



# The Tudors

## England 1485–1603

David Ferriby  
Angela Anderson  
Tony Imperato

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# Contents

Introduction

v

## Part One: Consolidation of the Tudor Dynasty: England, 1485–1547

### Section 1: Henry VII, 1485–1509

#### Chapter 1: The establishment of the Tudors: Henry VII

1

1 England in 1485

2

2 Henry VII and the consolidation of power

11

3 Removing threats to Henry's power

24

4 Relations with other countries, 1485–1509

27

Working on essay technique: focus, structure and deploying detail

36

Working on interpretation skills: extended reading

38

#### Chapter 2: The rule of Henry VIII and Wolsey, 1509–29

40

1 Henry VIII: the start of a new era

41

2 Wolsey as chief minister – Church and State

46

3 England's relations with foreign powers, 1509–29

54

4 Henry's quest for a divorce

58

Working on essay technique: analysis

63

Working on interpretation skills

65

### Section 2: Henry VIII, 1509–1547

#### Chapter 3: The break with Rome in the 1530s

67

1 The Reformation Parliament and the establishment of Royal Supremacy

68

2 The extent of religious change in the 1530s

76

3 Opposition to religious change

83

4 Royal authority and government in the 1530s

87

Working on essay technique: argument, counter-argument and resolution

92

Working on interpretation skills

96

#### Chapter 4: Henry VIII's last years

100

1 England's relations with foreign powers

101

2 Factions at court and the succession

105

3 Position of the Church by 1547

111

4 Assessment of Henry VIII's reign

114

Working on essay technique: evaluation and relative significance

118

Working on interpretation skills: extended reading

120

Key Questions: England, 1485–1547

122

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## Part Two: England: Turmoil and Triumph, 1547–1603

### Section 1: Instability and consolidation: ‘the mid-Tudor Crisis’, 1547–1563

<b>Chapter 5 The Reigns of Edward VI and Mary</b>	<b>126</b>
1 Regency of Somerset, 1547–49	127
2 Rule of Northumberland, 1549–53	134
3 Reign of Mary Tudor, 1553–58	139
4 To what extent was there a mid-Tudor crisis?	146
Working on essay technique	148
Working on interpretation skills	149

<b>Chapter 6 The beginning of Elizabeth’s reign, 1558–63</b>	<b>150</b>
1 Elizabeth’s accession	151
2 Elizabeth’s religious settlement, 1558–63	156
3 Marriage and the succession: Elizabeth’s dilemma	163
4 Social and economic conditions in the mid-sixteenth century	167
Working on essay technique	175
Working on interpretation skills: extended reading	176

### Section 2: The triumph of Elizabeth, 1563–1603

<b>Chapter 7 Elizabethan England: Queen, government and changing religious ideas</b>	<b>178</b>
1 Elizabeth and her court	179
2 Elizabethan government	189
3 Elizabeth and her Parliaments	194
4 Elizabeth: Religion and religious ideas	199
5 Church of England by 1603	209
Working on essay technique	212
Working on interpretation skills	213

<b>Chapter 8 Conflict and exploration in Elizabeth’s reign</b>	<b>214</b>
1 Mary Queen of Scots	215
2 Foreign policy in the reign of Elizabeth	220
3 Trade, exploration and colonisation	228
4 Closing years of Elizabeth’s reign	233
Working on essay technique	240
Working on interpretation skills: extended reading	241

<b>Key Questions: England, 1485–1603</b>	<b>243</b>
--	------------

<b>Further research</b>	<b>246</b>
-------------------------	------------

<b>Glossary of terms</b>	<b>251</b>
--------------------------	------------

<b>Index</b>	<b>253</b>
--------------	------------

## 3 Opposition to religious change

It is impossible to quantify, but many people in England were either suspicious of religious change or were totally opposed to it. We cannot know exactly what was happening. The nature of historical evidence means that we tend to know more about the activities and beliefs of the educated and famous rather than the ordinary illiterate villager or townspeople.

### NOTE-MAKING

Make notes on the individuals and groups who opposed the religious changes of the 1530s, and on why the government was able to deal with them successfully.

### Opposition to change

#### Who opposed religious change, and why did they fail to prevent it?

The main problem facing those who were uneasy about events during the late 1520s and early 1530s was that it was unclear where matters were heading. There was no single great event to take a stand against until the break with Rome was made official by the 1534 Act of Supremacy. Even then, many people (including the Pope) assumed that the break was only temporary, until Henry could sort out his marital problems. So, religious conservatives were unable to mount a successful opposition to Henry's plans because, in the words of Christopher Haigh, *'they did not know that they were in "the Reformation"'*.

As a result, those opposing religious change mounted only a feeble resistance before 1534 and, although they reacted more vigorously afterwards, they had left the real challenge too late.

### Resistance at court

Some individuals, including Sir Thomas More and old-established families such as the Howards, were very traditional in their beliefs. They were important people at Henry's court and tried to use their influence against the infiltration of Protestantism.

#### Sir Thomas More

Sir Thomas More (see page 68) was the most high-profile opponent of the royal divorce and the changes of 1534. He had replaced Wolsey as Chancellor for a brief period after 1529, but had fallen from royal favour when he showed reluctance to support Henry's plans to marry Anne Boleyn. In 1534 the Succession Act was passed. This made the children of Anne Boleyn the legitimate heirs to the throne. Catherine's daughter, Mary, was declared illegitimate because Henry's marriage to her had been declared invalid. More refused to swear an oath accepting this and was sent to the Tower of London. He refused to explain why he would not take the oath, but it seems likely that he felt that it would go against the Pope's authority. Although More wisely avoided incriminating himself, a trial rigged by Thomas Cromwell sealed his fate. According to evidence provided by Sir Richard Rich, one of Cromwell's supporters who was to become the head of the Court of Augmentations in 1540, More was alleged to have been overheard in prison saying that he did not accept Henry as head of the Church. This was slender proof of treason, but enough for the court, which ordered his execution. More had used passive resistance to signal his opposition to the changes going on around him, but he was too famous as a politician and too widely respected as a humanist to avoid persecution.

