

**REFORMATION
ENGLAND - ANNE
BOLEYN: HENRY VIII'S
SECOND WIFE**



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Description

Through an in-depth analysis of various primary and secondary sources, students in this lesson will identify, understand and be able to explain the story of Anne Boleyn, how she and Henry VIII came to marry, how their apparently happy marriage soon turned sour, why the queen was executed and how the story of Anne Boleyn played a role in the English Reformation and the creation of an English Church separate from Rome.

Subjects

World History, European History

Grade Level

11-12

Duration

90 minutes

Tour Links

- Church of St. Peter ad Vincula
- Tower of London

Essential Questions

- Who was Henry VIII? Why did he take so many wives?
- Who was Anne Boleyn? How did she become Henry's second wife?
- How did Henry's marriage to Anne Boleyn fracture the English Church?
- Why was the marriage ended after only three years?
- Why was Anne Boleyn executed?
- What is Anne Boleyn's legacy in England?

Academic Summary

Letter from Queen Anne Boleyn to King Henry VIII

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.

Anne Boleyn's Speech at her Execution, 19 May 1536, Tower of London

Good Christian people, I am come hither to die, for according to the law, and by the law I am judged to die, and therefore I will speak nothing against it. I am come hither to accuse no man, nor to speak anything of that, whereof I am accused and condemned to die, but I pray God save the king and send him long to reign over you, for a gentler nor a more merciful prince was there never: and to me he was ever a good, a gentle and sovereign lord. And if any person will meddle of my cause, I require them to judge the best. And thus I take my leave of the world and of you all, and I heartily desire you all to pray for me. O Lord have mercy on me, to God I commend my soul.

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 heir. On 01 Jun 1533, it appeared as though the king had found just such a wife when Anne Boleyn was crowned Queen Consort of England. No one said anything about the new young queen's pregnancy (she was already starting "to show"). After all, concessions could be made for the women carrying the king's perfect heir.

Henry VIII was almost 42 years old at the time of Anne's coronation and in the 24th year of his reign. According to contemporaries, the king was attractive, educated and vivacious. In 1509, a young Henry had married his sister-in-law, Catherine of Aragon. Two stillborn children and the infant death of a young male child, however, soured the relationship between the two. Catherine and Henry did have a daughter in 1516 that survived (Mary), but the inability to produce a son doomed the marriage.

By 1522, Catherine's marriage to Henry was in trouble. While it was well known that the king had taken a number of mistresses (including Anne's sister Mary), his attention eventually focused on the youngest Boleyn woman. Anne spurned his advances at first, but by the late 1520s the two were involved in a relationship. In 1531 Queen Catherine was driven from court and Anne assumed many of her duties. Henry tried for months to get Pope Clement VII to annul his marriage to Catherine on religious grounds, but the attempt fell upon deaf ears. In the end, Clement was probably in an impossible situation. It is believed by many historians that he privately sympathized with the

English king, but he also feared Charles V of the Holy Roman Empire. Charles was Catherine's nephew (most 16th century European monarchies were linked through marriage in one way or another).

By the time news reached England that the pope would not allow Henry to get rid of Catherine and then marry Anne, the king decided to take matters into his own hands. Henry simply appointed the Archbishop of Canterbury as his own spiritual leader for the English church. Parliament subsequently passed a series of laws declaring the separation between the Roman and English churches. Henry (and all subsequent English monarchs) was declared "supreme Head of the Church of England." Anyone choosing to side with Rome would face charges of treason and be subject to punishment (perhaps the most famous was Henry's Chancellor and long time friend, Sir Thomas More, who was beheaded in 1535).

Anne and Henry appeared as the perfect couple in 1533, but unfortunately the young queen's fortunes quickly turned. In September of that year, Anne gave birth to a baby girl (Elizabeth). Things went from bad to worse over the next couple of years. Sometime around Christmas 1534 (the exact date is unknown and was kept secret), Anne delivered a stillborn child. Public opinion of Anne, which had been at best lukewarm, began to turn against her, especially after the executions of prominent Catholics such as More.

By the time Catherine died in early January 1536, however, Anne was pregnant again. Unfortunately, just weeks later she again miscarried. Upon examination, the fetus had indications that it was probably male. This was probably the last straw for Henry, and the king began to turn his attention elsewhere. By early May, people close to Anne were being arrested and there were whispers of incest and treason, including George Boleyn (Anne's brother), with whom she was accused of having an incestuous affair. Anne was arrested on 02 May and taken to the Tower of London. Her "accomplices" were tried and convicted on 12 May. George and Anne were both convicted (in separate trials) on 15 May. Two days later, George and the other men were executed. Anne was executed on 19 May.

