

# Section 2: Activities

## Introduction

This section provides additional information and activities about how people lived during Tudor times. You may like to use these pages as worksheets for additional class exercises, to make during a Tudor day (see pages 18–19), or simply as information.

## Choose a queen for Henry

Learning about the life and times of Henry's wives serves several purposes. First, it allows students to see history from a different point of view – that of the wives. Second, it is an opportunity for students to explore some of the behind-the-scenes politics and life of the aristocracy and royals in Tudor times. This class exercise is one way that students can put themselves in the shoes of those behind the scenes and learn a little about Tudor politics.

The following pages contain information about some of the women who were 'in the running' for Henry's wife.

You can use these in several ways. You may wish to photocopy and cut the cards out and hand them to pairs or groups of students. Each pair would then represent a prospective wife (or Henry) and an advisor. The students could then work out some arguments and present their case – trying to convince Henry and his advisor of whom he should marry.

You may also wish to use the cards as the beginning of a research project. Again, you could give students or groups of students a card and they could research their subjects, or use their knowledge of Tudor times to make their case for who should be Henry's wife. You, or 'Henry' could then judge if the real Henry made the correct choice.

Children could also write scripts for each character and then put on a 'Who would make the best wife for Henry' play. At the end, the audience could choose who was best. The play could start with a brief overview of the political situation in Europe at the start of Tudor times.

## Henry VIII: King of England

**Likes:** Sports, poetry, hunting, dancing, beautiful women, reading.

**Dislikes:** Anyone who disagrees with him, people who are not loyal, women who interfere too much and do not listen to him.

**What he is looking for in a wife:** Beauty, a woman to bear sons, someone who appreciates music and poetry and loyalty. Someone who will not interfere in the affairs of state.

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### Henry VIII's chancellor (the king's chief advisor)

**What he wants from Henry's wife:** Someone from another country, the right religious background – someone from a Protestant country would be good. Someone to keep Henry VIII happy so he doesn't want to kill too many nobles and anger people. Someone who is pious and good and who the people like. She should be able to talk in an interesting way and know about life at court. Her looks are not important, although they are important to Henry.

## Eleanor of Austria

Eight years younger than Henry. Daughter of Archduke Philip the Handsome, who is heir to vast lands in Europe and may become Holy Roman Emperor. Eleanor's mother, Juana, is the ruler of Castile, Spain's most important territory and in line to inherit more land.

**Likes:** Reading, literature, needlework, talking about religion.

**For:** She would help Henry VIII to make alliances with Spain and with others, whose money could help Henry.

**Against:** She is Catholic. She is well read and religious, so she might try to influence Henry.

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**Eleanor's advisor:** Thinks Henry VIII would be a good match for Eleanor and would help make a powerful Austrian–English marriage that could influence events in Europe in favour of Austria.

## Catherine of Aragon

Daughter of Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile, both of Spain, whose marriage had united Spain under one rule.

**Likes:** Reading, writing, literature, politics, needlework, music, prayer and talking about religion.

**For:** Ferdinand and Isabella are Europe's most powerful rulers and an alliance with them would help England. Catherine had been married to Henry's brother Arthur for a short time before Arthur died, and Henry has known Catherine since he was 10. Only half of Catherine's huge dowry had been paid when Arthur died, and 100,000 crowns in cash, plate and jewels will be paid when she marries again. Catherine's family would also give Henry important ties that could be used in any war against long-time enemy France.

**Against:** She is older than Henry so there is less time for her to produce an heir. She is a Catholic and has friends in high places who might make trouble for Henry. She is very smart and may try to get involved in politics. England may wish to go to war against Spain at some point and that might be difficult with Catherine as queen.

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**Catherine's advisor:** Thinks Catherine could have made a better match once, but knows she is now in a difficult position. She has no position or income in England and needs to get married quickly in order to make a good marriage before she gets too old. Thinks Henry is the best chance for this.

### Marie de Guise

The eldest daughter of Claude, an important French duke. James V of Scotland is very interested in marrying her.

**Likes:** Her home, art, reading, music and dance.

**For:** She already has two sons, so we know she can have sons. If James V of Scotland married her, they would make an alliance which could be dangerous for England.

**Against:** She does not like Henry and would prefer to marry James. She does not speak English.

**Marie's advisor:** Worried about King Henry VIII as he does not have a very good reputation with women. For one thing, Henry wants all possible wives to come to England so he could see if they are pretty. Marie is pretty, but she thinks Henry's demand is insulting. He thinks Marie would have a more important role married to James of Scotland, as she would be helping him against the English.

### Christina of Milan

The daughter of King Christian of Denmark, and recently widowed wife of the Duke of Milan, and niece to the powerful Holy Roman Emperor.

**Likes:** Art, music, dance, needlework, religious charity and discussion.

**For:** She is beautiful and her family is very influential throughout Europe.

**Against:** She is slim, which Henry does not like, although she could always gain some weight. Her family have strong ties to the Catholic Church, so she might stir up trouble. She hates Henry and does not want to marry him.

**Christina's advisor:** Says "don't do it" and thinks Christina could end up with her head chopped off. Thinks Christina should refuse on the grounds that she is the great-niece of Catherine of Aragon and so is already related to Henry.