Henry VIII’s life further, the teacher will provide the students with copies of the Act of Supremacy, a letter from Henry VIII to Anne Boleyn, a letter from Sir Thomas More, a letter from Mary I of England to her father, and a letter from Anne to Henry during her imprisonment in the Tower of London.
  - The students will work in small groups of 4-5 to read and interpret the letters. There will be five stations in the classroom with several copies of one letter at each station, as well as a transcription of the letter and blank copies of the document analysis worksheet.
  - Each group will spend several minutes reading the letter at a station and filling out a Written Document Analysis sheet; then they will rotate in their groups to another to another station with a different letter.

- At each station, the role of the student who filled out the analysis sheet will switch to another group member.
- After reading, the class will discuss the letters. To begin this discussion, the teacher will ask, “What was some information you learned from the reading the letters? What does this information tell you about Henry VIII?”
  - The teacher will ask several questions to continue the discussion. For example, “What are some events that transpired as a result of these letters? After reading these accounts, is there a different title you would give Henry VIII from those previously discussed? What questions do you have now that you have read firsthand accounts of the drama that unfolded during Henry VIII’s reign? Based on this information, would you be a supporter of Henry VIII? Why or why not?”
- Then, the teacher will explain the death of Edward VI and the death of Queen Mary, which led to the rule of Queen Elizabeth I. The teacher will show the students a picture of Henry’s heir, Elizabeth I of England. The students will then be invited to share their thoughts on the outcome of Henry’s quest for an heir at all costs and the final result. The teacher will ask the students to consider and explain the various points of view that might be recorded of Henry VIII. The class will discuss firsthand and secondhand accounts and why the difference between the two is so important to understand.
- The teacher will invite students to review the historical figures that have been discussed in the life and reign of Henry VIII of England. The students and teacher will review the letters and other information previously discussed that give insight into the thoughts and actions of the historical characters that have been introduced.
- The teacher will ask the students to pick a historical figure to “become” from those discussed throughout the lesson for the purposes of writing a first-person account discussing the reign of Henry VIII from their chosen person’s perspective. The teacher will explain that there are various points of view when it comes to any issue and that everyone’s opinion could be different, depending on their experience. This is particularly true for Henry VIII who can be seen as a great king or an evil tyrant, depending on who you ask.
  - For the narrative, the teacher will ask the students to pick a historical figure they have discussed that had some interaction with Henry VIII. The teacher will ask the students to describe the relationship between that person and Henry VIII from the person’s point of view.
  - The students will explain the reason for interaction with Henry VIII, and whether it was pleasant or not.
  - The students will explain how the relationship ended from the perspective of their chosen historical figure. Based on all of this information, the student will explain what they think that figure thinks of Henry VIII as a ruler and a person.
- The students may review the documents, letters, and analysis sheets to aide their narrative writing. The students will be reminded that in the pursuit of a male heir, a separate and sovereign Christian church was founded as a result.
- After writing, the students will be invited to share a summary of their narrative with the class to prompt discussion. The students will explain why they chose their historical character, as well as explain what they felt that figure’s perspective would be when discussing Henry VIII.



## Assessment

Students will be evaluated on their discussion of the topic and on their completed narrative with the following criteria:

- a. Student displayed knowledge of the historical topic and figures throughout the discussion.
- b. Student demonstrated analyzing a historical event from a different point of view.

The teacher will also assess the students for their group work on the Document Analysis sheets.

The teacher will also assess student understanding from the completed graphic organizer of historical figure information.

## Differentiation

- The students will be grouped and paired in a way that complements their individual needs.
- The teacher will provide additional guidance for students who are below grade level in regards to reading comprehension.
- Students who are gifted or above grade level will be challenged to write an additional narrative from an opposite point of view from their first narrative.

## Supplementary Materials

- Information about Henry VIII: [http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/people/henry\\_viii/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/people/henry_viii/)
- Timeline of Henry VIII's wives: <http://www.historyinanhour.com/2012/07/08/henry-viii-wives-timeline/>
- Information about Edward VI (Henry VIII's son): [http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic\\_figures/edward\\_vi\\_king.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/edward_vi_king.shtml)
- Biography of Elizabeth I: <https://www.biography.com/people/queen-elizabeth-i-9286133>



## Teaching with Primary Sources Resource Guide

**Title:** Henry the Eighth: Defender of the Faith

**Historical Background:**

The tumultuous reign of Henry VIII has been the topic of study and entertainment for centuries. One labeled, Defender of the Faith, Henry's wish to end his marriage with Catherine of Aragon to marry another subsequently led to a separation from the Catholic Church and the foundation of a new, independent Church of England. This lesson explores the different perceptions of Henry VIII by those in his life by examining the writings of his wife, life-long friend, one of his own children, and Henry himself.

**Source 1:**

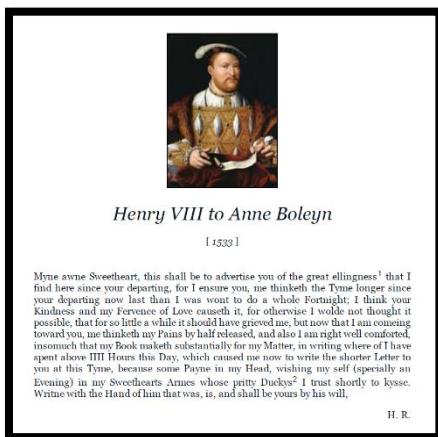


**Title:** Henry VIII, King of England, 1491-1547

**Link:** <https://www.loc.gov/item/2002699959/>

**Purpose:** This source is intended for initial introduction to Henry VIII and the story of his reign. Students are asked to give him a name and title without knowing who he is at the beginning of the lesson.