Anne Boleyn's story and legacy has survived through the ages because she was such a polarizing figure. Protestants martyrize her as the spark that brought the English Reformation. She is also remembered as an educated and outspoken woman by feminists who want to lionize the queen as a model for modern women. Many English Catholics, however, see Anne as Henry's immoral mistress who hated saints and supposedly slapped the decapitated head of Bishop John Fisher. She's been compared over the years to Salome of the Bible (who supposedly asked King Herod to bring her the head of John the Baptist). Perhaps that is why Anne's legacy and story are as big today as they have ever been.

Through an in-depth analysis of various primary and secondary sources, students in this lesson will identify, understand and be able to explain the story of Anne Boleyn, how she and Henry VIII came to marry, how their apparently happy marriage soon turned sour, why the queen was executed and how the story of Anne Boleyn played a role in the English Reformation and the creation of an English Church separate from Rome.

Objectives

1. Students will identify, analyze, understand and be able to explain how Anne Boleyn and Henry VIII came to marry in 1533.
2. Students will identify, analyze, understand and be able to explain how their apparently happy marriage soon turned sour.
3. Students will identify, analyze, understand and be able to explain why the queen was beheaded by her husband.
4. Students will identify, analyze, understand and be able to explain how the story of Anne Boleyn played a role in the English Reformation and the Creation of an English Church separate from Rome.

Procedure

I. Anticipatory Set

- Writing / Question: What is an annulment? Why might it be used? (5 min)
- Handouts – Copies of the primary sources and readings from the websites listed. (5 min)

II. Body of Lesson

- Lecture / PPT – Anne Boleyn (20 min)
- Video – Anne Boleyn (10 min)
- Independent Activity – Students read the primary sources and articles on Anne Boleyn, taking notes as appropriate. (20 min)
- Suggestion: Have the students read some of the articles as preparation for class discussion.
- Suggestion: Break students into groups and assign different articles to each group.
- Group Activity – Socratic Discussion: Anne Boleyn (20 min)

III. Closure

- Assessment – Essay / DBQ: Explain in detail the story of Anne Boleyn, how she and Henry VIII came to marry, how their apparently happy marriage soon turned sour, why the queen was executed and how the story of Anne Boleyn played a role in the English Reformation and the creation of an English Church separate from Rome.

Extension

On tour: Tower of London (Chapel of St. Peter ad Vincula)

While on tour, students visit the Tower of London, where Anne Boleyn was executed (along with many others) under orders from Henry VIII. Queen Anne is buried in the Chapel of St. Peter ad Vincula. Rumors regarding her remains have persisted throughout the centuries. She was said to be secretly buried with the rest of the Boleyns at Salle Church in Norfolk. Her heart was supposedly buried separately at Erwarton Church in Suffolk. During a 19th century archaeological dig at the Tower, however, the queen's remains were positively identified and were buried under the royal seal below.

Web Links

Lesson Plan Websites

- <http://englishhistory.net/tudor/primary.html>
Tudor Primary Sources (website with primary sources) – includes a number of primary sources on Anne Boleyn, as well as other people and events from the 16th century in England
- www.historylearningsite.co.uk/anne_boleyn.htm
Anne Boleyn (website) – from the History Learning Site (UK)
- <http://tudorhistory.org/boleyn/>
Anne Boleyn (website)
- http://departments.kings.edu/womens_history/anneboleyn.html
Anne Boleyn (web article) – from the Women’s History Resource Site at Kings College (PA)
- www.tudorplace.com.ar/aboutAnneBoleyn.htm
Anne Boleyn: Queen of England (website)
- www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/tudors/anne_boleyn_01.shtml
Anne Boleyn and the Downfall of her Family (website) – from the BBC
- www.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.
- www.youtube.com/watch?v=HqNTi_HNwnE
Tragedy of Anne Boleyn (video)
- www.youtube.com/watch?v=DMG5uYm69DY
Queen Anne Boleyn (video). This 60-minute video from the BBC, based on the events surrounding Henry and Anne, is probably too long for most in-class showings, but it is highly recommended as out-of-class preparation for all students.

Background Information

- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anne_Boleyn
Anne Boleyn – Wikipedia article
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/King%27s_Great_Matter#The_King.27s_.22great_matter.22
The King’s “Great Matter” – Wikipedia article
- www.passports.com/group_leaders/on_the_road/the_united_kingdom/country_profile
On the Road: Britain (country profile) – from Passports Educational Travel

Other Relevant Passports Lesson Plans

- www.passports.com/lesson_plans/england/sir-thomas-more
Reformation England – Sir Thomas More
- www.passports.com/lesson_plans/england/english-reformation
Reformation England – An Overview

- 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
Reformation England – Anne of Cleves

Key Terms

- Anne Boleyn
- Annulment
- English Reformation
- King Henry VIII

