

financially, they were reluctant to see Papal power dissolved and the power of the monarchy over the Church increased still further. Henry and Cromwell had to tread carefully in 1532, as such radical legislation as the Act in Conditional Restraint of Annates challenged centuries of tradition and worship. Even as late as 1532 Henry had some doubts about asserting Royal Supremacy over that of the Pope. The repercussions within England and across Europe could have been serious. Therefore the Act remained on the statute book as conditional until 1533.


Nevertheless, 1532 can be seen as a watershed mark in Henry's policy towards Rome. He had now all but given up on his annulment being granted by the papacy. Moreover, Anne Boleyn was pregnant by December 1532 and it became a matter of urgency to secure a divorce and marry Anne so that any offspring would be legitimate. However, even without the pregnancy it seems likely that the legislation and actions of 1533 would have occurred anyway. Henry was growing impatient; the idea of the Supremacy appealed to his enormous ego and Cromwell was determined to find a solution to the Great Matter. The year 1532 saw the break with Rome and the Royal Supremacy become Henry and Cromwell's first choice solution to the Great Matter. The following five sessions of the Reformation Parliament would see the policy become a reality.

SKILLS BUILDER

Do you agree with the view expressed in Source K that the diplomatic situation was the main reason for Henry's failure to attain an annulment of his marriage to Catherine by 1529?

Explain your answer using Sources I, J and K and your own knowledge.

Source I



After I had exhorted her [Catherine] at great length to remove all these difficulties, and to content herself with making a profession of chastity, setting before her all the reasons which could be urged on that head, she assured me that she would never do so; that she intended to live and die in the estate of matrimony, into which God had called her, and that she would always be of that opinion, and would not change it. She repeated this many times so determinately and deliberately that I am convinced she will act accordingly. She says that neither the whole kingdom on the one hand, nor any great punishment on the other, although she might be torn from limb to limb, should compel her to alter this opinion. I have always judged her to be a prudent lady, but her obstinacy in not accepting this sound counsel does not much please me.

From a letter written by Cardinal Campeggio to Pope Clement VII,
26 October 1528

Source J

Anne Boleyn is at last come hither, and the King has lodged her in a very fine lodging, which he prepared for her himself. Greater attention is now paid to her every day than has been to the Queen for a long time. I see they mean to accustom the people by degrees to endure her, so that when the blow comes it may not be thought strange. However the people remain quite hardened, and I think that they would do more if they had power. Wolsey uses all his means to bring the Emperor into hatred, and Francis into favour; but it is hard work to fight against nature.

From a letter written by the French Ambassador, December 1528

Source K

The diplomatic situation was running hard against Henry by March 1529. Pope and Emperor were fast coming together and in a few weeks Clement would confess to a close friend that 'I have quite made up my mind to become an imperialist and live and die as such.' In the face of all this Henry was not likely to make much headway with a programme which in even the most favourable circumstances, would have been a thorny one to handle.

From J.J. Scarisbrick's biography, *Henry VIII*, 1968

We are going to plan this answer together:

- Read the question carefully and then read all the sources.
- Use a grid like the one below to record information about the sources.

	Diplomacy	Other factors
Sources		<i>Catherine's stubbornness: 'live and die in the estate of matrimony'</i>
		<i>Popular approval of Catherine: 'people remain quite hardened against Anne'</i>
Own knowledge		

- First of all, use the grid to note down any information from the sources that fits in each column. A couple of examples have been included to get you started.
- Note that one source may provide material for both columns – that is no problem. In this case you should have material from Source J in both columns.

Exam tip

This is a part b) question. Make sure you use the three sources, but do not forget to include your own knowledge as well. This question is worth 40 marks. You will get 16 marks for analysing and evaluating the sources. You will get 24 marks for using your own knowledge, explaining your reasoning and making a judgement.

These words between Henry and Anne Boleyn were scrawled in the margins of a prayer book as they both took morning Mass in the royal chapel in 1527–28:

→ If you remember my love in your prayers as strongly as I adore you, I shall hardly be forgotten, for I am yours. Henry R forever

By daily proof you shall me find
To be to you both loving and kind. AB

Why did Henry seek an annulment of his marriage to Catherine of Aragon?

Source A

And as touching the queen, if it be adjudged by the law of God that she is my lawful wife, there was never thing more pleasant nor more acceptable to me in my life both for the discharge and clearing of my conscience and also for the good qualities and conditions the which I know to be in her. For I assure you all that she is a woman of most gentleness . . . she is without comparison . . . so that if I were to marry again if the marriage might be good I would surely choose her above all other women. But if it be determined by judgement that our marriage was against God's law and clearly void, then I shall not more lament and bewail my unfortunate chance that I have so long lived in adultery to God's great displeasure, and have no true heir of my body to inherit this realm.

