**Tudor Breadth Study for A Level – General Introduction and Research Tasks**

I often think that the Tudor section of the course is actually quite like a soap opera with there being a list of ‘good guys’ and ‘villains’, who are introduced to us and then quite often are ‘got rid of’ in an unpleasant or ruthless fashion. There are various parts of the GCSE course which will help you in your studies, obviously you will have some knowledge from the short study you did on Elizabeth during the War and Society course and your study of Charles I will help you understand the nature of the ‘personal rule’ that a fifteenth/sixteenth century monarch carried out. You will come to realise that each of the monarchs that we study have very different personalities and ruling styles, some very much more effective than others. Henry VIII is probably the most iconic ruler that England and Wales have ever had in many ways but you will come to realise that in many ways he was a very unpleasant individual. He reminds me of Donald Trump! Despite his desire to ‘make England great again’ when he died the country was in a much worse economic state than when Henry VII died, mostly because he followed what he wanted to do over what would have been better for the country – this involved the split from Rome to marry Anne Boleyn and his persistent and costly efforts to be a ‘warrior king’ by defeating France in battle. Henry VII is known as ‘the miser king’ because he was very keen to gather a good treasure chest around him to consolidate his rather shaky position; Edward VI is known for being a sickly king who died at 15 and was manipulated by advisors; Mary I is of course known as ‘Bloody Mary’ for her burning of 298 Protestants, (despite the fact that Henry VIII executed 330 during his reign) and Elizabeth is known as the ‘Virgin Queen’ for refusing to marry. When we study the course you will find out the truth behind these stereotypes and will need to form an opinion about each of them. Making up your own mind about each of the monarchs is one of the most important things that you can do as this will come through in the writing and assessments that you will complete. As an examiner I can tell you that someone who has studied effectively and knows what they think is someone who gets a high grade in the A Level exam.

The Tudor section of the course is 40% of your overall marks (the other parts being 40% US depth study and 20% coursework essay). The Tudors section is a breadth study, looking at significant developments over an extended time period (approximately 100 years), for Tudors this is the accession of Henry VII to the throne in 1485 until the end of the Tudor dynasty in 1603 with the death of Elizabeth I. The course is divided into two parts – the first and second years roughly:

1. Part One is the Consolidation of the Tudor Dynasty – 1485 – 1547
2. Henry VII, 1485 – 1509
3. Henry VIII and the Royal Supremacy 1509 – 1547
4. Part Two is England, Turmoil and Triumph 1547 – 1603
5. Instability and consolidation, the ‘Mid-Tudor Crisis’, 1547 – 1563
6. The Triumph of Elizabeth, 1563 – 1603

To prepare you to study the A level I would recommend first reading the Tudor Dynastic Summary document on Tudor monarchs (in the same folder as this document) and then researching a little on each of the monarchs to get a general idea of them. This research can take the form of watching documentaries, reading books or articles or listening to podcasts. If you want to watch a documentary I would start with ‘The Winter King’ by Thomas Penn on Youtube as this is easy to watch and very insightful. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aBpSRQ6wVPU>)

There is also an excellent book by Penn of the same name. Bear in mind though that as this is a breadth course you don’t need to know every single detail of each monarch and their reign, merely have a good understanding of the key questions (set out below) for the monarchs, certainly at this stage. If you prefer podcasts I would recommend those from the Historical Association here: <https://www.history.org.uk/podcasts/categories/britain-ireland-early-modern3?page=2>

You may need a log in to access please use the school login: Username: [KMurphy@st-benedicts.suffolk.sch.uk](mailto:KMurphy@st-benedicts.suffolk.sch.uk) and password: history123. There are many in this section on Tudors so just select some that sound interesting. If you would prefer to read an introduction I would recommend Richard Rex’s book ‘*Tudors*’. Whilst listening /reading and watching please bear in mind the following key questions set by AQA to frame your study:

1. How effectively did the Tudors restore and develop the powers of the monarchy?
2. In what ways and how effectively was England governed during this period?
3. How did relations with foreign powers change and how was the succession secured?
4. How did English society and economy change and with what effects?
5. How did intellectual and religious ideas change and develop and with what effects?
6. How important was the role of key individuals and groups and how were they affected by developments?

If you would like to complete some specific research prior to your study I would suggest choosing one of these questions and applying it to either Henry VII or Henry VIII as these will be the monarchs that you study first. If you want somewhere to start researching your topic the Historical Association A Level Tudors guide is available at: <https://www.history.org.uk/student/categories/915/module/8679/a-level-topic-guide-the-tudors>

Use the same login details as above to access if necessary but you can also create yourself a basic login for this guide too. If you would like me to have a look at any of your research or you have any questions please don’t hesitate to email me on [ctitcombe@st-benedicts.suffolk.sch.uk](mailto:ctitcombe@st-benedicts.suffolk.sch.uk).

Very best wishes

Mrs Titcombe