

By the end of the fourteenth century, the long war with France, known as the Hundred Years War, had already been going on for over fifty years. But there had been long periods without actual fighting. When Henry IV died in 1413 he passed on to his son Henry V a kingdom that was peaceful and united. Henry V was a brave and intelligent man, and like Richard I, he became one of England's favourite kings. Since the situation was peaceful at home Henry V felt able to begin fighting the French again. His French war was as popular as Edward III's had been. Between 1417 and 1420 Henry managed to capture most of Normandy and the nearby areas. By the treaty of Troyes in 1420 Henry was recognised as heir to the mad king, and he married Katherine of Valois, the king's daughter. But Henry V never became king of France because he died a few months before the French king in 1422. His nine month-old baby son, Henry VI, inherited the thrones of England and France.

But soon the French began to fight back. The English army was twice defeated by the French, who were inspired by a mysterious peasant girl called Joan of Arc, who claimed to hear heavenly voices. Joan of Arc was captured by the Burgundians, and given to Henry V is remembered as possibly the most heroic of English kings because of his brilliant campaigns in France. His death in 1422 brought to an end the English kings' hopes of ruling France. The English gave her to the Church in Rouen which burnt her as a witch in 1431.

England was now beginning to lose an extremely costly war. In 1435 England's best general, John of Bedford, died. Then England's Breton and Burgundian allies lost confidence in the value of the English alliance. With the loss of Gascony in 1453, the Hundred Years War was over.

England in Chaos: The Start of the Wars of the Roses

- This made the English king, Henry VI, look very weak even though he hated the warlike nobles, and was an unsuitable king for such a violent society. But he was a civilised and gentle man. He founded two places of learning that still exist, Eton College not far from London, and King's College in Cambridge.

- England had lost a war and was ruled by a mentally ill king who was bad at choosing advisers. It was perhaps natural that the nobles began to ask questions about who should be ruling the country.

2. The King Was a Weak Leader

- King Henry VI was shy, religious, and not a fighter.
- He was controlled by his powerful and ruthless wife, Margaret of Anjou, and by nobles who were always arguing.
- He couldn't make decisions, so the country was stuck.

3. A Rival Steps In: The Duke of York

- The discontented nobility were divided between those who remained loyal to Henry VI, the "Lancastrians", and those who supported the duke of York, the "Yorkists". The duke of York was the heir of the earl of March, who had lost the competition for the throne when Richard 11 was deposed in 1399. In 1460 the duke of York claimed the throne for himself.
- A powerful noble, Richard, the Duke of York, was angry with the king's government.
- He brought an army to London to list his complaints. He felt the king was doing a bad job.

4. The King's Mental Breakdown

- When King Henry heard the news that England had lost its last major French land, he had a mental breakdown.
- He didn't know who he was or recognize anyone, even his own newborn son.
- He couldn't rule the country for a whole year.

5. A Power Grab

- While the king was sick, the Duke of York took control as "Lord Protector."
- He put his enemies in prison and took power away from the queen.

6. The King Recovers, and the Queen Fights Back

- Surprisingly, the king suddenly got better.
- His wife, Queen Margaret, immediately worked to get their power back.
- She pushed the Duke of York out of the government and turned other nobles against him.

7. The Point of No Return: Civil War Begins

- The Duke of York felt threatened and knew he might be arrested for treason.
- He raised an army of about 7,000 men and marched toward London.
- This was the final step. The country was now split into two sides, ready to fight:
 - **The House of York** (White Rose), led by the Duke of York.
 - **The House of Lancaster** (Red Rose), led by Queen Margaret and King Henry VI.
- The Wars of the Roses had begun.

Part 1: The First Battle and an Unstable Peace

- **England was in a bad state:** It was poor, weak, and the nobles were constantly fighting. The Duke of York decided to march on London to take control.
- **Queen Margaret fights back:** She quickly raised a small army, led by the Duke of Somerset, and sent it to meet the Duke of York.
- **The First Battle of St. Albans (1455):** This was the first battle of the war. The Yorkists won quickly.
 - They killed the Duke of Somerset and other key Lancastrian nobles.
 - **King Henry VI was captured** after being found hiding in a shop, having another mental breakdown.
- **An Uneasy Truce:** The Duke of York took power again, but it didn't last. The king recovered, and Queen Margaret worked tirelessly to remove York from power. The country was basically split in two, on the verge of all-out war.

