

# Henry's six wives

Can you believe that Henry VIII was married to 6 different women?

This fact is one of the most famous facts in English history. Henry VIII is a famous king but his wives are even more talked about! We are going to spend the next 2 lessons learning why Henry had 6 wives and what was so interesting about them!

You are going to make a factfile for each of the wives (just like you see in magazines of pop stars or football players!) You are to include the following information that you will find below:

- Name and number of wife
- Where and when was she born
- Did she have any children?
- Why did Henry get rid of her?
- How did he get rid of her? (Was she divorced? Died? Executed?)
- Any other interesting facts

Make sure you leave room for a picture of the wife that you will either draw or find on the Internet at home/homework club.

Put the title Wives of Henry VIII in your exercise book and off you go!

## Wife number 1

### Catherine of Aragon



**Born:-** 16 December 1485

**Married Henry:-** 11 June 1509

**Divorced/Annulled:-** 1533

**Died:-** 7 January 1536

**Interesting facts:** Catherine was born in Spain and was first married to Henry's brother Arthur. After Catherine married Henry she gave birth to Mary (later Mary I), but only after many miscarriages. The most important thing to Henry was that he had a son to take over the throne when he died. Catherine had produced no male heir and was 42 years old when Henry fell in love with Anne Boleyn. So Henry asked the Pope (Head of the Catholic Church) for a divorce. This was not allowed and so Henry disobeyed the Pope to get rid of Catherine so he could marry someone else who could give him a son for the throne.

## Wife number 2

### Anne Boleyn



**Born:-** c.1500

**Married Henry:-** January 1533

**Executed:-** 19 May 1536

**Interesting facts:** Anne was English. Henry fell in love with Anne and got her pregnant in 1532 whilst still married to Catherine of Aragon. The result was a baby girl, Elizabeth (later Elizabeth I). Henry loved Anne very much and showered her with expensive gifts. There was much pressure on Anne to produce a boy but this did not happen. Henry needed to get rid of Anne and so accused her of adultery (being unfaithful), incest (having sex with your own family) and plotting to murder Henry. Those who were said to have helped Anne were hung, drawn, disembowelled and quartered. Anne was also to be executed. She was allowed a private execution, she gave a speech and was executed by a Frenchman's sword rather than the usual axe. Anne's head came off in one swoop.

**Wife number 3****Jane Seymour****Born:-** c.1509**Married Henry:-** 30 May 1536**Died:-** 24 October 1537

**Interesting facts:** Jane was born in Wiltshire, England. By February 1536 Henry was in love with Jane. Within 24 hours of the death of Anne Boleyn, wife number 2, Jane had agreed to marry Henry. Jane became pregnant to Henry and gave birth to a son, Edward. Finally Henry had what he wanted! Unfortunately Jane did not recover from childbirth and died 2 weeks after Edward was born.

**Wife number 4****Anne of Cleves****Born:-** 1515**Married:-** 6 January 1540**Divorced:-** July 1540**Died:-** 16 July 1557

**Interesting facts:-** After the death of wife number 3 Henry married a woman from an important German family. Above is the picture Henry was given when he decided Anne of Cleves would become wife number 4. Unfortunately when she arrived in England Henry thought she was rather ugly and called her the 'Flanders Mare!' Henry never loved Anne and wanted the marriage over before it had even begun. Anne declared that the marriage was never consummated (they'd never slept together) and so the marriage was annulled.

**Wife number 5****Kathryn Howard****Born:-** 1521**Married Henry:-** 28 July 1540**Executed:-** 13 February 1542

**Interesting facts:** Kathryn was from Norfolk, England and was the cousin of Anne Boleyn, wife number 2. Henry married Kathryn Howard only 16 days after his marriage to Anne of Cleves was over. At this time Henry was 42 years old and Kathryn was only 19. Henry thought she was very beautiful and said that she was, 'a rose without a thorn.' He showered her with expensive gifts but Kathryn wanted more than Henry could give her. There were rumours that Kathryn was being unfaithful to Henry only 1 year after their marriage. This was not a very clever move by Kathryn considering what Henry had done to his other wives! Henry investigated the rumours that she was being unfaithful and found them to be true. True to form Henry had Kathryn Howard executed.

**Wife number 6****Katherine Parr****Born:-** 1512**Married Henry:-** 12 July 1543**Widowed:-** 28 January 1547**Died:-** 5 September 1548

**Interesting facts:** Katherine Parr was born in Kendal not far from Lancaster. Katherine Parr was the last of Henry's wives. When Katherine married Henry he was an old man and she acted as his nurse as well as his wife. She had a sensitive nature and was interested in learning. Katherine was widowed by Henry (Henry died) in 1547 and she lived for only one year after.

Edward VI, son of Henry VIII and Jane Seymour, was now King of England.