

## HENRY VIII AND HIS MINISTERS

Pathway Guide by Mark Robinson (based on the original Reteach list *Henry VIII's relations with his chief ministers* also by Mark Robinson)

*Please note that all timings are suggestions only so feel free to adapt or change them according to the needs of your students and your timetable. (Times in brackets refer to classroom time.)*

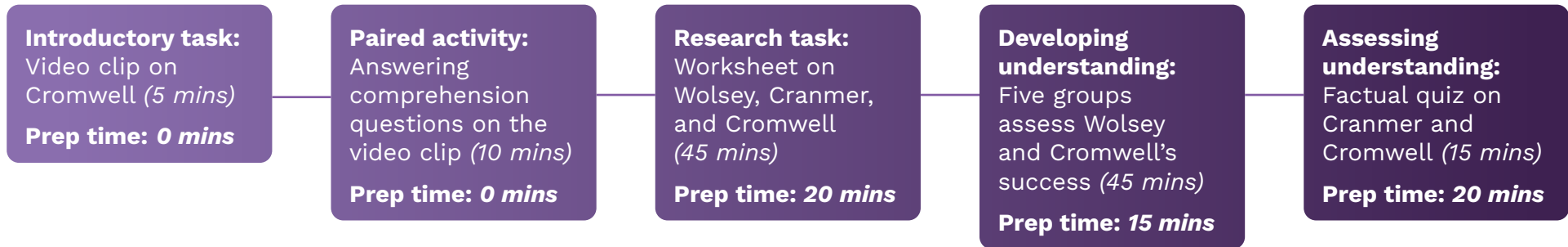
### Enquiry questions

1. Where did power really lie in Tudor government?
2. How did you rise to power in Tudor government?
3. What were the main concerns and issues for Henry VIII and his ministers?
4. Why did powerful figures fall from grace in the Tudor court?
5. To what extent does the nature of Tudor government reflect Tudor society?

### Curriculum and specification mapping

- **KS3 curriculum:** The development of Church, state and society in Britain 1509–1745
- **KS4 curriculum:** [British History from the] Early Modern (1450–1750)
- **AQA specification:** Britain: Power and the people (Part two: Challenging royal authority)
- **Edexcel specification:** Option B3: Henry VIII and his ministers, 1509–1540
- **OCR specification A:** Power: Monarchy and Democracy in Britain c.1000–2014 (Tudor government: growth of royal power under Henry VIII; the role of Parliament under Henry VIII and Elizabeth I)
- **OCR specification A:** British depth studies (The English Reformation, c.1520–c.1550).

## Not much planning time available



- **Introductory task:** Watch the Simon Schama BBC Four clip on the partnership of Cranmer and Cromwell (<https://reteach.org.uk/subject/history/henry-viii-s-relations-with-his-chief-ministers>). This provides an excellent context to the era and the topic.
- **Paired activity:** Help students to understand the nature of the context by completing a table based on the BBC clip:

Watch the video clip and identify the answers to the following questions:	
1. Why didn't England stay as a Catholic country?	
2. What three areas of life did Cranmer, Cromwell and Henry VIII represent?	
3. What kind of agenda were Cromwell and Cranmer putting forward?	
4. What defence did Cromwell create against the Pope's threat of excommunicating Henry VIII?	
5. What three things did Cromwell demand to force obedience to Henry VIII?	