Part 2: The War Escalates

- **War Breaks Out Again (1459):** The peace shattered when the Yorkists, fearing a trap from the king and queen, refused to come to court and instead gathered an army.
- **A Series of Bloody Battles:** For the next few years, the two sides fought many battles (Blore Heath, Ludford Bridge, Northampton, Wakefield). The advantage swung back and forth.

- **A Major Loss for York:** At the **Battle of Wakefield**, the Duke of York was killed. This was a huge victory for Queen Margaret and the Lancastrians.

Part 3: A New Leader and a Decisive Victory

- **A New York Leader:** With the Duke of York dead, his son, **Edward of March**, took over as the new leader.
- **Edward Gains Popularity:** Edward marched to London. The people, tired of the weak Henry VI, welcomed him as a hero. He was even unofficially declared King Edward IV.
- **The Battle of Towton (1461):** Edward then marched north with a massive army to face the Lancastrians.
 - This was one of the **bloodiest battles ever in England**.
 - The Yorkists won a decisive victory. **Part 2: The Start of the Wars of the Roses**
 - **The Power Struggle:** When King Henry VI became too mentally ill to rule, a power struggle began. Richard, Duke of York, was appointed "Lord Protector" to rule in the king's place. He was a powerful lord with a very strong claim to the throne himself.
 - **The First Battle:** The Duke of York tried to fight corruption, but when King Henry VI recovered, the queen and her supporters pushed York out of power. Feeling threatened, York raised an army. His forces fought the king's army at the **Battle of St. Albans in 1455**, which is considered the start of the Wars of the Roses. The Duke of York won, captured the king, and took power again.
 - **Part 3: The Rise and Fall of the House of York**
 - **A Temporary Peace:** The Duke of York did not take the crown for himself. He reaffirmed his loyalty to Henry VI and only served as Protector. This peace was unstable.
 - **War Breaks Out Again:** Fighting soon resumed. The Duke of York was killed at the **Battle of Wakefield in 1460**.
 - **A New Yorkist King:** York's son, Edward, took over the fight. He defeated the Lancastrian army at the bloody **Battle of Towton in 1461** and was crowned **King Edward IV**.
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Part 4: The Outcome

- **The Yorkists Triumph:** Henry VI and Margaret were forced to flee to Scotland. Edward IV was officially crowned king.
- **The Lancastrian Cause Crumbles:** Margaret's remaining forces were defeated. Her top commander was executed, and Henry VI was captured and imprisoned in the Tower of London.
- **Margaret's Exile:** With no money or army, Margaret had no choice but to escape to France with her son. It seemed the war was over.

Part 5: But It Wasn't Over...

- The Lancastrians were down, but not out. Margaret never gave up and continued to plot.
- The fighting would eventually start again, leading to more kings and battles.
- The war finally ended in 1485 at the **Battle of Bosworth**, where a distant relative named **Henry Tudor** won the crown and started the Tudor dynasty.

Part 1: Henry Tudor's Invasion and Claim to the Throne

- **The Invasion:** On August 1, 1485, a small army of about 2,000 French and Scottish mercenaries sailed from France. Their leader was Henry Tudor. Their mission was to invade England and make him king.
- **Henry's Weak Claim:** Henry had a weak claim to the English throne. He was a distant descendant of King Edward III through his mother, Margaret Beaufort. He was born in Wales at Pembroke Castle.
- **The Chaos in England:** Henry's invasion was possible because England had been unstable for decades. The king at the time of Henry's birth, Henry VI, was a weak ruler who suffered from mental illness. His court was corrupt, and England had lost all its lands in France except for Calais.

Part 4: Henry Tudor's Dangerous Childhood

- **A Pawn in the War:** As a child, Henry Tudor was a potential Lancastrian claimant to the throne. After Edward IV became king, Henry was taken into the custody of a Yorkist noble, William Herbert.
- **Exile in Brittany:** When the Yorkist king Edward IV briefly lost his throne in 1470, Henry was freed. But when Edward IV returned to power in 1471, Henry's uncle, Jasper Tudor, fled with him to Brittany (in France) for safety. They lived there for years as exiles, partly as guests and partly as prisoners.