Henry's speech to the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of London,
8 November 1528

By 1527 Henry was convinced that his marriage to **Catherine of Aragon** was invalid before God and therefore unlawful. After a relatively happy eighteen years of marriage, Henry had decided that he wanted a divorce, the implications of which would be monumental for the Church in England.

Biography

Catherine of Aragon (1485–1536)

Catherine had married Henry VIII's brother Arthur in 1501 when she was only sixteen years old and he just fourteen. Arthur died shortly after the wedding, harbouring doubts that their marriage had ever been consummated. In 1509 Catherine married Henry VIII, thus maintaining the Anglo-Spanish alliance. Catherine fell pregnant on several occasions but bore only one child, a girl named Mary (b.1516). Henry's affections for Catherine were tested by her failure to produce a male heir and his increasing lust for Anne Boleyn. The whole issue of the King's Great Matter and the ensuing break with Rome revolves around Henry's desire to free himself from his marriage to Catherine of Aragon.

Question

What do these words tell us about the relationship between Henry and Anne by this time?

Take it further

Anne Boleyn was not a catalyst in the English Reformation; she was a key element in the equation.

Eric Ives, *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn*, 2004

Who was Anne Boleyn? Find out more about including her importance in the Henrician Reformation beyond her love affair with Henry. A good starting point would be Eric Ives's biography of Anne mentioned above.

Questions

- 1 What does Henry mean when he says *for the discharge and clearing of my conscience*?
- 2 What was Henry's purpose in describing Catherine as a woman *without comparison*?

Was Henry motivated by lust or pragmatism?

Source D

Sire,

It belongs only to the august mind of a great king, to whom Nature has given a heart full of generosity towards the sex, to repay by favours so extraordinary an artless and short conversation with a girl. Inexhaustible as is the treasury of your majesty's bounties, I pray you to consider that it cannot be sufficient to your generosity; for if you recompense so slight a conversation by gifts so great, what will you be able to do for those who are ready to consecrate their entire obedience to your desires? How great soever may be the bounties I have received, the joy that I feel in being loved by a King whom I adore, and to whom I would with pleasure make a sacrifice of my heart, if fortune had rendered it worthy of being offered to him, will ever be infinitely greater.

Letter from Anne Boleyn to King Henry VIII, late summer 1526

Question

Seventeen of Henry VIII's famous love letters to Anne Boleyn exist but only one of Anne's letters to the King has survived. In this letter (above) Anne thanks the King for personally appointing her a maid of honour to his queen, Catherine of Aragon.

Why do you think this letter is so important to historians studying the relationship between Henry and Anne Boleyn?

Biography**Anne Boleyn (c. 1501–36)**

Anne was the second daughter of Thomas Boleyn and granddaughter of the second duke of Norfolk. She spent some of her adolescent years in the French court, returning to England in 1522, with the intention of marrying Lord Henry Percy. Henry had Wolsey terminate the proposal and Henry became increasingly obsessed with Anne. Anne would not become Henry's mistress and it is widely believed that she played her cards wisely as the Great Matter unfolded. In January 1533 Henry married Anne in secret and she was crowned queen later that year.

The question remains as to just what motivated Henry to divorce his wife of eighteen years. There is little doubt that he fell madly in love with **Anne Boleyn** some time between 1525 and 1527. Anne was the daughter of Sir Thomas Boleyn, a courtier and minister, as well as being the niece of the Duke of Norfolk. Henry even had to employ Wolsey to break up Anne's love affair with Henry Percy. More interestingly, Anne was also the sister of one of Henry's former mistresses, namely Mary. Anne was determined not to follow in her sister's footsteps and give in to Henry's lustful overtures. If Henry was to bed her he must first wed her and in doing so make her his lawful queen. Anne set out to allure Henry and she succeeded, but at the same time she played a clever game of cat and mouse in refusing to become merely another notch on Henry's bedstead. There is little doubt that Henry became infatuated with

Biography**Arthur, Prince of Wales (1486–1502)**

Eldest son of Henry VII and his wife, Elizabeth of York and groomed by Henry VII for kingship. Arthur was betrothed to Catherine of Aragon in 1489, when he was only three years old. The marriage was designed to seal an Anglo-Spanish alliance and took place on 14 November 1501. On 2 April 1502, Arthur died suddenly. Catherine maintained that the marriage was unconsummated, but Julius II's dispensation for Catherine to marry Henry issued in 1503 suggested otherwise.

Why did Henry have problems attaining a divorce through Rome 1527–29?

