

TOPIC PACKS · GRADES 3–6

The Tudors!

A cross-curricular themed week

Suggested timetable

Day	Subject	Activity
Monday	History	Tudor monarchs — who, when, what they did
Tuesday	History	Henry VIII and his six wives
Wednesday	DT & History	Tudor food — design a banquet menu
Thursday	Geography	Tudor explorers — voyages and the New World
Friday	English	Eyewitness writing — the Spanish Armada

Day 1 — The five Tudor monarchs

Monarch	Reigned	Famous for
Henry VII	1485–1509	Won the Battle of Bosworth, started the dynasty
Henry VIII	1509–1547	Six wives, broke from the Roman Catholic Church
Edward VI	1547–1553	Boy king, died aged 15
Mary I	1553–1558	Tried to bring back Catholicism, nicknamed 'Bloody Mary'



Monarch	Reigned	Famous for
Elizabeth I	1558–1603	Long reign, defeated Spanish Armada, golden age of theatre

Day 1 timeline activity

Children draw a Tudor timeline (1485–1603). Mark each monarch with their dates, plus 3 key events: • 1534 — Henry VIII breaks from Rome • 1588 — Spanish Armada defeated • 1599 — Shakespeare's Globe Theatre opens DISCUSSION: 118 years of Tudor rule. How does that compare to a single human lifetime? (Most Tudors didn't live to be 50 — so 118 years is more than two lifetimes.)

Day 2 — Henry VIII's six wives

Wife	Marriage end	Memorable rhyme line
Catherine of Aragon	Divorced	Divorced...
Anne Boleyn	Beheaded	...beheaded...
Jane Seymour	Died (childbirth)	...died...
Anne of Cleves	Divorced	...divorced...
Catherine Howard	Beheaded	...beheaded...
Catherine Parr	Survived (Henry died first)	...survived

Day 2 — The famous rhyme

DIVORCED, BEHEADED, DIED — DIVORCED, BEHEADED, SURVIVED. This old rhyme remembers the fates of Henry's wives in order. Children memorise it. Then research one wife each in pairs and present: • Where she was from • How she met Henry • What kind of person she was • How her marriage ended • What we remember her for CATHERINE OF ARAGON was Spanish and a queen in her own right. ANNE BOLEYN was clever and ambitious. JANE SEYMOUR gave Henry his only son. ANNE OF CLEVES escaped with her life and a generous settlement. CATHERINE HOWARD was very young — just a teenager. CATHERINE PARR was a writer and helped reconcile Henry with his daughters.

Day 3 — Tudor food (60 min)

WHAT TUDORS ATE depended on whether you were rich or poor. RICH PEOPLE'S BANQUETS: • Roast peacock, swan, deer • Spiced wine, sweet wine • Sugar sculptures (sugar



was new and expensive!) • Marzipan shaped into animals or castles • Multiple courses — sometimes 30 dishes! POOR PEOPLE'S MEALS: • Pottage — thick stew of vegetables and grain, eaten daily • Coarse brown bread • Cheese and apples • Ale (water wasn't safe to drink — even children drank weak ale) ACTIVITY: Children design a menu for either a rich Tudor banquet OR a poor Tudor family's day. Decorate with Tudor borders. Real Tudor food can be Googled — many surprising dishes.

Day 4 — Tudor explorers

Explorer	Sponsored by	Famous voyage
John Cabot	Henry VII	1497 — First English voyage to North America (Newfoundland)
Sir Francis Drake	Elizabeth I	1577–80 — First Englishman to sail around the world
Sir Walter Raleigh	Elizabeth I	1584 — Founded Virginia colony, brought back tobacco and potato
Sir Humphrey Gilbert	Elizabeth I	1583 — Claimed Newfoundland for England
John Hawkins	Elizabeth I	Reformed the navy that beat the Spanish Armada

Day 5 — Spanish Armada eyewitness (60 min)

BACKGROUND: In 1588, King Philip II of Spain sent 130 ships to invade England. The Spanish Armada. England's smaller, faster ships used clever tactics — fire ships, manoeuvrability — to scatter them. Then storms wrecked many on the way home. Only half made it back to Spain.

WRITING TASK: Eyewitness account of the Armada from one of these perspectives: • A young English sailor on Drake's ship • A Spanish sailor watching the fire ships approach • A Spanish soldier shipwrecked on the coast of Ireland • A villager in Kent watching beacons being lit • Queen Elizabeth I writing her speech to the troops at Tilbury **INCLUDE:** Sensory detail (fire, salt, fear, wind), dialogue, and emotional reactions. **AVOID:** Movie-style heroics. The reality was confusing, smelly and terrifying.