Part 5: Richard III and the Path to the Throne

- **A Sudden Opportunity:** King Edward IV died unexpectedly in 1483. His heir was his 12-year-old son, Edward V.
- **Richard III's Takeover:** Edward IV's brother, Richard, Duke of Gloucester, seized power. He arrested the boy king's relatives, declared Edward IV's marriage invalid (making his children illegitimate), and had himself crowned **King Richard III**.
- **The Princes in the Tower:** The young King Edward V and his younger brother were locked in the Tower of London and were never seen again. It was widely believed that Richard III had them killed to secure his own position.
- **Growing Unrest:** This cruel act made Richard III very unpopular. Many people turned against him and began to look for a new king to support. Henry Tudor, waiting in France, became their main hope.

Henry Tudor's Rise to Power

1. The Invasion: A Desperate Gamble

- In 1485, a 28-year-old man named Henry Tudor invaded England from France with a small, ragged army.
- He landed in Wales, where he was born, and prayed for success because his chances seemed very low.
- His claim to the English throne was weak, and the army of the current king, Richard III, was much larger and stronger.

2. Henry's Dangerous Past

- Henry had a distant claim to the throne through his mother, Margaret Beaufort.
- He had spent the last 14 years living in exile in France, constantly fearing for his life after his family lost the Wars of the Roses.
- He saw his chance to invade when King Richard III became unpopular. Many people were angry that Richard had taken the throne from his two young nephews (the "Princes in the Tower"), who then mysteriously disappeared.

3. A Clever Promise and the Decisive Battle

- Henry was a clever politician. He promised that if he became king, he would marry Elizabeth of York. This would unite the two warring families—York and Lancaster—and end the civil war.

- The two armies met at the **Battle of Bosworth**. Henry was nearly defeated, but at the last moment, a powerful lord named William Stanley switched sides and attacked King Richard III.
- Richard III was killed, and Henry Tudor won the battle and became **King Henry VII**.

4. Securing the Throne: Symbols and Suspicion

- Henry knew winning the crown was not enough; he had to convince everyone he was the rightful king.
- **Propaganda:** He backdated his reign to before the battle, making Richard III look like a traitor.
- **A Powerful Symbol:** He married Elizabeth of York and created the **Tudor Rose**, combining the white rose of York and the red rose of Lancaster.
- **An Heir:** The birth of his son, Prince Arthur, gave the new dynasty stability.

5. Fighting Off Challenges

- Henry's throne was not secure. He faced two major rebellions with imposters claiming to be royal princes:
 - **Lambert Simnel** pretended to be a Yorkist prince.
 - **Perkin Warbeck** pretended to be one of the missing Princes in the Tower.
- Henry defeated both rebellions, but they made him paranoid. He created a network of spies to watch his enemies and tightly controlled the government's money to maintain power.

In short, Henry VII started as an outsider with a weak claim but used a combination of military victory, smart propaganda, political marriages, and ruthless control to found the powerful Tudor dynasty.

. A Royal Wedding for Power

- To make his family stronger, Henry VII arranged for his son, Prince Arthur, to marry a Spanish princess, Catherine of Aragon.
- This marriage was a huge success for Henry. It showed that other powerful countries saw him as the true King of England.
- The wedding in 1501 was a massive celebration in London.

2. Tragedy Strikes

- Just a few months after the wedding, Prince Arthur died from an illness. This was a disaster for Henry VII, who had counted on his son to continue the dynasty.
- Things got even worse when Henry's wife, Queen Elizabeth, died in childbirth soon after. The baby also died.
- These losses broke Henry's spirit. He was filled with grief and became much more suspicious and harsh.

3. A Reign of Fear and Control

- After his family died, Henry VII became paranoid. He trusted no one and decided to rule through fear.
- He used a special council to extort large sums of money from rich citizens and nobles to keep them under his control.
- He created a climate of fear to make sure no one would dare to rebel against him.

4. A Lucky Break and a Peaceful End

- Henry got very lucky when a foreign ruler, Philip, was shipwrecked in England. Henry effectively held him prisoner until he agreed to hand over a man who was plotting against Henry.
- In his final years, Henry was sick and withdrawn. His second son, the future Henry VIII, was the opposite of him—young, athletic, and popular.
- Henry VII died in 1509. His greatest achievement was that his son became king without any fighting or rebellion. He had successfully established the Tudor dynasty through a mix of clever planning, hard work, and ruthlessness.

HENRY VIII

Henry VIII really, really wanted to be a great warrior king like Henry V. He dreamed of conquering France. But his big problem was that he never had enough money for these wars, and his allies kept letting him down.