Source E

Our trusty and wellbeloved subjects, both you of the nobility and you of the meaner sort, it is not unknown to you how that we, both by God's provision and true and lawful inheritance have reigned over this realm of England almost the term of 20 years, during which time we have so ordered us, thanked be God, that no outward enemy hath oppressed you nor taken anything from us . . . so that we think that you nor none of your predecessors never lived more quietly, more wealthy, nor in more estimation under any of our noble progenitors. But when we remember our mortality and that we must die, then we think that all our doings in our lifetime are clearly defaced and worthy of no memory if we leave you in trouble. For if our true heir be not known at the time of our death, see what mischief and trouble shall succeed to you and your children.

Henry's speech to the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of London, 8 November 1528

Henry required a divorce through Rome as only a papal annulment of his marriage to Catherine would be seen as legitimate across Europe. Henry had to demonstrate that his marriage to Catherine had been unlawful from the very beginning.

- Catherine's nephew was **Charles V**, Holy Roman Emperor and the most powerful political figure in Western Christendom. Charles held real influence over **Pope Clement VII** as a consequence of military superiority in the Habsburg–Valois conflict and it would have been unwise for Clement to disgrace the Habsburg emperor by granting an annulment. In May 1527 Imperial troops sacked Rome and the Pope was held a virtual prisoner. Papal policy was now shaped largely by the wishes of Charles, and the chances of an annulment for Henry seemed slim as long as Imperial power held sway in Italy.

Biography

Charles V (1500–58)

Holy Roman Emperor 1519–56. Son of Philip of Burgundy and Joanna of Castile, he inherited vast territorial possessions including the Netherlands, Spain, Naples, Sicily, Sardinia, the Americas and the Habsburg dominions in 1519 when he was elected Holy Roman Emperor. Charles was unquestionably the most powerful ruler in Western Christendom, but his enormous inheritance upset the balance of power in Europe and provoked antagonism with Francis I of France.

Questions

- 1 What was Henry's purpose in addressing the important citizens of London in November 1528?
- 2 In your own words explain what Henry's main point is in this extract of his speech?

Biography

Clement VII (1478–1534)

Pope from 1523. The illegitimate and posthumous son of Giuliano de Medici, he was brought up by Lorenzo de Medici. His cousin, Pope Leo X, elevated him to the cardinalate and to the position of papal legate in Florence. In 1523, after the brief pontificate of Adrian VI, he became the second Medici Pope at an awkward time. Charles V was in the ascendancy in Italy and his advance threatened papal lands. In 1527 Imperial troops sacked Rome. Partly as a consequence of this, Clement was unable to resolve the issue of Henry VIII's divorce, leading to England's break with Rome in 1534.

Anne Boleyn

The daughter of Sir Thomas Boleyn, Anne had spent her formative years in France only to return to England in 1522. Here she attracted the attentions of several notable figures at court, including Sir Thomas Wyatt, the poet, and Henry Percy, son of the Earl of Northumberland. When Henry met her, however, he fell head over heels in love with her, ordering Wolsey to stamp on Percy's interest in her.

SOURCE 9.7 From 1526 until Easter 1527, Henry wanted Anne to be his mistress

Debating with myself the contents of your letter, I have put myself in great distress, not knowing how to interpret them . . . For of necessity I must assure me of this answer having been now above one whole year struck with the dart of love . . .

If it shall please you to do me the office of a true, loyal mistress . . . I promise you that not only shall the name be given you, but that also I will take you for my only mistress, rejecting from thought and affection all others save yourself, to serve you only.

SOURCE 9.8 From Easter to summer 1527, Henry complained of silence from Anne

Since I parted with you I have been advised that the opinion in which I left you is now altogether changed, and that you will not come to court . . . the which report being true I cannot enough marvel at, seeing that I am well assured I have never since that time committed fault.

What parallels might a historian make between Henry's love life and that of the British royal family at the turn of the twentieth century? Are such parallels part of the proper work of a historian?



SOURCE 9.9 In the summer of 1527, Henry wanted Anne to be his wife, not his mistress. When Anne sent Henry a trinket of a ship with a woman on board, he responded with the following letter

The proofs of your affection are such, the fine poesies of the letters so warmly couched, that they constrain me ever truly to honour, love and serve you, praying that you will continue in this same firm and constant purpose . . .

Henceforth, my heart shall be dedicate to you alone, greatly desirous that so my body could be as well, as God can bring to pass if it pleaseth Him, whom I entreat once each day for the accomplishment thereof . . .

Written with the hand of that secretary who in heart, body and will is

*Your loyal and most ensured servant
Henry aultre A B ne cherse R.
[Translation: Henry looks for no other]*

If Eric Ives' timeline of events (see Chart 9B on page 106–07) is accurate, Henry had already decided to end his marriage to Catherine of Aragon before being smitten by Anne Boleyn's 'dart of love'. This is not to say that Anne Boleyn played an insignificant role in the break with Rome. As we shall see, she and her followers had a significant impact on Henry's thinking (see page 115). We should, however, question the simplistic model that suggests that Henry fell in love with Anne, fell out of love with Catherine, therefore wanted a divorce and then broke with Rome as a result.