**Source 2:**



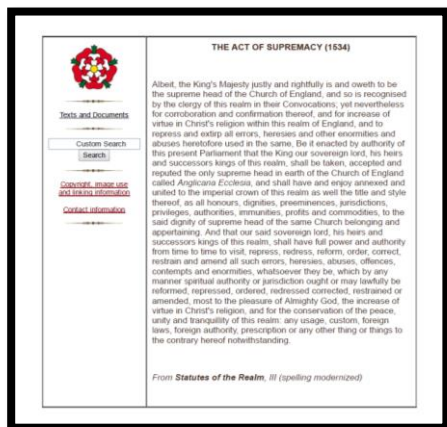
**Title:** Letter from Henry VIII to Anne Boleyn (1533)

**Link:**

<http://www.luminarium.org/renlit/henrytoanne.htm>

**Purpose:** This source, written by Henry VIII himself, gives a glimpse into his feelings for Anne, his wife and new hope of obtaining a male heir.

**Source 3:**



Title: Act of Supremacy (1534)

Link: <http://tudorhistory.org/primary/supremacy.html>

Purpose: This source is the declaration of Henry VIII that he was the head of the Church of England, therefore separating from the Catholic Church.

**Source 4:**

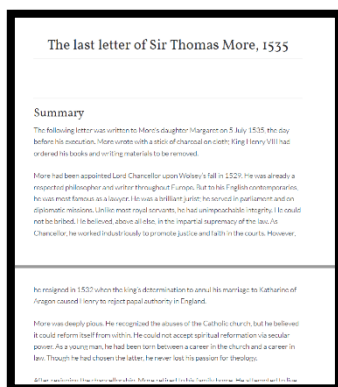


Title: Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn at Cardinal Wolsey's

Link: <https://www.loc.gov/item/2012650100/>

Purpose: This portrait shows the great divide that Henry VIII places between himself and his advisors due to his relationship with Anne Boleyn.

**Source 5:**

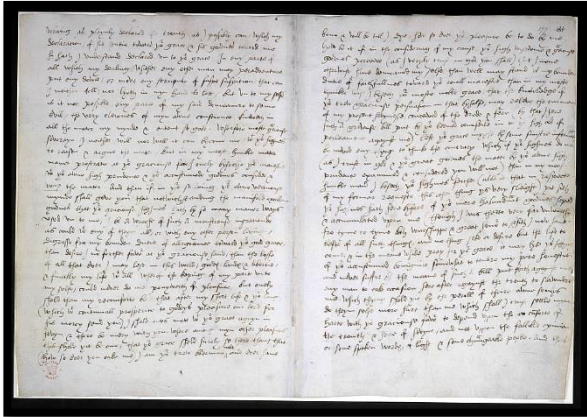


Title: The last letter of Sir Thomas More, 1535

Link: <https://englishhistory.net/tudor/last-letter-sir-thomas-1535/>

Purpose: This source is written by Sir Thomas Moore in 1535 when charged by Henry of treason not acknowledging his marriage to Anne and his subsequent declaration as head of the Church. More was a devoted tutor to Henry in his formative years, and this letter gives insight into the volatile personality Henry possessed.

**Source 6:**



Title: The last letter of Sir Thomas More, 1535

Link:

<http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/henryviii/greatmatter/lastletter/largeimage93129.html>

Purpose: This is an image of the last letter of Sir Thomas More in his own hand. This source is meant to compliment the plain text source of the same name listed above.

**Source 7:**



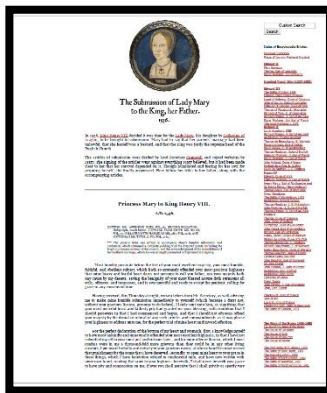
Title: Letter from Anne Boleyn to Henry VIII, from the Tower of London (1536)

Link: <https://englishhistory.net/tudor/queen-anne-boleyn-letter-king-henry-viii/>

Purpose: This source is a letter possibly written by Queen Anne Boleyn to her husband from the Tower of London. She pleads with her husband through this letter of her love for him, as well as professes her innocence to the charges of adultery and treason.



**Source 8:**



Title: Princess Mary to King Henry VIII.

Link:

<http://www.luminarium.org/encyclopedia/marytohenry1536.htm>

Purpose: This source is intended for students to understand the relationship between Henry VIII and his daughter Mary. The language in letter provides light into Mary's perception of her father.

**Source 9:**



Title: Elizabeth I, Queen of England, 1533-1603

Link: <https://www.loc.gov/item/2005688185/>

Purpose: This source is intended to show the only living heir to Henry VIII, Elizabeth I, even after his elaborate attempts to leave a male heir to the Tudor throne.

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