

**REFORMATION  
ENGLAND: THE  
CHURCH OF ENGLAND**



# REFORMATION ENGLAND: THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

## Description

Through an in-depth analysis of primary and secondary sources, students in this lesson will identify, understand and be able to explain the split between London and Rome, how Henry VIII and his children each changed both the church and the government, the drama and intrigue behind characters such as Anne Boleyn and Sir Thomas More (religious opposites, and yet both executed at the Tower of London by Henry VIII) and finally the twists and turns of English history under the reigns of Mary and Elizabeth (half-sisters who ended up buried in the same grave at Westminster Abbey).

## Subjects

European History  
World History  
US History

## Grade Level

11-12

## Duration

90 minutes

## Tour Links

- Windsor
- Houses of Parliament
- Westminster Abbey
- Tower of London

## Essential Questions

- What was English Reformation? What were the reasons for the break between the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church?
- Who were the leading figures in the split between London and Rome during the English Reformation? What role did each of these figures play in changing or helping to change the Church in England?
- Who was Anne Boleyn? What role did she play in the Reformation? What ultimately happened to Mistress Boleyn?
- Who was Sir Thomas More? What role did he play in the Reformation? What ultimately happened to Sir Thomas More?
- Why is the English Reformation central to understanding the role the church and the monarch play in the United Kingdom today?

# Academic Summary

## THE TOWER OF LONDON, 1536

SIR, YOUR GRACE'S DISPLEASURE, and my Imprisonment are Things so strange unto me, as what to Write, or what to Excuse, I am altogether ignorant; whereas you sent unto me (willing me to confess a Truth, and so obtain your Favour) by such a one, whom you know to be my ancient and professed Enemy; I no sooner received the Message by him, than I rightly conceived your Meaning; and if, as you say, confessing Truth indeed may procure my safety, I shall with all Willingness and Duty perform your Command.

But let not your Grace ever imagine that your poor Wife will ever be brought to acknowledge a Fault, where not so much as Thought thereof proceeded. And to speak a truth, never Prince had Wife more Loyal in all Duty, and in all true Affection, than you have found in Anne Boleyn, with which Name and Place could willingly have contented my self, as if God, and your Grace's Pleasure had been so pleased. Neither did I at any time so far forge my self in my Exaltation, or received Queenship, but that I always looked for such an Alteration as now I find; for the ground of my preferment being on no surer Foundation than your Grace's Fancy, the least Alteration, I knew, was fit and sufficient to draw that Fancy to some other subject.

You have chosen me, from a low Estate, to be your Queen and Companion, far beyond my Desert or Desire. If then you found me worthy of such Honour, Good your Grace, let not any light Fancy, or bad Counsel of mine Enemies, withdraw your Princely Favour from me; neither let that Stain, that unworthy Stain of a Disloyal Heart towards your good Grace, ever cast so foul a Blot on your most Dutiful Wife, and the Infant Princess your Daughter:

Try me, good King, but let me have a Lawful Trial, and let not my sworn Enemies sit as my Accusers and Judges; yes, let me receive an open Trial, for my Truth shall fear no open shame; then shall you see, either mine Innocency cleared, your Suspicion and Conscience satisfied, the Ignominy and Slander of the World stopped, or my Guilt openly declared. So that whatsoever God or you may determine of me, your Grace may be freed from an open Censure; and mine Offence being so lawfully proved, your Grace is at liberty, both before God and Man, not only to execute worthy Punishment on me as an unlawful Wife, but to follow your Affection already settled on that party, for whose sake I am now as I am, whose Name I could some good while since have pointed unto: Your Grace being not ignorant of my Suspicion therein.

But if you have already determined of me, and that not only my Death, but an Infamous Slander must bring you the enjoying of your desired Happiness; then I desire of God, that he will pardon your great Sin therein, and likewise mine Enemies, the Instruments thereof; that he will not call you to a strict Account for your unprincely and cruel usage of me, at his General Judgment-Seat, where both you and my self must shortly appear, and in whose Judgment, I doubt not, (whatsoever the World may think of me) mine Innocence shall be openly known, and sufficiently cleared.

My last and only Request shall be, That my self may only bear the Burthen of your Grace's Displeasure, and that it may not touch the Innocent Souls of those poor Gentlemen, who (as I understand) are likewise in strait Imprisonment for my sake. If ever I have found favour in your Sight; if ever the Name of Anne Boleyn hath been pleasing to your Ears, then let me obtain this Request; and I will so leave to trouble your Grace any further, with mine

earnest Prayers to the Trinity to have your Grace in his good keeping, and to direct you in all your Actions.