**Source H** From an account of the execution of Sir Thomas More, from *The Life of Sir Thomas More*, by William Roper (who was More's son-in-law).

And so the next day, being Tuesday, More's great friend Sir Thomas Pope came to him with a message from the King and his Council that he should suffer death before nine of the clock the same morning. 'Master Pope', said Sir Thomas More, 'for your good tidings I heartily thank you. I have been always much bounden to the King for the benefits and honours that he has from time to time most bountifully heaped upon me, and I am even more bounden to him for putting me into this place. And, most of all, I am bounden to his Highness that it pleases him so shortly to put me out of the miseries of this wretched world and therefore I will not fail earnestly to pray for him both here and also in the world to come.' 'The King's pleasure is further', said Master Pope, 'that you shall not use so many words'.

And so he was brought out of the Tower, and from there led to the place of execution. Where, going up to the scaffold (which was so weak that it was ready to fall), he said merrily to the lieutenant, 'I pray you, see me safely up, and for my coming down let me shift for myself'. Then desired he that all the people thereabouts pray for him, and to bear witness with him that he should now suffer death in and for the faith of the Holy Catholic Church. Which done, he knelt down and turned to the executioner with a cheerful countenance and said, 'Pluck up thy spirits, man, and be not afraid to do your work. My neck is very short, so take heed and do not strike badly, to save your reputation'. So passed Sir Thomas More out of this world and to God.

- 1 What does Source H reveal about More's character?
- 2 How can the account help to show why More was regarded as such a danger by the King?

### Aragonese faction

Before 1534, those who opposed the attack on the Church generally expressed their concerns by being sympathetic to Catherine of Aragon in the matter of the royal divorce. Within the nobility, and at court, there was a personal following for Catherine among the 'Aragonese' faction. This consisted of a small group of nobles and courtiers, led by Henry Courtenay, Marquis of Exeter, and the northern Lords Darcy and Hussey, who supported Catherine of Aragon in the divorce question. Courtenay was a member of the King's Privy Chamber, while another supporter – Sir Henry Guildford – was the Comptroller [Controller] of the King's Household. From 1532, the stronger presence of Anne Boleyn and her supporters at court and the growing influence of Thomas Cromwell within the King's Council had largely silenced the Aragonese faction. However, they remained hopeful after the divorce that Catherine's daughter Mary would be recognised as Henry's heir. Her exclusion from the succession in 1536 helped to push Darcy and Hussey into supporting the rebellion known as the Pilgrimage of Grace (see pages 85–86) and their execution for treason. Courtenay did not become involved in the rebellion, but he did become linked to the activities of Reginald Pole, his distant cousin who was a descendant of the Yorkist kings overthrown by the Tudors. This association was enough to cause Henry to arrest Courtenay and to order his execution in 1539.

### Resistance within the clergy

One bishop in particular stood out against Henry. John Fisher had been Bishop of Rochester since 1504. He had never shown any interest in world promotion or wealth. He studied and prayed and believed that Henry's actions against Catherine were totally wrong. He said so to Henry's face. However, Henry took a relatively lenient view until Fisher refused, like More, to swear the oath accepting the divorce. Fisher was imprisoned in the Tower. When the Pope declared that Fisher was to be made a Cardinal, Henry acted quickly. Fisher was accused of high treason, tried and executed. While Fisher was, in law, guilty, Henry's action gained support for Fisher's cause and provided evidence for accusations that Henry acted as a tyrant when it suited him to do so.

### Elizabeth Barton, the Nun of Kent

Elizabeth Barton had been subject to visions since her teens, following an illness in 1525 and an apparently miraculous cure by a vision of the Virgin Mary. She had acquired local fame and been sent to a nunnery under the protection of Dr Edward Bocking, a Canterbury monk. By 1528 her visions had begun to focus on the King's marriage and she had warned of disastrous consequences if he abandoned his wife. Her threats continued and included telling the King to his face that he would be dead within a month if he divorced Catherine. The likelihood is that Elizabeth herself believed her visions, but those around her were playing a more political game.

By 1530 Bocking had developed Elizabeth's warnings into a wider campaign against changes in the Church, the influence of humanism and the Boleyn marriage, by encouraging pilgrims and publishing books describing her visions and the warnings they contained. Rumours were deliberately circulated about miraculous interventions, including the story that an angel had appeared while the King was at mass and seized the communion bread from his hands. Letters were sent to More and Fisher; links were established with Exeter (Courtenay) and Hussey, and with the Carthusian monks in London who were to prove a centre of resistance to the Royal Supremacy in 1534. All this suggested that an orchestrated campaign was being prepared.

Faced with this evidence Cromwell acted, and the nun and her mentors were arrested in September 1533. After a public humiliation at St Paul's Cross in London, where Elizabeth confessed that her visions were false, they were executed in April 1534. The judges could find no specific crime committed by Elizabeth, but the group were condemned by an Act of Attainder. While the nun's fate was tragic, her mentors had cynically exploited her fame for several years, and their attempts to co-ordinate a resistance movement represented a genuine threat that no government could afford to ignore.