Here's a simpler look at his military failures:

1. The Dream vs. The Reality

- **The Dream:** Henry wanted to be a legendary conqueror and reclaim English lands in France, maybe even Paris.
- **The Problem:** War is incredibly expensive. His father, Henry VII, had saved up a lot of money, but Henry VIII spent it all very quickly. He also

couldn't trust his allies, who often pursued their own goals and left England to fight alone.

2. Early Campaigns: All Show, No Gain

- **The Holy League (1511):** Henry joined an alliance with the Pope and Spain to fight France.
- **Disaster in Gascony (1512):** His troops got sick and his Spanish allies abandoned him. The mission failed.
- **The Battle of the Spurs (1513):** This was a minor victory where the French cavalry famously *ran away*. Henry captured two small towns, but this was a tiny success for the huge amount of money spent. It was more for his ego than for real gain.
- **Meanwhile, Back Home:** While Henry was in France, Scotland attacked England. His queen, Catherine of Aragon, expertly handled the defense and the English army crushed the Scots, killing their king. This was a much more significant victory than anything Henry achieved in France.

3. The Downward Spiral: Empty Pockets and Bad Alliances

- **Money Runs Out:** By 1525, England was bankrupt from war. When Henry tried to raise a new "tax" to invade France, the people refused to pay. He was forced to give up and make peace, which was a massive humiliation.
- **The Great Mistake:** Henry's desire to divorce Catherine of Aragon and marry Anne Boleyn destroyed his foreign policy. It turned his most powerful ally (the Holy Roman Emperor, who was Catherine's nephew) into an enemy.
- **Isolation:** When Henry broke from the Catholic Church, the Pope excommunicated him and encouraged France and Spain to invade England. He was very lucky they were too busy fighting each other to attack.

4. The Final, Costly Failure

- **Last Invasion (1544):** An old and sick Henry launched one last invasion of France. His army managed to capture the city of **Boulogne** after a long siege.
- **Pyrrhic Victory:** This "victory" was a disaster. It cost a fortune, and his allies immediately made peace without him. France then launched a counter-invasion of England. In the end, England was forced to return Boulogne for a huge ransom. The gain was temporary, but the financial ruin was permanent.

In short: Henry VIII spent his entire reign and all of his country's wealth chasing military glory in France. He achieved almost nothing, won only minor battles, and left the kingdom nearly bankrupt. His wars were driven by pride and a childish dream of conquest, not by smart strategy.

Presentation: The Six Wives of Henry VIII

Slide 1: Title Slide

- **Title:** The Six Wives of Henry VIII
- **Subtitle:** Divorced, Beheaded, Died; Divorced, Beheaded, Survived.
- **Visual:** A collage of the six wives' portraits.

Slide 2: Introduction: The King's "Great Matter"

- **Content:**
 - Henry VIII's desire for a male heir to secure the Tudor dynasty dictated his personal life and national policy.
 - His failure to get this heir from his first wife, Catherine of Aragon, led him to seek an annulment.
 - When the Pope refused, Henry broke England away from the Roman Catholic Church, declaring himself Head of the Church of England.
 - This single issue—the succession—is the thread that connects all six marriages.

Part 1: The First Wife - Catherine of Aragon

Slide 3: Catherine of Aragon (1485-1536)

- **Tagline:** The Resilient Queen
- **Marriage:** 1509 - 1533 (Annulled)
- **Children:** Mary I (survived), several miscarriages and stillborn/short-lived sons.
- **Key Facts:**
 - Originally married to Henry's older brother, Arthur, who died.
 - A capable ruler who acted as Regent while Henry was at war in France.

- Devoutly Catholic.
 - **Fate & How it Ended:**
 - Henry sought an annulment, claiming their marriage was invalid because she was his brother's widow.
 - Catherine fiercely defended the legitimacy of her marriage and her daughter's birthright.
 - The marriage was annulled by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer, in 1533.
 - **Aftermath:** She was banished from court, separated from her daughter, and died of illness three years later. She always called herself the one true Queen.
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Part 2: The Second Wife - Anne Boleyn

Slide 4: Anne Boleyn (c.1501-1536)

