

my **revision** notes

AQA AS/A-level History

THE TUDORS

ENGLAND, 1485–1603



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My Revision Planner



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REVISED



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1 Henry VII, 1485–1509

Henry Tudor's consolidation of power: character, aims and establishing the Tudor dynasty

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Claim to the throne

Henry Tudor's claim to the throne was weak.

- Henry's claim came through his mother, Margaret Beaufort, who was a direct descendant of Edward III by the marriage of his third son, John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, to Katherine Swynford. However, the fact that John and Katherine's son, John Beaufort (Margaret's grandfather), had been born prior to their marriage weakened any future claim to the throne by this line of descent.
- Henry inherited royal blood from his father, Edmund Tudor. Edmund's French mother, Catherine, had been married to Henry V before she became the wife of Edmund's Welsh father, Owen. Edmund was the half-brother of the king, Henry VI. Henry VI raised his half-brother to the peerage by creating Edmund, Earl of Richmond. Therefore, Henry VII was the half-nephew of the king of England and a member of the extended royal family.
- In reality, Henry's claim to the throne rested on his victory in battle. That he had defeated and killed king Richard III was regarded as a sign that God had approved of Henry's assumption of power.

Aims

Henry VII's aim was to remain king and establish his dynasty by handing on an unchallenged succession to his descendants. His policies at home and abroad were shaped and dictated by this aim. Therefore, his goals were simple: to secure and strengthen his dynasty. He knew that if he was to prove himself a strong king and retain full control of his realm he would have to:

- establish effective government
- maintain law and order
- control the nobility
- secure the Crown's finances.

He would also need good advice, friends abroad and a considerable amount of luck.

Character

The character of the king was important because the ruler was responsible for policy and was closely involved in the business of government. Because monarchy was personal, everything depended on the monarch's energy, interest and willingness to work.

Historians have been more concerned with Henry's aims and achievements than his character, which explains why they tend to disagree about what he was like.

Establishing and consolidating the Tudor dynasty

- Henry dated the beginning of his reign from the day before the battle of **Bosworth**: 22 August 1485. Therefore Richard and his supporters could be declared traitors, which meant that their estates became the property of the Crown by Act of Attainder.
- Henry deliberately arranged his coronation before the first meeting of parliament. Thus it could never be said that parliament made him king.
- He married Elizabeth of York, the daughter of Edward IV. This united the Houses of Lancaster and York and dissuaded many Yorkists from challenging Henry.
- The birth of a son and heir, Arthur, early in the reign (September 1486) helped to establish the dynasty (see page 16).
- Henry enlisted the support of the Church and gained control of the nobility (see page 12).
- He secured the support of the Pope and the kings of France and Spain, who recognised the legitimacy of his kingship (see page 14).

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**Spot the mistake****a**

Below are a sample question and a paragraph written in answer to this question. Why does this paragraph not get high praise? What is wrong with the focus of the answer in this paragraph?

To what extent do you agree that Henry VII's claim to the throne was weak?

Henry's claim to the throne was weak because his father was an earl and not a king. His grandfather was not even an Englishman; he was a Welsh squire. Henry's claim through inheritance was weak because it descended through the female line. Henry was an exiled earl who took a gamble on winning the throne by invading England and facing Richard III in battle.

**Support or challenge?****a**

Below is a sample question which asks to what extent you agree with a specific statement. The table sets out a list of general statements that are relevant to the question. Using your own knowledge and the information on the opposite page, decide whether these statements support or challenge the statement in the question.

Do you agree that the main reason Henry VII succeeded in establishing the dynasty was due to the strength of his royal connections?

	SUPPORT	CHALLENGE
Henry VII was descended from Edward III		
Henry VII was a hard-working and energetic monarch		
Henry VII was the half-nephew of Henry VI		
Henry VII had the support of the Pope and the Church		
Henry VII controlled the nobility		
Henry VII married Elizabeth, the daughter of Edward IV		

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Securing the succession

Henry's chief priority was securing the succession. To do this he had to secure the kingdom at home and find allies abroad. To safeguard the succession, Henry had to have and protect a male heir. His heir, Arthur, was born a little over a year after his accession in 1486, and another son, Henry, was born in 1491. To establish a dynasty and ensure continuity of succession, Henry's sons would need to marry and have children of their own. To promote the Tudor dynasty, Henry sought suitable brides from among Europe's royal families. Marriage alliances negotiated by treaty would help to ensure the Tudor succession.