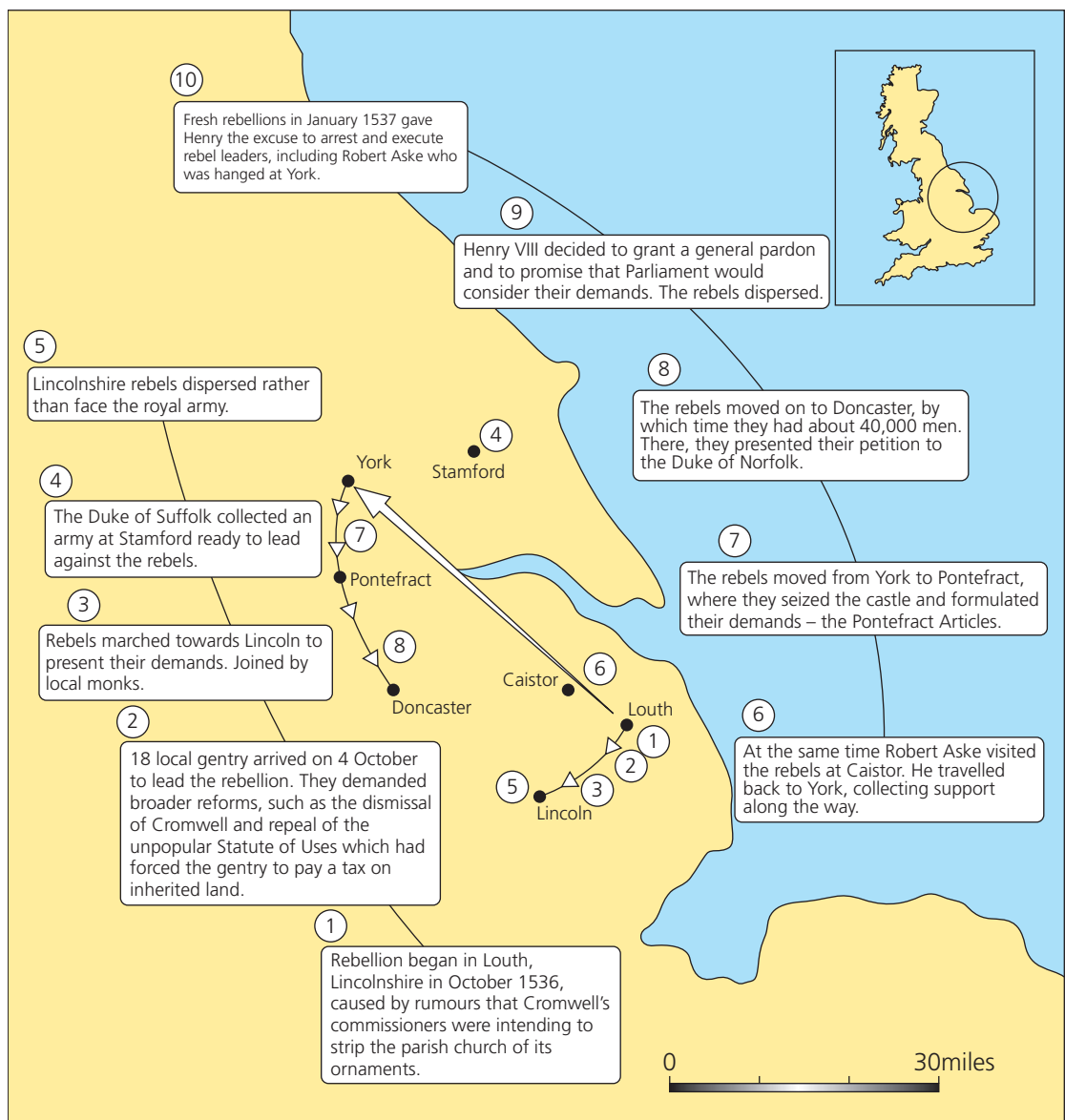
### Monastic resistance

By far the strongest clerical resistance to Henry came from the monastic orders. While the Cistercians and Benedictines, who owned the great rural monasteries dissolved after 1536, were not widely active, there were many examples of individual monks who preached against the divorce, the supremacy and the new heresies that came with them.

More significant, and certainly more organised, was the reaction of the widely respected London monks of the Carthusian order, who had remained closer to the strict ideals of monasticism. In 1532–33 they refused to accept the divorce and in 1534 resisted government pressure to agree to a declaration against the authority of the Pope. The government could not permit such defiance, and after the passage of the Treason Act, forced the Carthusians to submit, arresting the most reluctant and executing eighteen of them.

### Resistance within the country

The government's success in containing opposition has led some historians to argue that resistance to the Henrician Reformation was both weak and minimal, never a serious threat to the King's position. In 1536, however, riots started in Louth in Lincolnshire. The townspeople were proud of their tall church spire which had been completed in 1515 and was nearly 300 feet high. Three sets of royal commissioners had visited the town within a few weeks of each other and there were wild rumours that the King or his ministers were going to close all the churches and that taxes were going to increase. The town also had a large monastery with a small number of



▲ Figure 4 Course of the Pilgrimage of Grace, 1536–37.

monks that was being closed. The riots in Lincolnshire quickly spread across the whole of the north (see Figure 4). At the height of the rebellion the King's forces faced 40,000 'pilgrims' in arms. This was the most serious challenge to royal authority so far within the Tudor period. Study the map of the Pilgrimage of Grace (Figure 4) which shows the details of the events and the King's reaction.

