

Anne Boleyn



Anne Boleyn was the second wife of Henry VIII and Queen of England from 1533 to 1536. Her relationship and marriage to Henry was the cause of the Reformation and because of this, she has been referred to as 'the most important queen consort England has ever had'.

Early Life

Anne was born around 1501, though the exact date isn't known. Anne grew up with her brother George, sister Mary and their parents, Thomas and Elizabeth Boleyn, at Hever Castle in Kent.

Around 1513, Anne travelled to the Netherlands as maid of honour to Margaret of Austria. She later went to France as a lady to Queen Mary, wife of the French king and Henry VIII's sister. She also served Queen Claude who was wife of the following King of France.

Return to England

Anne was called back to England by her father in 1521 and became lady-in-waiting to Henry's wife, Queen Catherine of Aragon.

In 1526, Anne caught the attention of the king who began to fall in love with her. Within a year, he proposed marriage to Anne and set about trying to divorce Catherine.

As divorce was not allowed in the Catholic Church, Henry had to ask special permission from the Pope to end his marriage. The Pope refused, supporting his marriage to Catherine, which infuriated Henry. Anne showed Henry a book which introduced him to the idea of a monarch answering to no one except God. Henry then decided to break away from Rome and the Catholic Church, creating the Church of England with himself as Supreme Head, no longer needing the Pope's permission to divorce. This was known as the Reformation.



Queen of England

On 1st September 1532, Henry granted Anne a noble rank appropriate for a future queen. They were married in secret on 14th November 1532 after Anne fell pregnant but had to hold a second wedding the following January to legalise their marriage. On 23rd May 1533, Archbishop Cranmer declared that Henry's marriage to Catherine was void and five days later, declared Henry's marriage to Anne lawful.

Anne was officially crowned Queen of England on 1st June 1533 in a magnificent ceremony. As queen, she showed a great deal of intelligence in political matters, though this often led to arguments with Henry.

On 7th September 1533, Anne gave birth to a daughter, Elizabeth. Henry was disappointed as he wanted a son but reassured Anne that a son would follow. Anne fell pregnant several more times, but lost each child before they were born.

Anne's Downfall

In early 1536, Henry had lost patience with Anne and began courting one of her ladies-in-waiting, Jane Seymour. He claimed that he had only married Anne due to 'witchcraft' and Jane was soon moved into royal quarters close to the king. Rumours soon started to follow that Anne had been having relationships with other men during her marriage and, on 2nd May 1536, she was arrested and taken to the Tower of London.

Throughout her imprisonment, Anne protested her innocence but, after two weeks of imprisonment, Anne and four men accused of having a relationship with her were found guilty of high treason and sentenced to death.

On 19th May 1536, Anne was executed. As she was a queen, she was beheaded by an expert swordsman from France rather than by a common axe.

After her daughter was crowned Queen Elizabeth I in 1558, Anne was thought of as a heroine of the Reformation and that all accusations against her were false. As the mother of Elizabeth, she is also the mother of one of the most important monarchs in history. She has remained a popular historical figure and has had many artworks, books and films produced about her.



Anne Boleyn Questions

1. What was the name of Anne's father? Tick **one**.

- George Thomas
 Henry Edward

2. Fill in the missing words.

Anne travelled to the _____ as maid of honour
to _____ of Austria. She later went to _____ as a
lady to Queen Mary, wife of the French king and Henry VIII's _____.

3. Who did Anne serve as lady-in-waiting when she returned to England?

4. When was Anne crowned Queen of England?

5. Tick to show whether each statement is true or false.

	True	False
Anne's parents were called George and Elizabeth.		
Anne married Henry in secret on 14 th November 1532.		
Anne gave birth to a daughter, Elizabeth, on 7 th September 1533.		
Anne was executed by axe on 19 th May 1536.		

6. Why do you think Henry blamed his marriage to Anne on witchcraft?

7. At the end of the text, it says that Anne was thought of as a 'heroine of the Reformation'. Why do you think this is?

Anne Boleyn **Questions**

8. At the start of the text, it says Anne is sometimes credited as 'the most important queen consort in history'. Do you agree? Explain using evidence from the text.

9. Why do you think Anne has remained a popular historical figure?