Securing the succession at home

In 1485 there were still a number of important Yorkists alive with a strong claim to the throne:

- **Edward, Earl of Warwick**
- **John de la Pole, Earl of Lincoln.**

The 10-year-old Warwick was sent to the Tower of London. He remained in comfortable confinement until 1499, when he was executed for conspiring with Perkin Warbeck to escape from the Tower.

Lincoln was invited to join the government and became a member of the king's council. He remained loyal until the spring of 1487, when he fled the court and joined the Pretender Lambert Simnel. Lincoln was killed at the battle of Stoke in June 1487.

Surviving Yorkist nobility were either pardoned or eliminated:

- Thomas Howard, Earl of Surrey and Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland were pardoned. They could prove useful and were prepared to work with the new regime.
- Francis, Lord Lovell, Humphrey and Sir Thomas Stafford and Edmund de la Pole, Earl of Suffolk were executed. They were unwilling to work with the new king and so had to be disposed of. This would also set a powerful example to deter other would-be rebels.

Securing the succession abroad

Henry's foreign policy was defensive because of the nature of his succession, by usurpation. There were several claimants to his throne who sought aid from foreign powers and Henry had to be constantly on his guard against possible invasion.

The two claimants who posed the most serious threat to Henry's throne were the Pretenders, Simnel and Warbeck. Henry used diplomacy to conclude treaties with Brittany, France, Spain and Scotland. In each treaty, the heads of state agreed not to aid the Pretenders or any of Henry's enemies, such as the Earl of Suffolk and his brother Richard de la Pole, who fled England for the Continent in 1501.

Marriage alliances

Henry used marriage as a diplomatic device to bind Spain and Scotland into a closer union with England. Sealed by treaty, these marriages helped to secure the succession because the Spanish and Scottish royal families had a personal connection with the Tudor dynasty. It was in their interests to ensure the survival of the Tudors.

- In accordance with the terms of the Treaty of Medina del Campo (1489), Henry's heir, Arthur, was promised in marriage to Catherine of Aragon, daughter of king Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain. When Arthur died in 1502, it was agreed that Catherine would marry Arthur's brother, Henry.
- In accordance with the terms of the Treaty of Ayton (1502), Margaret, Henry VII's eldest daughter, was married to James IV of Scotland in 1503.

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**Delete as applicable****a**

Below are a sample question and a paragraph written in answer to this question. Read the paragraph and decide which of the possible options (in bold) is most appropriate. Delete the least appropriate options and complete the paragraph by justifying your selection.

How successful was Henry VII in securing the succession?

Henry VII was successful in securing the succession to a **great/fair/limited** extent. For example, Henry went some way to safeguarding the succession by having and protecting his male heirs. His heir, Arthur, was born a little over a year after his accession in 1486, and another son, Henry, was born in 1491. Henry also secured the succession by being proactive in domestic and foreign affairs. For example, surviving Yorkist nobility were either pardoned or eliminated, and treaties were concluded with Brittany, France, Spain and Scotland. In each treaty, the heads of state agreed not to aid the Pretenders or any of Henry's enemies. In this way, Henry VII's attempt to secure the succession was **extremely/moderately/slightly** successful because

**RAG – rate the interpretation****a**

Read the interpretation in the yellow box below.

- Shade the sections you agree with in green.
- Shade anything you disagree with in red.
- Shade anything you partly agree/disagree with in amber.

EXTRACT A

Henry's foreign policy illustrates his realism and lack of illusion. Where Edward IV had harboured delusions of re-conquering France, Henry VII pursued a limited policy based on peace with France and alliance with Spain; this enabled him gradually to eliminate the risk of conspiracies against the throne launched from overseas.

Henry VII acted with energy and decisiveness in his dealings with all rivals of royal blood. Edward IV had attempted to buy off potential rivals with grants of land and office. Henry, in contrast, tried to neutralise any rivals before they could be used as figureheads by conspirators.

Henry's success in dealing with conspiracies owed much to the conspirators, but also reflected his persistence and ruthlessness. The best means of further strengthening his dynasty was by eliminating potential foreign supporters of pretenders and concluding favourable marriage alliances for his family. For these reasons, a realistic and successful foreign policy was essential for the security of his dynasty.