Your most Loyal and ever Faithful Wife, Anne Boleyn

From my doleful Prison the Tower, this 6th of May.

The English Reformation... a dramatic series of 16th century events that at times seemed more like a modern soap opera than a subject for serious study in history, is the story of Henry VIII's cataclysmic break with the Roman Catholic Church because of his relentless pursuit of both the perfect wife and the perfect heir, to how the brief reign of the teenage king, Edward VI shifted the English Church towards radical Lutheranism, which then in turn gave way to the violent re-imposition of Catholicism and the stench of bonfires under "Bloody Mary", and finally to the long reign of Elizabeth I, which, though marked by civil strife, plots against her, and even an invasion force, finally brought political and religious stability. Above all, it is the story of the English Reformation and the creation of the Anglican Church.

Through an in-depth analysis of primary and secondary sources, students in this lesson will identify, understand and be able to explain the split between London and Rome, how Henry VIII and his children each changed both the church and the government, the drama and intrigue behind characters such as Anne Boleyn and Sir Thomas More (religious opposites, and yet both executed at the Tower of London by Henry VIII) and finally the twists and turns of English history under the reigns of Mary and Elizabeth (half-sisters who ended up buried in the same grave at Westminster Abbey).

## Objectives

1. Students will identify, understand and be able to explain the events surrounding English Reformation and the major figures involved in the Church of England's break from the Roman Catholic Church, including, but not limited to
  - a. Henry VIII – King of England 1509-1547
  - b. Clement VII – Pope of the Roman Catholic Church
  - c. Thomas Cranmer – Archbishop of Canterbury who annulled Henry VIII's first marriage
  - d. Catherine of Aragon -- Henry VIII's first wife
  - e. Anne Boleyn – Henry VIII's second wife
  - f. Jane Seymour – Henry VIII's third wife
  - g. Sir Thomas More – Chancellor under Henry VIII
  - h. Mary I – Daughter of Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon – Queen of England 1553-1558
  - i. Elizabeth I – Daughter of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn – Queen of England 1558-1603
  - j. Edward VI – Son of Henry VIII and Jane Seymour – King of England 1547-1553
2. Students will identify, understand and be able to explain the how the English Reformation is seen as a watershed event in both English and European history.

# Procedures

## I. Anticipatory Set

- Writing / Question: What do you know about Henry VIII from popular myths and stories? (5 min)
- Handouts – Copies of the primary sources and readings from the websites listed below (5 min)

## II. Body of Lesson

- Lecture / PPT – Brief Overview of the English Reformation and the major characters involved. (20 min)
- Video – English Reformation (5 min)
- Independent Activity – students read the primary sources and articles on the English Reformation, taking notes as appropriate (30 min)
- Suggestion: Have the students read some of these articles for homework the night before class to prepare for class discussion.
- Group Activity – Discussion on the English Reformation and the major characters involved in breaking the Church of England from the Roman Catholic Church. (15 min)

## III. Closure

- Exit Ticket / Assessment – Short Essay: Analyze Henry VIII's decision to break with the Roman Catholic Church during the Reformation. Was he justified? How did the average English citizens take to the change? How were the issues surrounding the monarch and the Church ultimately settled by Henry's children? What is the relationship between church and state in England today? Might this relationship have anything to do with American ideas behind government's role (or lack thereof) in religious matters?

## Extension

### **On four: Tower of London (Chapel of St. Peter ad Vincula)**

While on tour, students visit the Tower of London, where both Anne Boleyn and Sir Thomas More were executed under orders from Henry VIII. Queen Boleyn is buried in the Chapel of St. Peter ad Vincula. Her remains were positively identified in the 19th century. As for Sir Thomas More, his remains are a bit harder to trace. According to records from his execution, his headless body was put in the chapel at the Tower, but the head itself was parboiled and then placed on London Bridge for a month. According to multiple sources, Margaret Roper, More's daughter, then purchased her father's head and had it buried in the Roper family vault in Canterbury.