Answers:

Watch the video clip and identify the answers to the following questions:	
1. Why didn't England stay as a Catholic country?	<i>This is due to the working partnership between Archbishop Thomas Cranmer and Thomas Cromwell (Secretary of State).</i>
2. What three areas of life did Cranmer, Cromwell and Henry VIII represent?	<i>Cranmer: Theological Cromwell: Political Henry VIII: Royal triumph</i>
3. What kind of agenda were Cromwell and Cranmer putting forward?	<i>It was 'more radical than the king's'.</i>
4. What defence did Cromwell create against the Pope's threat of excommunicating Henry VIII?	<i>Patriotism</i>
5. What three things did Cromwell demand to force obedience to Henry VIII?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>An oath recognising the royal supremacy</i></li> <li>2. <i>Legitimacy of the heirs of the King and Queen Anne</i></li> <li>3. <i>The bastardisation of Mary.</i></li> </ol>

- **Research task:** Who was Thomas Wolsey? Who was Thomas Cromwell? Use the book summaries and the article by Hilary Mantel on the Reteach website (<https://reteach.org.uk/subject/history/henry-viii-s-relations-with-his-chief-ministers>) to frame some research tasks for students. These can be summarised on the worksheet (below):

	Wolsey	Cranmer	Cromwell
When was he born?			
Where was he from?			
How did he come to Henry VIII's attention?			
What official posts did he hold?			
What were his main actions for Henry VIII?			
How did he fall from power?			
Summary timeline: Pick out three potential turning points in each man's life and write them out into a chronology.			

- **Developing understanding:** Every Tudor monarch faced challenges in a number of common areas. Assign small groups to investigate how successful Wolsey and Cromwell were in sorting out:
  1. Marriage and the succession
  2. Parliament
  3. Domestic policy and finance
  4. The Church
  5. Foreign relations
- **Assessing understanding:** Create a factual quiz on the two ministers. Possible formats could include:
  1. Ordering exercise: Place the 10 key events of the period into chronological order/match to dates
  2. Ten actions of the Tudor government: Identify which was Wolsey and which was Cromwell
  3. 'Quiz, Quiz, Trade': Students review information with their peers by asking and answering questions [Guidelines for Quiz, Quiz, Trade format widely available online]
  4. Basic factual knowledge test
  5. Make a plan of how this quizzing technique could be used over a three-week period to prepare for a history test

## Some planning time available

### Introductory task:

Video clips on Wolsey and Cromwell (10 mins)

Prep time: 0 mins

### Paired activity:

Answering comprehension questions on the clips (10 mins)

Prep time: 0 mins

### Take it further:

Worksheet on the attributes of Wolsey and Cromwell (45 mins)

Prep time: 10 mins

**Discussion:** Six key questions to research and discuss on Wolsey and Cromwell (120 mins)

Prep time: 30 mins

**Debate:** Talent vs Patronage in the Tudor Court (90 mins)

Prep time: 45 mins

- **Introductory task:** Watch both three-minute BBC Four clips (<https://reteach.org.uk/subject/history/henry-viii-s-relations-with-his-chief-ministers>) on:
  - the partnership of Cranmer and Cromwell by Simon Schama
  - Wolsey's building of Hampton Court. This provides an excellent context to the era and the topic.
- **Paired activity:** Help students to understand the nature of the context by completing a table based on the BBC clips:

Wolsey or Cromwell? Look at the different quotes (below) and see if you can remember which was about Wolsey and which was about Cromwell.

	Wolsey or Cromwell?
<i>'out to make a name for himself'</i>	
<i>'the least sentimental Englishman ever to run the country'</i>	
<i>'the most powerful churchman in England'</i>	
<i>'he was prepared to fight hard'</i>	
<i>'indispensable in Henry's court'</i>	

Answers:

Wolsey or Cromwell? Look at the different quotes (below) and see if you can remember which was about Wolsey and which was about Cromwell.