### Scale of resistance against the religious changes

Overall, it has to be said that the momentous social, economic and cultural changes resulting from the closing of all the religious houses caused little in the way of revolt. It used to be claimed by writers from a Protestant viewpoint that this was because most people were fed up with the shortcomings and scandals of the Catholic Church and welcomed the changes. However, this picture of a Church in crisis waiting to be reformed is a false one. The Church was in no worse a situation in the 1500s than it had been for at least a century and most

**Source I** From *Tudor England* by John Guy, OUP, 1988, p.149.

The Pilgrimage of Grace was threatening because nobles, gentry, clergy and people combined forces, and because they shared an ideology. Indeed this revolt was neither a clash between different social groups nor a split within the governing class, but a popular rising by northerners in general.

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ordinary people were not interested in the novelties of religious doctrine. What happened in church services in these years had not greatly altered – until the Bible in English appeared.

Cromwell had made sure that all the changes appeared legal – they were passed by Act of Parliament and therefore had the approval of the important people in each locality. The Treasons Act was an attempt to discourage opposition and, where necessary, the Act was used to silence opponents.

Once the process of dissolving the monasteries was under way, the heads of religious houses were given generous pensions and the monks a basic pension. The piecemeal process by which the monasteries were dissolved also reduced the scope for any opponents to mount a united opposition to what was happening.

### KEY DATES: OPPOSITION TO CHANGE

**1532** Resignation of Sir Thomas More

**1534** Execution of Elizabeth Barton and others following an Act of Attainder

**1535** Execution of Sir Thomas More and Bishop John Fisher

**1535–40** Execution of eighteen Carthusian monks

**1536–37** Pilgrimage of Grace

## 4 Royal authority and government in the 1530s

In the 1530s the nature and extent of royal authority changed. Through the process of obtaining a divorce, Henry had claimed powers at the expense of the Pope. Thomas Cromwell used the opportunity to institute reforms in the organisation of central government, though it is important not to exaggerate the extent of those changes.

### Reform of government

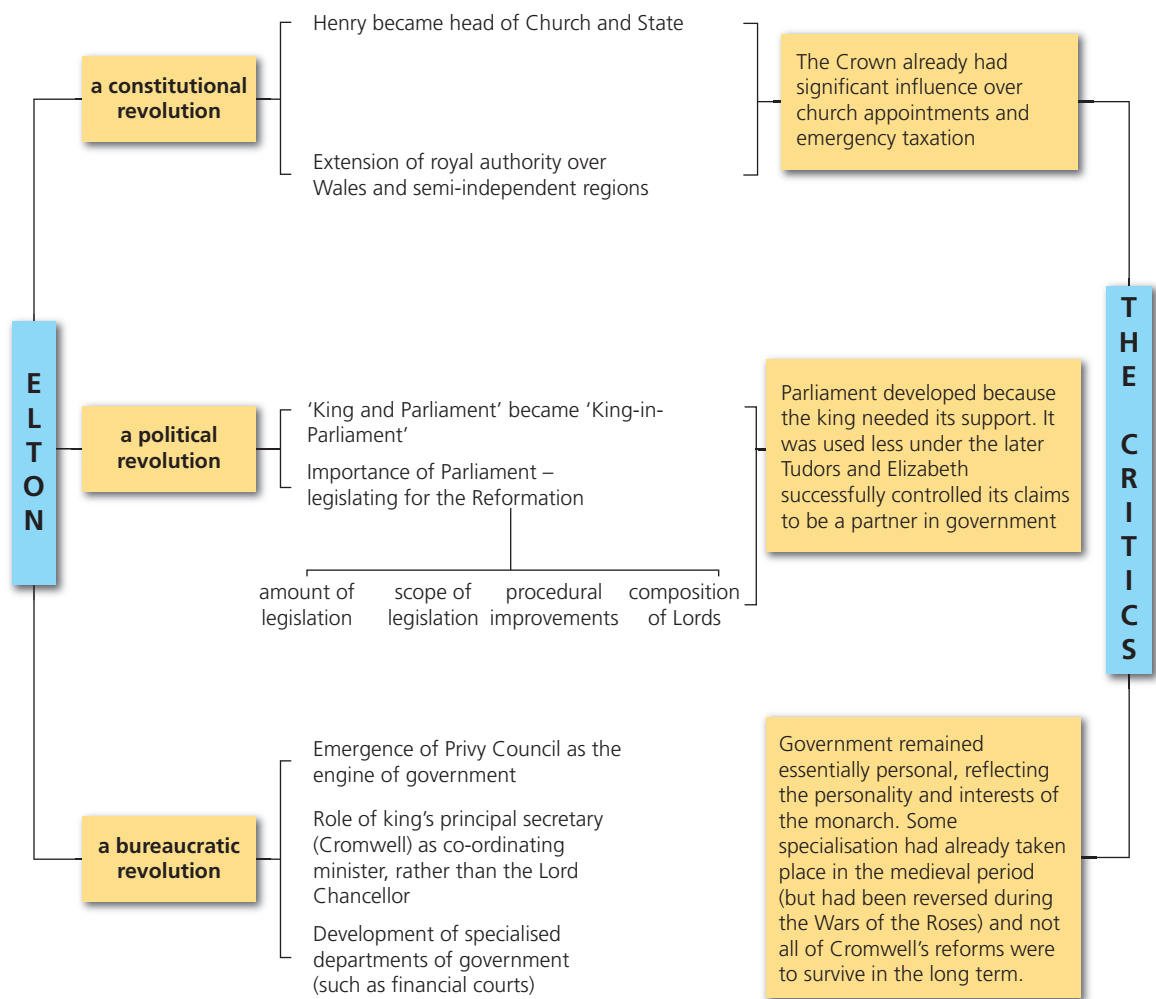
**How big a change took place to government, and with what effects?**

One of the most contentious issues among historians over the past half-century has been whether or not Cromwell brought about changes in the structure of government that amounted to a revolution. Those who believe that he did regard Cromwell's actions as modernising the system of government into one that was distinct from the medieval idea of 'personal monarchy' (where the monarch was directly involved in decision making through his or her offices in the royal court), and which would be recognisable today as 'bureaucratic government' (where specialised departments and trained officials manage the routine matters of government).

