Introduction

This resource was designed to help teachers plan a productive on-site school visit to the Tower of London, an essential part of studying the Tudors at Key Stage 2. It is particularly aimed at integrating a visit into History Unit 7 ‘Why did Henry VIII marry six times?’

This resource includes:

• an introduction to using these notes
• links to related resources
• learning objectives, activities and outcomes
• a map of the relevant locations to visit
• pupil and teacher notes for sites around the Tower of London
About these notes

Books and study materials cannot provide the same stimulus as the first-hand experience of visiting the Tower of London, which featured so significantly in the story of Henry and his wives.

We recommend a visit somewhere near the start of your course, as the Tower will be referred to many times while studying Unit 7. This will familiarise pupils with the Tower as a location, and help establish basic concepts such as the names and order of the wives.

Related resources

We recommend using this resource together with some of the supporting fact sheets and briefing notes available at [www.hrp.org.uk/learning](http://www.hrp.org.uk/learning)

**Fact sheets**

- *The Tower of London: 1066-1554* – a timeline of significant moments and events in the fortress’s history
- *Henry VIII and his six wives* – key points about the king and his many marriages

**Briefing notes**

- *Tudor Tower: Functions of the Tower of London during the reign of Henry VIII*
- *Imprisonment and execution: The Tower of London under Henry VIII (1509–47)*
Teaching on site

Getting started
If you enter through the Middle Drawbridge the best location to begin is just through Ravens’ Arch. From here you can give an overview of the Tower as an ancient fortress and royal residence.

From Ravens’ Arch the other sites highlighted in these notes follow a sequential path around the Tower ground.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning objectives</th>
<th>Teaching activities</th>
<th>Learning outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pupils should learn:</td>
<td>Visit the towers and other locations associated with Henry VIII, his wives and other important characters from his reign</td>
<td>Pupils should understand:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The names and order of Henry VIII’s wives</td>
<td>Look at portraits of famous Tudor prisoners</td>
<td>The names of the six wives and how put them in sequence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The fates of Anne Boleyn and Catherine Howard</td>
<td>Compare fictional or humorous modern descriptions of Tudor prisoners at the Tower with reality</td>
<td>How to recognise the names and fates of other famous prisoners of the time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About Henry VII’s changing appearance and about his favourite sport – the tournament</td>
<td></td>
<td>How Henry’s physical appearance changed over time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Pilgrimage of Grace and other religious dissent against the king, and what happened to dissenters.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Henry enjoyed taking part in his favourite sporting event – the tournament</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The fate of Anne Boleyn, Executed by a clean stroke of the sword on Tower Green, by order of Henry VIII.
Key sites to visit
Why did Henry VIII marry six times?
Important locations for studying Henry VIII and his six wives

1. Middle Drawbridge
2. Ravens’ Arch
3. Site of the Great Hall
4. Lanthorn Tower
5. Wardrobe Tower (remains)
6. White Tower
7. Chapel Royal of St Peter ad Vincula
8. Execution site
9. Tower Green
10. Queen’s House
11. Beauchamp Tower
12. Coldharbour Gate (remains)
13. Traitors’ Gate
14. Water Lane
15. Bell Tower
16. Mint Street
17. Byward Postern
18. Lion Tower drawbridge pit (remains)
On-site pupil and teacher notes

Ravens’ Arch

> For pupils

Q: Can you see any evidence of buildings at the Tower which are no longer standing?

> For teachers

Look for the ruined buildings between the Wakefield Tower and the White Tower. There is a ruined wall section in front of the Medieval Palace shop and traces of other buildings on the wall of the Wakefield Tower. The ruins of the Wardrobe Tower are just outside the main entrance to the White Tower. We know from such evidence that the royal palace once stood here.

The royal court stayed in the palace before the coronation of Anne Boleyn. The trial of Anne Boleyn was held in the palace’s Great Hall, which stood in the area in front of the Medieval Palace shop.

Lanthorn Tower

Go up the stairs by the Medieval Palace Shop to the foot of the Lanthorn Tower

The Queen’s apartments ran from here up towards the White Tower. Anne Boleyn stayed here before her coronation and, three years later, before her trial and execution.
Q: How do you think Anne Boleyn felt when she came here before her coronation? How do you think she felt before her trial? What might other people have thought?

Anne and her family were very pleased at the time of the coronation. Most people, however, it seems didn’t feel the same. Anne remarked to Henry that she ‘saw a great many caps on heads and saw but few tongues’. A Spanish merchant also confirmed that few people cried ‘God save you’ as she processed to Westminster Abbey from the Tower.

Three years later, Anne pointed out ‘I was received with greater ceremony the last time I entered here’. Anne feared she would be cast in a dungeon (similar to Thomas More and Bishop Fisher) and asked her jailer ‘Shall I die without justice?’ ‘The poorest subject if the king hath justice,’ he replied, at which Anne laughed.

For pupils
Q: Why did the king keep precious jewels at the Tower?