	Wolsey or Cromwell?
<i>'out to make a name for himself'</i>	Cromwell
<i>'the least sentimental Englishman ever to run the country'</i>	Cromwell
<i>'the most powerful churchman in England'</i>	Wolsey
<i>'he was prepared to fight hard'</i>	Cromwell
<i>'indispensable in Henry's court'</i>	Wolsey

- **Take it further:** Research Henry VIII's two ministers in greater depth by exploring the quotes identified in the video clips (above). Use the resources on the Reteach website <https://reteach.org.uk/subject/history/henry-viii-s-relations-with-his-chief-ministers> to find evidence to support each statement:

Wolsey:

*'the most powerful churchman in England'*

*'indispensable in Henry's court'*

Cromwell:

*'out to make a name for himself'*

*'the least sentimental Englishman ever to run the country'*

*'he was prepared to fight hard'*

- **Discussion:** Discuss with the class what motivated the key figures in Henry VIII's government, namely Wolsey and Cromwell? Why, and to what extent, was Henry VIII willing to surrender control of day-to-day government? How much power did Wolsey and Cromwell actually wield? Was it inevitable that Wolsey and Cromwell would eventually fall from power? Could they have resigned/been replaced peacefully?
- **Debate:** Read Chapter 2 of Matusiak's Wolsey biography entitled simply *Wolsey*, and Chapter 2 of MacCulloch's Cromwell biography *Thomas Cromwell: A Life*. Support these with wider research on the internet into the background of each man. When you have gathered this information, divide the class into two. Group 1 will argue that talent is all that was necessary to get ahead in the Tudor court. (Group 2 should record the points raised.) Group 2 will then argue that luck and good patronage were more significant, while Group 1 records their points. Having explored the issues, you could conclude by discussing the renowned 1953 publication *Tudor Revolution in Government*. How far do the careers of Wolsey and Cromwell support the idea of a traditional medieval style of government, or a new modern style of government?

## Longer planning time available

**Overview:** England in 1509 (45 mins)

**Prep time: 20 mins**

**Research task:** Five key issues confronting Henry VIII during his reign (150 mins)

**Prep time: 45 mins**

**Project work:** Five key roles in the Tudor government of England (150 mins)

**Prep time: 45 mins**

**Extension task:** The power of women in the Tudor court (90 mins)

**Prep time: 30 mins**

**Taking it further:** The focus of Tudor governments (60 mins)

**Prep time: 40 mins**

- **Overview:** Think more widely about the nature of Tudor government. When Henry VIII inherited the throne, what were the challenges that he faced? How far could England be described as being in a healthy state in 1509? Assess Henry VIII's character: How does it influence the government of England?
- **Research task:** Explore with the class the main issues that emerge in Henry VIII's reign: Relations with France, the question of the succession, the divorce, the split with Rome, and opposition to religious change.
- **Project work:** Students have to imagine that they are curating a museum exhibition on the roles of different characters in Tudor government. Each group could take a character and outline their responsibilities and powers, choosing a small selection of objects from the internet/on a pre-prepared Google Slide to illustrate their work. For example: Tudor coins, wax seals, heraldic devices, buildings, portraits, maps, family trees, jewellery.

Characters to use: King (Henry VIII), Cardinal (Wolsey), Lord Chamberlain (for example, Cromwell), Archbishop of Canterbury (for example, Cranmer), Groom of the Stool (for example, Sir Anthony Denny).

Each object chosen for the museum should have an explanation identifying how it addresses questions such as: How could the post be acquired? How far was the role independent of the monarch? To what extent was the role able to affect the processes of government? etc.

- **Extension task:** Extend the project work by looking at the role of the queen in Henry VIII's court. Examine the life and roles of Catherine of Aragon, Anne Boleyn and Jane Seymour (add Anne of Cleves, Katherine Howard and Catherine Parr if there is time). Groups could take one or two queens each. How powerful were the royal wives? To what extent was Henry VIII influenced by his queens?
- **Taking it further:** Extend the project work even further by trying to match the roles in Tudor government with modern roles in government. What activities are governments now involved in that did not happen in the 16th century? For example the environment, welfare, equality. Why were these aspects of life not a concern to Tudor administrators? Explore the concept of the Tudor revolution in government in depth. Assess how far the Tudors introduced a 'modern' form of government, and how far they were simply adapting traditional forms. Why were such a small group of aristocrats able to hold power without being challenged very often? What do the careers of Wolsey and Cromwell suggest about the opportunities that existed for people from outside this group?