- **Tagline:** The Ambitious Reformer
 - **Marriage:** 1533 - 1536 (Executed)
 - **Children:** Elizabeth I (survived), at least two miscarriages.
 - **Key Facts:**
 - Refused to be Henry's mistress, demanding the crown instead.
 - Her influence and the need to marry her accelerated the English Reformation.
 - Intelligent, witty, and fashion-forward.
 - **Fate & How it Ended:**
 - After failing to produce a male heir, Henry turned against her.
 - She was arrested on false charges of treason, adultery, and incest.
 - Found guilty after a show trial.
 - **Aftermath:** Beheaded by a swordsman at the Tower of London. Her daughter Elizabeth became one of England's greatest monarchs.
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Part 3: The Third Wife - Jane Seymour

Slide 5: Jane Seymour (c.1508-1537)

- **Tagline:** The Tragic Victory
- **Marriage:** 1536 - 1537 (Died)
- **Children:** Edward VI (survived).
- **Key Facts:**
 - Lady-in-waiting to both Catherine and Anne.
 - Quiet, gentle, and presented as the opposite of Anne Boleyn.
 - A conservative Catholic.
- **Fate & How it Ended:**
 - She gave Henry the male heir he so desperately wanted.
 - Died from complications of childbirth just days after Edward's birth.
- **Aftermath:** Henry was genuinely grieved and considered Jane his "true" wife. He was buried beside her upon his death.

Part 4: The Fourth Wife - Anne of Cleves

Slide 6: Anne of Cleves (1515-1557)

- **Tagline:** The Lucky Survivor
- **Marriage:** January - July 1540 (Annulled)
- **Children:** None.
- **Key Facts:**
 - A political marriage to form an alliance with her brother, a German Protestant duke.
 - Henry found her unattractive in person, despite a flattering portrait.
- **Fate & How it Ended:**
 - The marriage was never consummated.
 - It was annulled on the grounds of non-consummation and her pre-contract to another man.
 - Anne did not contest the annulment.
- **Aftermath:** She was given a generous settlement and the title "The King's Beloved Sister." She outlived all the other wives and remained on good terms with Henry.

Part 5: The Fifth Wife - Catherine Howard

Slide 7: Catherine Howard (c.1523-1542)

- **Tagline:** The Doomed Teenager
- **Marriage:** 1540 - 1541 (Executed)
- **Children:** None.
- **Key Facts:**
 - Cousin to Anne Boleyn.
 - Very young (likely 17-19) and inexperienced.
 - Henry was besotted, calling her his "rose without a thorn."
- **Fate & How it Ended:**
 - Her past sexual relationships before marriage were discovered and construed as treason.
 - After marriage, she likely began an affair with courtier Thomas Culpeper.
- **Aftermath:** She was arrested, charged with treason, and beheaded at the Tower of London.

Part 6: The Sixth Wife - Catherine Parr

Slide 8: Catherine Parr (1512-1548)

- **Tagline:** The Practical Survivor
- **Marriage:** 1543 - 1547 (Henry's death)
- **Children:** Mary Seymour (short-lived). She was a stepmother to Henry's three children.
- **Key Facts:**
 - Twice-widowed, intelligent, and well-educated.
 - She acted as Regent while Henry was at war.
 - She helped reconcile Henry with his daughters, Mary and Elizabeth, and was instrumental in their education.
- **Fate & How it Ended:**

- She survived a plot against her by religious conservatives who opposed her Protestant views.
 - She outlived Henry, who died in 1547.
- **Aftermath:** After Henry's death, she married Thomas Seymour, brother of Jane Seymour, but died shortly after giving birth to her only child.

Summary & Legacy

Slide 9: The Wives at a Glance

- **Visual:** A table summarizing the key data.

Name	Fate	Children	Lasting Impact
Catherine of Aragon	Divorced	Mary I	Catalyst for the English Reformation
Anne Boleyn	Beheaded	Elizabeth I	Mother of Elizabeth I; promoted Reformation
Jane Seymour	Died	Edward VI	Provided the male heir; died tragically
Anne of Cleves	Divorced	None	Smart negotiator; survived with wealth
Catherine Howard	Beheaded	None	A victim of her youth and court intrigue
Catherine Parr	Survived	None (stepmother)	Unified the royal family; outlived Henry

Slide 10: Conclusion: The Real Legacy

- **Content:**
 - The six marriages were not just a personal drama but a central force in English history.
 - They led directly to the **English Reformation** and England's break from the Catholic Church.

- They produced three monarchs who shaped England's future: **Edward VI, Mary I, and Elizabeth I.**
- The story of the six wives is a powerful reminder of the dangers of absolute power and the relentless pressure to secure a dynasty.