Wardrobe Tower
Go up towards the White Tower. As your group approaches the staircase, notice the ruins of the Wardrobe Tower

Much of the jewellery used at the coronations was kept here, though the actual crowns and coronation regalia did not arrive at the Tower until 1661. By that time all the Tudor Crown Jewels had been destroyed and only the Anointing Spoon, used for the holy oil, survives (now in the Tower’s Jewel House). It was used at Henry VIII’s coronation and almost certainly at Anne Boleyn’s.

For pupils
Q: Why did the king keep precious jewels at the Tower?

For teachers
It was and is a very secure location. You might relate this to the Tower’s use as a prison during Henry’s reign.

White Tower and Royal Armouries
Go into the White Tower and up to the first-floor model of the Tower in 1547

This is a good place to orientate your group as the model lays out the Tower at the end of Henry’s reign. Show students the White Tower, the buildings of the now lost royal palace, the water-filled moat – which added an extra line of defence – and the Lion Tower where the king’s exotic animals were kept.
> For pupils
Q: Which parts of the Tower of London have stayed the same since Henry’s day? Which have changed?

Display cases in the next room hold King Henry VIII’s armour and weapons. Start by the case with the armour for man and horse.*

> For pupils
Q: What is this? What was it used for? Who do you think wore it? Can you see any clues? Look at the decoration. Do you think this was expensive? Can you see the initials K and H? What do you think they stand for?

> For teachers
The armour for man and horse was made for King Henry VIII in 1520, probably for meeting with the French King Francis I at the Field of Cloth of Gold. This diplomatic meeting included a tournament. Decorated armour like this was mainly for tournaments, but the king wore similar suits to war.

This piece is decorated with Tudor roses for the king. The skirt – a steel imitation of fabric skirts usually worn by knights over armour – has the initials ‘H’ for Henry and ‘K’ for Katherine of Aragon. Notice too her pomegranate badge.

A decorated suit of armour for a man cost at least £12. In 1520 most men in England earned less than £6 a year.

> For pupils
Q: What does this suit of armour tell you about Henry VIII?

> For teachers
It tells us he was rich and liked taking part in tournaments. He was a knight, and trained to go into battle. And he loved Katherine of Aragon, at least when the suit was made.

Physically he was very tall (about 6’ 2”) and well built, but not yet overweight. He had a 36” chest for this armour. It was all made to measure, and shows us exactly how big he was in 1520.

Beside the case is a lance used by Henry VIII’s friend and brother-in-law, Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk. He competed against Henry in tournaments.

> For pupils
Q: How old was Henry in 1520 when he wore this armour?

*At the time of writing Henry VIII’s armour is displayed on the White Tower’s first floor. In the event that future exhibitions require the armour’s relocation within the tower, ask a White Tower Warden for details.
> **For teachers**

Born in 1491, he was 28 or 29.

The next case facing the armour for man and horse display contains another large suit of Henry’s armour.

This armour was made for Henry VIII in 1540. He was married to Catherine Howard by this time, his fifth wife.

> **For pupils**

Q: How old was Henry VIII in 1540? How had he changed?

> **For teachers**

Henry was 49 years old when this armour was made, and much larger. His chest was now 56” and his waist measurement similar.

He no longer took part in tournaments. This armour was probably only for show. Perhaps he was trying to appear young and fit. Advanced age and badly injured legs – from accidents in earlier tournaments – meant he took less exercise. But he was still eating the same amount of food - about 5,000 calories a day. At the end of 1540, he actually went on a diet and course of exercise called ‘his new rule of living’.

---

**Tower Green**

_Leave the White Tower and go over to Tower Green_

Built by Henry VIII in 1519-20, the Chapel Royal of St Peter ad Vincula served as the church for prisoners and their guards. Anne Boleyn and Catherine Howard are buried inside, but please note it is only possible to visit the Chapel Royal as part of a Yeoman Warder’s guided tour.

In front of the chapel is the execution site memorial. We do not know the exact placement of the wooden scaffolds on which the executions were carried out, but it is known they were near the Chapel Royal.

> **For pupils**

Q: How many people were executed here? How many were executed in King Henry’s reign? What were their names? What was similar about them? Are you surprised at the number? Why do you think they were executed here?

> **For teachers**

For execution details see the briefing note: *Imprisonment and execution: The Tower of London under Henry VIII (1509-47).*
Only very important women were executed in the Tower under Henry. This was mainly for reasons of privacy and security. Other famous executions took place outside on Tower Hill, before huge crowds.

> For pupils
Q: Why were they executed?

> For teachers
Execution was standard punishment for serious crimes in Henry VIII’s England. You could be executed for stealing significant amounts and for murder, for example, but also for political and religious crimes.

Executions were only carried out on legal grounds. People were executed for breaking the law, not at the king’s whim. Most victims – including Henry’s queens – acknowledged their guilt. The king was praised for his mercy in offering them a swift death.

On the other hand, Henry VIII saw to it that his enemies were tried. He could pardon their guilt if he wanted them alive. But otherwise he did not usually show mercy in the manner of their executions.