# Web Links

## Lesson Plan Websites

- [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English\\_reformation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_reformation)  
“English Reformation” – Wikipedia. Gives a good general overview.
- [nationalarchives.gov.uk/domesday/discover-domesday](http://nationalarchives.gov.uk/domesday/discover-domesday)  
BBC website on the English Reformation article written by Andrew Pettegree, Professor of History at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland.
- [passports.com/group\\_leaders/on\\_the\\_road/the\\_united\\_kingdom/london](http://passports.com/group_leaders/on_the_road/the_united_kingdom/london)  
On the Road: London – city facts on London from Passports Educational Travel
- [passports.com/group\\_leaders/on\\_the\\_road/the\\_united\\_kingdom/canterbury\\_cathedral](http://passports.com/group_leaders/on_the_road/the_united_kingdom/canterbury_cathedral)  
On the Road: Canterbury Cathedral – from Passports Educational Travel
- [theanneboleynfiles.com](http://theanneboleynfiles.com)  
The Anne Boleyn Files website – great source for both primary and secondary sources, not only on Anne Boleyn, but also on other characters and figures involved in the English Reformation. This site is quite extensive and can serve as a great resource for both teachers and students studying the period.
- [fordham.edu/Halsall/source/1186ASChron-Domesday.asp](http://fordham.edu/Halsall/source/1186ASChron-Domesday.asp)  
History Learning Site – Sir Thomas More.
- [englishhistory.net/tudor/annedesc.html](http://englishhistory.net/tudor/annedesc.html)  
Contemporary Descriptions of Anne Boleyn (primary sources)
- [historyteacher.net/APEuroCourse/PowerpointPresent/TheTudors.ppt](http://historyteacher.net/APEuroCourse/PowerpointPresent/TheTudors.ppt)  
“The Tudors” PowerPoint – from Susan Pojer (AP European History teacher at Horace Greeley High School in Chappaqua, NY) who manages the website Historyteacher.net (great primary source images of the Tudors and the English Reformation).
- [tudorhistory.org/primary/supremacy.html](http://tudorhistory.org/primary/supremacy.html)  
Primary Source: The Act of Supremacy (1534)
- [englishhistory.net/tudor/primore.html](http://englishhistory.net/tudor/primore.html)  
Primary Source: The Last Letter of Sir Thomas More (1535)
- [englishhistory.net/tudor/prianne2.html](http://englishhistory.net/tudor/prianne2.html)  
Primary Source: The execution of Anne Boleyn by Eustace Chapuys, Spanish Ambassador to England in a letter to Emperor Charles V, 1536.
- [tudorplace.com.ar/Documents/act\\_dissolution2.htm](http://tudorplace.com.ar/Documents/act_dissolution2.htm)  
Primary Source: Act for the Dissolution of the Greater Monasteries (1539)
- [fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1571-39articles.asp](http://fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1571-39articles.asp)  
Primary Source: The Thirty-Nine Articles, 1571, 1662 – from the Internet Modern History Sourcebook at Fordham University.
- [teachingchannel.org/videos/choosing-primary-source-documents?fd=1](http://teachingchannel.org/videos/choosing-primary-source-documents?fd=1)  
Reading Like a Historian: Primary Source Documents (video) – great 2 minute video on how to incorporate primary sources into the Common Core and history classes – from Shilpa Duvoor of Summit Preparatory Charter High School in Redwood City, CA – highly recommended for teachers.
- [englishhistory.net/tudor/pcranmer.html](http://englishhistory.net/tudor/pcranmer.html)  
Primary source: The Execution of Archbishop Thomas Cranmer, 1556 by an anonymous bystander burnt at the stake by Queen Mary I – his ashes were scattered after death.
- [www.history.com/videos/protestand-reformation-english-reformation#protestand-reformation-english-reformation](http://www.history.com/videos/protestand-reformation-english-reformation#protestand-reformation-english-reformation)  
“The English Reformation” (clip) – The History Channel.

## **Other Relevant Passports Lesson Plans**

- [www.passports.com/lesson\\_plans/england/sir-thomas-more](http://www.passports.com/lesson_plans/england/sir-thomas-more)  
Reformation England – Sir Thomas More
- [www.passports.com/lesson\\_plans/england/english-reformation](http://www.passports.com/lesson_plans/england/english-reformation)  
Reformation England – An Overview
- [www.passports.com/lesson\\_plans/england/reformation-britain-pilgrimage-of-grace](http://www.passports.com/lesson_plans/england/reformation-britain-pilgrimage-of-grace)  
Reformation England – Pilgrimage of Grace 1536-37
- [www.passports.com/lesson\\_plans/england/anne-of-cleves](http://www.passports.com/lesson_plans/england/anne-of-cleves)  
Reformation England – Anne of Cleves: Henry's 4th Wife and Beloved Sister

## **Key Terms**

- Act of Supremacy
- Church of England
- Reformation
- Roman Catholic Church