The argument was originally made by Geoffrey Elton in 1953, in a book entitled *The Tudor Revolution in Government*. Since then, writers (including Elton himself) have watered down and modified some of his key arguments. Some of the historians who have challenged Elton have been his former pupils, especially David Starkey whose own detailed research on the period provides evidence that contradicts some of Elton's bolder claims. The result is a view of political reform in the 1530s which accepts that new institutions arose and that government expanded to cope with the changes brought about by Henry VIII's decision to break away from the Pope's control to get the divorce he needed. However, this view questions how far these changes were planned by Cromwell and how far the changes represented systems that were entirely new.

### NOTE-MAKING

Your notes should focus on the changes to systems of government and on the extent of the changes in practice. You will see that there is not total agreement on this, and this needs to feature in your notes as well.



▲ Figure 5 Summary of the 'Tudor revolution in government' historical debate.

## Royal Council

In the era of personal monarchy during Henry VII's reign, the King met regularly with his Royal Council of advisers. The council was a large group (although not everyone attended every meeting) which included leading noblemen, clergy and members of the King's household staff. During Henry VIII's reign a more professional Privy Council emerged. It was different from the old one because it contained fewer people, perhaps no more than 20 members, and was mainly composed of professionally trained lawyers and bureaucrats, rather than notables from the wider ruling class.

Historians disagree, however, about whether it appeared at all in the 1530s or was in fact a creation of the early 1540s after Cromwell's fall. It had also been suggested by Wolsey as a potential reform in 1526 – when one of his chief advisers was the young Thomas Cromwell. There was a move towards a smaller group of members in the 1530s which was important during the period of crisis in 1536–37 after the start of the Pilgrimage of Grace. However, it is doubtful whether the change in practice was extensive or part of a planned major change, as opposed to a reaction to particular circumstances.

## Financial management

The Tudors had generally continued the system introduced by Edward IV of managing national finances not through the slow workings of the Exchequer and Treasury, but from offices in their private rooms in the palace – the Privy Chamber. This gave monarchs significant control over day-to-day decisions about all aspects of income and expenditure. Cromwell created new financial institutions alongside the Privy Chamber to manage the new revenues generated by the break with Rome. In all, four new departments were created:

- The Court of Augmentations – which controlled the land and finances formerly under the control of the Catholic Church.
- The Court of General Surveyors – which initially handled some of the ex-monastic land, but was soon amalgamated with the Court of Augmentations.
- The Court of First Fruits and Tenths – which collected money previously sent to Rome.
- The Court of Wards – the King had the ancient feudal right to collect money from the estate of a minor, under the age of 21, who had inherited.

So, by 1540, increasing specialism had apparently been introduced into the management of royal finances, although Cromwell recognised that the Privy Chamber remained an important part of the system and continued to work through it.

## The King's advisers

As a result of the bureaucratic changes described above, professional administrators rather than untrained members of the nobility and clergy were needed to maintain the system. Both Wolsey and Cromwell represented this new breed of government official – hard-working and often from humble origins. Unlike the nobility, these men depended on the King for their promotions and titles, so formed an utterly loyal band of royal servants.

## Power of the Crown

### How much did the Crown increase its power in the 1530s?

Another feature of the debate about the significance of the 1530s has been what effect it had on the power and authority of the monarchy. In the introduction to the Act in Restraint of Appeals in 1533, Cromwell wrote that, historically, England was an empire and that everyone owed the King, ruling under God, total obedience (see page 74 for the preamble's wording). Cromwell's purpose in writing this was to set up the argument that Englishmen should not have the automatic right to appeal to Rome to give them judgments in religious cases, because the King was supreme in his own lands. However, the passage has also been taken to mean something more. Cromwell seems to be suggesting that England was an independent political body ('an Empire' that had been 'accepted so in the world') and that it was a single, unitary state, with all power derived from the monarch.

This view contrasted with the reality of England in 1533. First, the King was subject to the Pope's views in matters of religious doctrine and was supposed to seek the Pope's permission when choosing bishops and other high-ranking religious officials. Second, parts of England held 'liberties' which gave them semi-independent status. For example, Durham was governed by the Bishop as a semi-independent ruler. Another example was Wales which was no longer independent, but neither had it formally been made part of the English system of government. The consequence of these and other examples was that royal authority was spread unevenly across the country.

## LOOK AGAIN

Evaluate the powers of the monarchy by 1540 compared with the description of national government on pages 20–21.

**Statute law** – Laws made by Parliament with royal consent. By the sixteenth century statute law was generally regarded as the highest form of law in England.

**Proclamations** – Decrees by the King on policy matters either falling outside the scope of parliamentary authority or made when Parliament was not in session to cope with an unusual circumstance or emergency. In 1539 the Proclamations Act gave these royal decrees equal force with parliamentary statutes, but also said that proclamations could not contravene existing statutes.