Queen’s House

Opposite the chapel, at the far end of Tower Green, is the Queen’s House (closed to the public)

Henry VIII had the Queen’s House built in 1540 for the Lieutenant, the officer in charge of the Tower. Your group may notice the difference between the Queen’s House and the medieval White Tower.

Beauchamp Tower

Cross Tower Green to Beauchamp (pronounced ‘Beecham’) Tower. Go up the stairs to the first floor

> For pupils
Q: What do you think this tower was used for? What evidence can you see?

> For teachers
Like all the towers, Beauchamp Tower was built for defence in the Middle Ages. However, we know for certain it was used for prisoners in Henry VIII’s time. It would have been very difficult to escape. (For more background see the briefing note: Imprisonment and execution: The Tower of London under Henry VIII (1509-47).)
Prisoners have carved their names and inscriptions on the wall. Most inscriptions are from the reigns of Henry VIII’s children: Edward VI, Mary I and Elizabeth I. Some date from Henry’s time, including six from 1537 left by men associated with the Pilgrimage of Grace, the revolt prompted by the Dissolution of the Monasteries.

Inscription 61, for example, was made by Adam of Sedborough, Abbot of Jervaulx. He was executed at Tyburn. The rebels captured Lord Latimer and his young wife, the future Queen Catherine Parr. And as the rebels advanced south Queen Jane Seymour begged the king to restore the monasteries saying ‘God had permitted this rebellion for the ruining of so many churches’. Henry replied by reminding her that the last queen had died as a consequence of meddling too much in state affairs.

> **For pupils**

Q: What do you think it would have been like to be imprisoned in this tower?

> **For teachers**

Prisoners in such a tower would have been less crowded and had more comforts than elsewhere. However, the darkness, damp and cold would have been general in most of the old towers.

Catherine Howard heard of the cold conditions in which Margaret Pole was kept during the winter and sent her a furred night gown and petticoat, four pairs of hose and shoes, a pair of slippers and other clothes to keep her warm.

**Coldharbour Gate**

*Leave the Beauchamp Tower and cross back over Tower Green to the steps next to the White Tower. Notice the ruins of the Coldharbour Gate*

In 1534 Alice Tankerville was imprisoned in the Tower for financial offences, apparently in the Coldharbour Gate.

She escaped with the help of one of her guards, the only successful escapee in Henry’s time.

> **For pupils**

Q: How would you try to escape from the Tower?
**Traitors’ Gate**

*Go down the stairs and under the Bloody Tower to Traitors’ Gate*

> **For pupils**
> Q: What is a traitor? Why might they have come in through this gate? What is on the other side? What is above the gate?

> **For teachers**

This was a convenient way of bringing traitors – people who plotted against the king – into prison. Chance of escape or rescue was reduced and they could be delivered unobtrusively, away from crowds of onlookers. Although there was more than one river entrance, popular tradition has it this gate was where the most famous prisoners of Henry’s time arrived at the Tower.

The watergate led to a tunnel under the wharf and then out to the Thames. It was normal for nobles to travel to the Tower by boat, as it was quicker and more convenient than travelling through London’s narrow, crowded streets by horse or carriage.

Henry VIII’s ancestor Edward I built private rooms over the gate, part of the Medieval Palace. At the time of the coronation of Anne Boleyn, they were rebuilt as lodgings for important officials, and much of the woodwork dates from that time.

**Bell Tower and Mint Street**

*Both are closed to the public. Head west down Water Lane – on the right is the base of the Bell Tower*

According to tradition Thomas More and Bishop Fisher were imprisoned here in separate cells. From the top of the Bell Tower, Sir Thomas Wyatt was forced to watch the execution of Anne Boleyn’s brother and the other men accused with her on Tower Hill. As a friend of the queen he was shown the executions as a warning.

Next to the Bell Tower is Mint Street, named after the Royal Mint that was once housed there. It produced the gold and silver coins used in Tudor England.

> **For pupils**
> Q: Why were coins made in the Tower of London?

Sir Thomas More, imprisoned for refusing to swear allegiance to Henry VIII as the Supreme Head of the Church of England.

© National Portrait Gallery
> For teachers

The Tower was very secure, making it hard to steal the coins. For more on the Royal Mint and the Tower’s other uses see the briefing note: *Tudor Tower: Functions of the Tower of London during the reign of Henry VIII.*

---

**Byward Postern**

*Opposite Mint Street is the Byward Postern, beside Byward Tower*

Monarchs entered the Tower through this gate. According to tradition, it is where Anne Boleyn entered the Tower before her coronation.

---

> For pupils

Q: Why might kings and queens have used this side entrance?

---

> For teachers

It was probably for convenience. The main gates, with their large double doors, drawbridges and portcullis might have been awkward or time consuming. Monarchs came to the Tower by boat, so it was easy to enter by the gates leading to the river.

---

**Lion Tower drawbridge pit**

Beyond the Middle Tower was the Lion Tower, where Henry’s collection of exotic animals was kept.

The tower had its own moat and drawbridge. Though the tower was long ago pulled down you can still see the drawbridge pit here.