VITY
 Sources 9.3–9.6.
 Summarise the arguments of these historians, using about 20 words for each.
 Which historian is the odd one out? Explain how their interpretations differ/agree/disagree.

SOURCE 9.3 V. Murphy 'The literature and propaganda of Henry VIII's first divorce', in D. MacCulloch (ed.), *The Reign of Henry VIII: Politics, Policy and Piety*, 1995, p. 139

By substituting the Hebrew for the Latin, Leviticus was thus cleverly made to fit Henry's situation exactly; he had married in contravention of Leviticus and as a result had incurred the punishment threatened there, as the loss of all his sons proved. This narrow understanding of Leviticus is important for it allowed Henry to reconcile Leviticus with his own circumstances. How deeply Henry believed the views expressed in the address, especially the rewording of Leviticus, is impossible to say, although it is probable that they reflected a genuine and strongly held conviction. Certainly the connection between the king's failure to have produced a surviving son and Leviticus would become a central theme of the treatises produced in his name.

SOURCE 9.4 E. Ives, *Anne Boleyn*, 1986, p. 101

God had spoken directly to his condition; Henry had no option as a devout Christian but to obey, to contract a legal (indeed his first) marriage, and a son would be the reward. Post-Freudian scepticism may smile, but the vital historical point is that Henry believed. Armed with his certainty he consulted Wolsey and his lawyers, and on 17 May 1527 took the first and secret steps to divorce his wife.

SOURCE 9.5 L. B. Smith, *Henry VIII: The Mask of Royalty*, 1971, p. 111

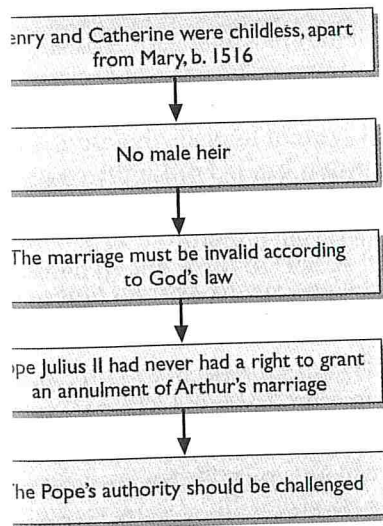
If there is anything approaching a complete explanation of Henry's actions it lies in an amalgam of his compulsive need to wall out doubt by keeping conscience clear and placing blame on others and his absolute conviction that events are determined by a bargain struck between God and man... Ultimately the King rested his case on 'the discharge of our conscience'.

SOURCE 9.6 P. Gwyn, *The King's Cardinal: The Rise and Fall of Thomas Wolsey*, 1990, pp. 512–13

The one argument for the divorce that Henry never made in public was that he had fallen in love with Anne, for to have done so would have been tactically foolish. Yet in February 1529 Campeggio was to say that Henry's love was 'something amazing, and in fact he sees nothing and thinks nothing but Anne. He cannot stay away from her for an hour; it is really quite pitiable, and on it depends his life, and indeed the destruction or survival of this kingdom.' Surely Campeggio had got to the heart of the matter, for without the intensity of that love, or perhaps it should be called infatuation, it is difficult to see how Henry could have sustained the campaign for the five and a half years that were needed, or that he would have jeopardized so much in order to do so... What was at stake was not a 'scruple' but lust, and lust was not something that the Vicar of Christ should encourage, especially when the legal arguments for doing so were not very strong.

Henry's motives

Recent research suggests that Henry brought into conflict with the Pope at an early stage in the 1520s. The logic of Henry's thinking went as follows:



... points to the fact that from the outset Henry questioned the Pope's authority to over his marriage to Catherine. It supports the argument that Henry's actions were motivated by a genuine sense of conscience, which led him to reject his first marriage and, ultimately, papal authority.

The role of Anne Boleyn

Although Henry had found that his marriage to Catherine of Aragon offended his own conscience and God's law, there is no doubt that lurking in the background lay a more earthly temptation, Anne Boleyn. Her tantalising presence at court gave Henry a greater desire to bring an end to his marriage to Catherine of Aragon. The big question, however, is whether Henry's desire for Anne Boleyn pushed him into a separation that would not otherwise have happened.

At the age of 36 and despite hating writing letters, Henry wrote Anne a series of passionate love letters. The letters are fascinating evidence, in that they give us a sense of Henry's growing infatuation with Anne Boleyn at exactly the time that he had decided on annulling his marriage to Catherine of Aragon. Three stages can be identified in Henry's correspondence, as shown in Sources 9.7–9.9 on page 110.