**King-in-Parliament** – The term 'King-in-Parliament' needs to be fully understood to avoid confusion. It does not mean the same as King and Parliament, which implies two separate powerful institutions. King-in-Parliament refers to government by the King, but implies that some of his functions, in particular the making of law, are carried out in Parliament rather than by the King alone. Through Parliament, the King could make statute law, the highest form of law: a statute (Act of Parliament) that had been agreed by both houses and signed by the King took precedence over any earlier law or custom and could only be changed by another statute.

Cromwell dealt with this by using the occasion of the break with Rome (which sorted out the first problem) to extend royal power more firmly across the kingdom. In 1536 an Act of Union with Wales reorganised local government in the principality and the borderlands of the marches (the border area between England and Wales). At the same time an Act against Liberties and Franchises removed and restricted the special powers exercised by regional nobles in the more remote parts of the kingdom, such as those held by the Bishop in the Palatinate of Durham. Cromwell's aim was not merely to limit the power of the magnates, but to provide consistent application of the law.

## Role and importance of Parliament

### How much did the function and power of Parliament change in the 1530s?

During the 1530s Cromwell used Parliament extensively to enact the legislation needed to legalise the break with Rome and to strengthen royal authority in outlying regions. Until then, Parliaments had not been a regular part of government, and although **statute law** had long been recognised as the highest form of law in England, kings were still able to make law by **proclamation** on many issues. The role of, and power exercised by, Parliament tended to depend on the state of royal finances. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, when the Hundred Years' War was exhausting royal revenues, Parliaments had been called frequently and were able to exercise considerable influence over the choice of royal advisers and the measures taken by them. It should be stressed, however, that the House of Lords tended to take the lead and in many ways these Parliaments were an extension of noble politics. The restoration of royal finances under Edward IV and Henry VII had reversed this trend. Parliaments were rarely called and operated in partnership with the Crown. The expenses of Henry VIII's foreign policy under Wolsey had led to some friction with Parliament, and Wolsey chose not to call it unless it was unavoidable. There was, therefore, nothing to indicate the role that Parliament was to play in the 1530s when it was summoned at the time of the fall of Wolsey.

The Parliament that met in 1529 was to be unlike any that had gone before. It remained in being for seven years and passed a quantity and range of laws unseen before that point in parliamentary history. This stability and workload helped Parliament to develop its procedures and gave MPs a level of experience that was rare. For example, the process for passing a bill after three readings in both Lords and Commons became standard practice. Equally significant, Parliament legislated in areas of government and the Church where it had never previously been involved. By the end of the 1530s it was recognised that statute law made by the **King-in-Parliament** represented ultimate authority in England and Wales and could be applied to virtually any aspect of life and society. Moreover, if any future monarchs wished to change the laws that had been made, they would have to do so in co-operation with Parliament.

Cromwell chose to use Parliament in a way that his predecessors had not because he needed the status of statute law to strengthen the changes that he was making in Church and government. Parliament contained representatives of the 'political nation' – the governing class – on whom the King relied to make his policies happen. In the early 1530s the House of Lords contained 51 peers, 21 bishops and about 29 abbots, representing the nobility and the Church. The House of Commons had 310 members, 74 representing the English counties and 236 representing towns and boroughs.

The county members and some of the borough MPs were members of the lesser nobility, while borough members included merchants and royal administrators. With such a cross-section of the political nation present in Parliament, any changes it enacted were likely to be implemented smoothly, while any resistance from Parliament could be an early warning sign of trouble in implementing the King's wishes.

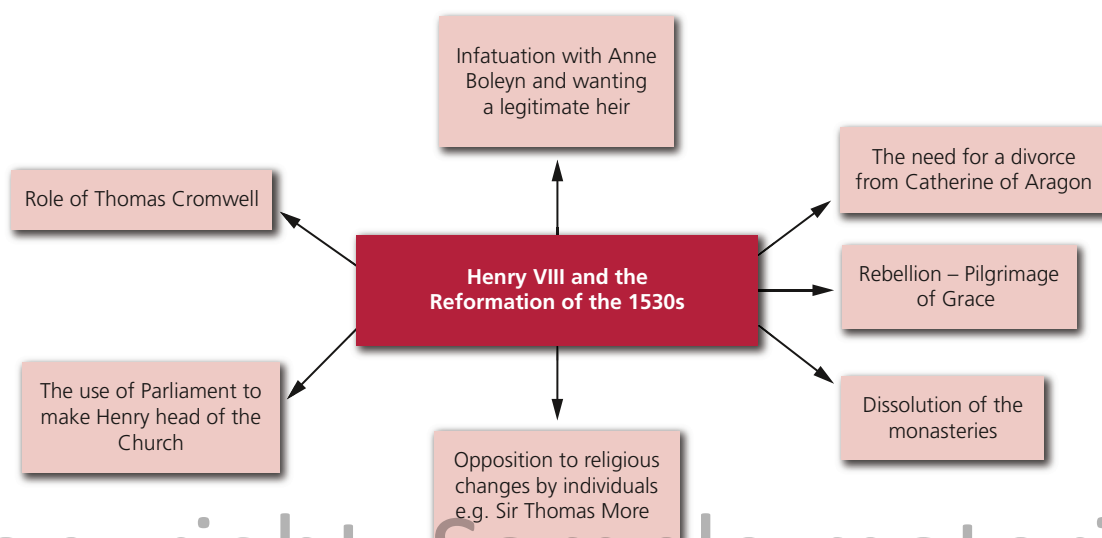
## Composition of Parliament

The composition of Parliament changed considerably as a result of developments in the 1530s. After the dissolution of the monasteries the abbots disappeared and the number of bishops increased slightly with the foundation of four new cathedrals, while the number of peers increased to 55 by 1534. This meant that the clergy were now in a minority in the House of Lords. In the Commons, 14 new boroughs were given the right to elect MPs, while the increased status and importance of the chamber brought a growing tendency for gentleman landowners to seek election.