Henry was obsessed with the need to preserve order and retain the loyalty of his subjects. Indeed it is in this area that Henry was seen at his most ruthless, and his methods were certainly controversial and unpopular. But, like all successful rulers, Henry also enjoyed good fortune.

Adapted from John Lotherington (ed.), *The Tudor Years* (Hodder, 1994 edn)

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Regional divisions

The regional division of the kingdom of England was marked by councils set up to govern distant and distinct parts of the realm.

- The north of England was governed through the Council of the North based in York.
- Wales and the western counties of England were governed through the Council of Wales and the Marches based in Ludlow.

Outside the kingdom of England, the king ruled Ireland and a small part of France centred on Calais.

- Ireland was governed through the Council of Ireland based in Dublin.
- Calais was governed by a captain appointed by the king.

Regional division was complicated by:

- the existence of semi-independent lordships, which were self-governing units in which the ‘**king’s writ did not run**’; the Crown had limited power in the **Marcher lordships** of Wales and the **County Palatines** of Durham and Chester
- ethnic and racial differences – Wales, Cornwall, Ireland and Calais each had its own language and culture.

Henry’s drive to forge stronger links between central and local governments caused friction in these distant regions. Regional loyalties were strong and there was growing resentment at what was regarded as outside interference. The extension of royal government was accompanied by a strengthening of royal justice. Officials appointed by the London-based government were unwelcome in regions where local lords had been passed over in favour of royal nominees.

Social discontent and rebellions

When Henry came to power he was a largely unknown and untried nobleman. Few of his subjects believed that the civil wars were over or that he would remain king for long. The uncertainty of his rule, the continuing political instability and the economic dislocation caused by civil war affected nobleman and commoner alike.

Henry had to deal with the disgruntled protesters against such things as high taxes and food shortages, alongside the dangerous pretenders or rival claimants to the throne. Henry could not afford to ignore or treat lightly any protest or rebellion.

Protest and rebellions in Yorkshire (1489) and Cornwall (1497)

These rebellions stemmed from the king’s demands for money. Compared with the prosperous south-east of England, these regions were poor and they could ill-afford to bear the increasing burden of taxation. Social discontent in these regions led to local protests, but because the Crown appeared to be indifferent to their social and economic problems, they turned into rebellion. The economic and social differences between the regions showed how delicate the balance was between public order and lawlessness.

Within England there were great differences between regions, counties and even neighbouring villages. Yorkshire folk resented being taxed and governed by southerners. This antipathy between northerners and southerners was made worse by the fact that this region had been the centre of Yorkist power.

The traditionally independent-minded Cornish refused to contribute to the defence of the northern part of the kingdom. The Scottish border meant nothing to the Cornish and they were unwilling to pay a tax demanded by a distant government based in the south-east of England.

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**Use own knowledge to support or contradict**

Below is an extract to read. You are asked to summarise the interpretation about the reasons why Henry VII faced rebellions, and then develop a counter-argument.

Interpretation offered by the extract:

Counter-argument:

EXTRACT A

In addition to the Simnel and Warbeck risings, Henry VII also faced other, less serious, rebellions – in Yorkshire in 1489 and in Cornwall in 1497. The 1489 rebellion was sparked by a parliamentary tax, voted to finance Henry's aid to Brittany. Not only had Yorkshire suffered from a particularly bad harvest, but there was also resentment that counties further north did not have to pay the tax. Rebellion in Cornwall in 1497 was also triggered by a demand for money, this time to pay for a campaign to resist a projected invasion by James IV of Scotland and Perkin Warbeck. The Cornish refused to pay because they considered that any invasion threat in the north would have little relevance to them.

Adapted from D. Rogerson, S. Ellsmore and D. Hudson,
The Early Tudors: England, 1485–1558 (John Murray, 2001)

**Develop the detail**

Below are a sample question and a paragraph written in answer to this question. The paragraph contains a limited amount of detail. Annotate the paragraph to add additional detail to the answer.

To what extent did regional divisions contribute to social discontent and the outbreak of rebellion?

Regional divisions were complicated by a number of factors, such as the existence of semi-independent and self-governing lordships. The kingdom governed by Henry VII consisted of England, Wales, Ireland and Calais. The ethnic and racial differences were a further complication, as was the fact that the king's subjects spoke a number of different languages, making communication difficult. Even within England itself there were significant differences between northerners, southerners and the people of the far south-west. The wealth enjoyed by southerners was resented by poorer northerners.

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