**Anne Boleyn**

Anne Boleyn was born in 1501. Anne's father was the courtier and diplomat, Sir Thomas Boleyn,1st Earl of Wiltshire, and her mother, Lady Elizabeth Howard, was the daughter of the Duke of Norfolk.

**Childhood**

Anne spent some of her childhood and teenage years in Europe. In 1514, Anne's father arranged for her to be a lady-in-waiting at the French court to Queen Mary, King Henry VIII's younger sister.

**Henry VIII**

On her return to England in 1522, Anne was appointed as lady-in-waiting to Henry VIII's wife Catherine of Aragon. Anne's striking looks and sophisticated manners earned her many admirers at court and by 1523 she was betrothed to Lord Henry Percy. However this relationship was cut short by Cardinal Thomas Wolsey.

Henry VIII had grown tired of his wife, as she had not produced a male heir. In 1527 he appealed to Pope Clement VII for an annulment to his marriage so that he could marry Anne. The Pope refused to annul the marriage as he was afraid to go against the will of Catherine's nephew Charles V, The Holy Roman Emperor.

**Marriage**

Although she resisted Henry VIII's advances, by 1533 Anne was pregnant with her first child. Henry was forced into action. In January 1533 Henry VIII and Anne were married in a secret ceremony and Henry broke with the Catholic Church. He passed the Act of Supremacy, declaring that he was the head of the English church. In June 1533 Anne was crowned Queen of England in a lavish ceremony at Westminster Abbey.

Henry and Anne's daughter Elizabeth (the future Queen Elizabeth I) was born in September 1533. Two more pregnancies ended in miscarriage, in the summer of 1534 and in January 1536. When Henry discovered the second baby had been a boy, he became convinced the marriage was cursed. Henry was still desperate for a male heir and he blamed Anne for this misfortune. He took on Anne’s lady-in-waiting Jane Seymour as his mistress and looked for a way to end his marriage. Unlike Queen Catherine before her, Anne was enraged by Henry's promiscuity and became increasingly jealous.

**Downfall**

In April 1536, Sir Francis Weston, William Brereton, Mark Smeaton, Sir Henry Norris and Anne's brother Lord Rochford were arrested on suspicion of having had relations with the Queen.

Anne was investigated by a secret commission which included her father, her uncle the Duke of Norfolk and Thomas Cromwell. On 2 May 1536 Anne was arrested on charges of adultery with five men. At the trial, Anne was accused of adultery and witchcraft. She was convicted and imprisoned in the Tower of London.

**Death**

On 19 May 1536, Anne was led from her quarters to Tower Green where, spared the axe, she was granted the 'mercy' of beheading by a French swordsman. Anne was the first English queen to be publicly executed.

**●Vocabulary**

Earl(1st Earl of Wiltshire), Duke(Duke of Norfolk) : title of nobility

Cardinal: a high-ranking priest in the Catholic church

Pope: the head of the Roman Catholic Church

The court: the official home of a queen or king or the important people who live in the official home of a queen or king or who work for or advise them.

Courtier: a person who attends a royal court as a companion or adviser to the king or queen

Lady-in-waiting: a woman who attends a queen or princess

Betroth: to promise to marry

Annul: to declare or make legally invalid or void

Annulment: the act of annulling something

Act of Supremacy: the law that declared Henry VIII was the head of the English church not the Pope in1534

Promiscuity: the practice of having casual sex frequently with different partners