## Chapter summary

- Henry VIII's divorce was gained through Parliament, not the Pope.
- Parliament was used to declare Henry VIII as Supreme Head of the Church.
- Government propaganda was used to justify Henry replacing the Pope.
- During the reign, religious change began to influence England as Protestantism was introduced.
- Archbishop Cranmer defined the beliefs of the Church of England.
- The dissolution of the monasteries was successfully accomplished.
- There were major consequences for the monarch, the Church and society following the dissolution of the monasteries.
- Some individuals such as Thomas More opposed the Reformation.
- The Pilgrimage of Grace, opposing aspects of religious change, was a potentially major rebellion.
- Thomas Cromwell was extremely important for the smooth running of government in the 1530s, though there are debates about the extent of the administrative changes he introduced.

### Chapter summary diagram



## Working on essay technique: argument, counter-argument and resolution

Essays that develop a good argument are more likely to reach the highest levels. This is because argumentative essays are much more likely to develop sustained analysis. As you know, your essays are judged on the extent to which they analyse. The mark scheme opposite is for the full A-level. It is virtually the same for AS level. Both stress the need to analyse and evaluate the key features related to the periods studied. It distinguishes between five different levels of analysis (as well as other relevant skills that are the ingredients of good essays).

The key feature of the highest level is sustained analysis: analysis that unites the whole of the essay.

You can set up an argument in your introduction, but you should develop it throughout the essay. One way of doing this is to adopt an argument, counter-argument structure (see below). This approach will be very relevant on certain topics and questions where there are different opinions. We will first look at techniques for developing sustained analysis and argument before looking at the counter-argument technique.

### Argument and sustained analysis

Good essays will analyse the keys issues discussed in the essay. They will probably have a clear piece of analysis at the end of each paragraph. This will offer a judgement on the question and is likely to consist of little or no narrative.

Outstanding essays will be analytical throughout. As well as the analysis of each factor discussed above, there will be an overall analysis. This will run throughout the essay and can be achieved through developing a clear, relevant and coherent argument.

### High-level arguments

Typically, essays examine a series of factors. A good way of achieving sustained analysis is to consider which factor is most important, as in the example on page 93.

<b>Level 5</b>	Answers will display a very good understanding of the full demands of the question. They will be well organised and effectively delivered. The supporting information will be well-selected, specific and precise. It will show a very good understanding of key features, issues and concepts. The answer will be fully analytical with a balanced argument and well substantiated judgement. <i>21–25 marks</i>
<b>Level 4</b>	Answers will display a good understanding of the demands of the question. It will be well-organised and effectively communicated. There will be a range of clear and specific supporting information showing a good understanding of key features and issues, together with some conceptual awareness. The answer will be analytical in style with a range of direct comment relating to the question. The answer will be well balanced with some judgement, which may, however, be only partially substantiated. <i>16–20 marks</i>
<b>Level 3</b>	Answers will show an understanding of the question and will supply a range of largely accurate information, which will show an awareness of some of the key issues and features, but may, however, be unspecific or lack precision of detail. The answer will be effectively organised and show adequate communication skills. There will be a good deal of comment in relation to the question and the answer will display some balance, but a number of statements may be inadequately supported and generalist. <i>11–15 marks</i>
<b>Level 2</b>	The answer is descriptive or partial, showing some awareness of the question but a failure to grasp its full demands. There will be some attempt to convey material in an organised way, although communication skills may be limited. There will be some appropriate information showing understanding of some key features and/or issues, but the answer may be very limited in scope and/or contain inaccuracy and irrelevance. There will be some, but limited, comment in relation to the question and statements will, for the most part, be unsupported and generalist. <i>6–10 marks</i>
<b>Level 1</b>	The question has not been properly understood and the response shows limited organisational and communication skills. The information conveyed is irrelevant or extremely limited. There may be some unsupported, vague or generalist comment. <i>1–5 marks</i>

**EXAMPLE**

Consider the following practice question:

**How far can Henry VIII's decision to dissolve the monasteries be explained by the Crown's financial problems that had developed since Henry VIII became king in 1509?** (25 marks)

Introduction 1 addresses the question but does not develop an argument:

**Introduction 1**

*During a period of inflation and an expensive foreign policy, Henry VIII desperately needed more money and there was a limit to what he could expect to be granted by Parliament. Getting control of the monasteries seemed an excellent solution to the problem. However, there were also other reasons why this major event occurred. These include the criticisms of the monasteries for their poor levels of devotion and the fact that the monasteries owed direct allegiance to the Pope who was no longer head of the Church in England.*

This introduction could be improved by the introduction of an argument. An argument is a type of explanation. It makes a claim about the question and supports it with a reason.

A good way of beginning to develop an argument is to think about the meaning of the words in the question. With the question above, you could think about the words 'how far'.

Here is an example of an introduction that begins an argument:

**Introduction 2**

*Getting control of the monasteries seemed an excellent solution to Henry's financial problems, and Henry as Head of the Church had the power to do so. However, this was not the main reason for the process of dissolution. The monasteries owed direct allegiance to the Pope who was no longer head of the Church in England, and the religious houses could become a centre for religious revolts against this. Henry VIII had previously been a loyal supporter of the Pope and had been given the title 'Defender of the Faith'. Now Henry had disobeyed the Pope in order to divorce Catherine of Aragon and marry again. Many monks rejected this carnal reason and argued that spiritual values included the acceptance of the authority of the Pope.*

This introduction focuses on the question and sets out the main factors that the essay will develop. However, it also sets out an argument that can then be developed throughout each paragraph and is then rounded off with an overall judgement in the conclusion. It also introduces an argument about which factor was the most significant leading to the dissolution of the monasteries. This means that Introduction 2 is potentially better than Introduction 1, but it is important that it remains relatively brief and very concise.

Recognises that cannot just cover named factor

The introduction begins with a claim

Clear focus on the question

Introduction continues with another reason

Concludes with outline of argument of most important reason

## Counter-argument

You can set up an argument in your introduction as we have seen on page 93, but you should develop your argument throughout the essay. One way of doing this is to adopt an argument, counter-argument structure. A counter-argument is an argument that disagrees with the main argument of the essay. Setting up an argument and then challenging it with a counter-argument is one way of weighing up or evaluating the importance of the different factors that you discuss. Essays of this type will develop an argument in one paragraph and then set out an opposing argument in another paragraph.

### ACTIVITY

Imagine you are answering the following A-level practice question:

**'Changes in religion in the reign of Henry VIII up to 1540 occurred because of Cromwell.' Assess the validity of this view. [25 marks]**

Using your notes from this chapter, one way to tackle this question would be to:

1 Divide your page as follows:

How Cromwell helped the process	Other reasons for changes in religion in the reign of Henry VIII

2 Consider the following points and place them either in the left- or right-hand column:

- The Church was a wealthy institution and offered easy money for the King.
- The Pope was unable to protect the Church from Parliament's decisions.
- The Church had been criticised for its failings in morality.
- The political reformation was achieved by Acts of Parliament which meant it was treason to oppose it.
- Some supporters of Luther were influencing people's beliefs in England in the 1520s and 1530s, and there were small groups of Lollards. Humanists also supported some change.

- The monasteries were a threat to Henry because they were under the control of the Pope.
- Henry VIII controlled the process of the break from Rome because he needed to marry Anne Boleyn in order that their baby would be born legitimate.
- Cromwell's careful wording of the Acts linked the political change of control to English national interests.
- Cranmer was important for the way in which, as Archbishop of Canterbury, he steered changes in religious belief into the Church of England.

3 Now write a short argument that addresses the question of how important Cromwell's skills were. Remember, your argument must contain a statement and a reason.

4 Begin with the side of the argument that you agree with. Write two sentences that explain this side of the argument.

5 Now write two sentences for the side of the argument that you don't agree with. This is your counter-argument. Remember that it has to consist of a claim and a reason.

6 Use your original argument and counter-argument as the basis for writing two paragraphs in answer to the question.

Remember, you can apply this approach when responding to other, similar questions.

## Resolution

The best written essays are those which contain sustained analysis. We have seen that one way of achieving this is to write an essay that develops a clear argument and counter-argument.

Next you should resolve the tension between the argument and the counter-argument. One way of concluding an essay is to resolve this debate that you have established between the argument and the counter-argument, as in the example on page 95.

**EXAMPLE**

Imagine you are answering the following A-level practice question:

**To what extent was the reform of the Privy Council the most important development in government and administration in the reign of Henry VIII up to 1540? (25 marks)**

A possible way to tackle this question would be to write one clear paragraph arguing that the Privy Council reform was the most important change and two paragraphs arguing against this. In an essay of this type you could then resolve the tension by weighing up the argument and counter-argument in the conclusion. In so doing, you can reach a supported overall judgement. For example, a possible conclusion could look like this:

*In conclusion, the most important change was in the 1530s in the role of Parliament. The process of Henry becoming Supreme Head of the Church had been achieved through Parliament, with the result that further administrative and doctrinal changes in the Church could only be made through Parliament.*

Begins with main argument

Counter-argument contrast

*However, aspects of administrative reform did have an impact as well, such as the developing role of the Privy Council. But the extent of these administrative changes have been criticised by historians since Elton first put forward his thesis, and not all the reforms survived Cromwell's period in office. Therefore,*

Limitations of counter-argument

Resolves tension

*it can be argued that the changes in the function of Parliament was the most important long-term achievement. The 1530s marks the beginning of a Parliament that had gained responsibility for determining the religion of the country and a House of Commons that was becoming increasingly assertive towards the monarch as seen in the reign of Elizabeth and during the century of Stuart rule.*

This conclusion evaluates the argument and counter-argument. It resolves the tension by identifying a problem with the counter-argument and reaching an overall concluding judgement in relation to the question.

The process of evaluating the argument and the counter-argument is helped by the use of words such as 'however' and 'nonetheless', indicating that the paragraph is weighing up contrasting arguments.

**ACTIVITY**

Imagine you are answering the following A-level practice question:

**'Changes in religion in the reign of Henry VIII up to 1540 occurred because of Cromwell.' Assess the validity of this view. [25 marks]**

Use the ideas on page 94 and the work you have already done on this question in order to complete the activities.

1 Answer the following questions:

- Which is stronger, the argument or the counter-argument? Why is it stronger?
- What are the flaws in the weaker argument?
- What strengths does the weaker argument have?

2 Having answered these questions write a conclusion that weighs up the argument and the counter-argument in order to reach an overall judgement. Use the words 'however', 'nonetheless' and 'therefore' to structure your paragraph.