



# Henry VIII

**How did Henry VIII get up in the morning?**

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## Introduction

Henry VIII became King of England in 1509, aged 18. He was determined to be a great king, looked up to by everyone. He showed this in lots of ways: his grand portraits, his keenness for French wars and his behaviour towards his court and to other kings.

He also showed it in his control of every detail of his daily life. One measure of greatness at that time was the number of people that surrounded you, the more people, the more important you were. When Henry stayed at Hampton Court he was attended by nearly 1,000 people.

Controlling this number of people was quite a job and in 1526, while he was staying at another of his palaces, at Eltham, a strict and detailed set of rules was drawn up by his closest advisor Cardinal Thomas Wolsey. Here are some extracts from these rules.

## Tasks

Look at Source 1a and b

1. This is an extract from the Ordinances of Eltham which sets out the start to the Kings day.
  - a) Write down what the pages and esquires did each morning.
  - b) What did the gentlemen of the privy chamber have to do?.
  - c) Who were the only people allowed to touch the king?
  - d) Why do you think this was?

Look at Source 2a and b

2. This section of the ordinances deals with the duties of the King's barber and the behaviour of his staff.
  - a) How often did the barber visit the King?
  - b) What tools did he use to help him with his job?
  - c) What was the punishment for the barber if he mixed with the wrong kind of people?
  - d) Why do you think that it was important who he mixed with?
  - e) What were you not allowed to do in the King's chamber?
  - f) When was the only time you would be allowed to do this?
  - g) Why do you think it was so important?

Look at Source 3

3. This piece of the document deals with how the people who worked in the Privy Chamber should act.
  - a) What do you think is meant by the sentence "fhall be loving together, and of good unity and accord"?
  - b) Why do you think they were not allowed to talk about what happened in the chamber?

- c) If you had to write a list of rules for the people who worked in the chamber, what would they be?
4. You are now going to pretend you are making a film about how King Henry VIII gets up;
- Draw a table with a column for the shot number, one for what each shot would show, and a third column for the voice-over (words to go with the shot).
  - Now fill in the your table for what you think you would put in your film.
  - Add a fourth column to your table for the King's words.
  - Think about what the King would say in each shot, then add this to your table.
5. The point of all this was to increase the importance of Henry VIII. How do each of the following points show this?
- having lots of servants
  - having upper class people serve the King
  - doing things in the right order
  - strict control of good behaviour

## Background

Henry's father Henry VII was always careful with money and his court was not famous for its show of wealth. Henry VIII wanted to change all that. When he met one of his rivals, King Francis I of France, just outside Calais in 1520, a complete town of tents and timber was built for the meeting. Yards of velvet, satin and cloth of gold were sent to decorate the temporary palaces. It was called "The Field of the Cloth of Gold." Henry loved all this display: by the end of his reign he had amassed fifty-five palaces, two thousand tapestries, one hundred and fifty paintings and nearly one thousand eight hundred books. He also owned forty-one gowns, twenty-five doublets (a doublet is a snug fitting buttoned jacket), twenty coats, eight cloaks, fifteen capes and eight walking sticks.

The number of people waiting on the monarch was another sign of power. But even better than numbers was the quality of your servants. Kings and great barons had always taken young boys from their friends' families into their households. It was a good education for leadership: you learnt how great men ran their affairs, how to behave, and made contacts which would be useful all your life.

However, to get on at Henry's court young men had to have more than noble blood. Sixteenth century monarchs were expected to play, sing and compose music, read and discuss books, speak several languages as well as wrestle, play tennis, joust and hunt. Henry could do all these things superbly and his favourite "gentlemen of the privy chamber" did as well. Not surprisingly, some of the older aristocrats looked with disdain at these clever young men - "minions", or pretty boys, as they called them.

Henry was intelligent enough to see that there was a point to all this. His father, Henry VII, had won the throne of England by fighting for it, winning the battle of Bosworth in 1485. Henry VII did not have a strong claim to the throne, so his son's was not much better. In the 15th century kings and barons had been rivals for power. In fact, some

barons were more powerful than the king himself. Henry VIII could see that putting a big distance between the monarchy and the barons, building up his magnificence, his separate position, made him more secure.

Everything outlined in the extracts from the Ordinances of Eltham, therefore, built up this separateness and specialness. The elaborate rules about who was allowed to get near the king and when, the requirement to be well-behaved and for servants to be keep the king's secrets, all contributed to this image-building.

## Teachers Notes

The document extracts are designed to be used in Key Stage 2, probably alongside portrait-study. They add another dimension to the strong sense of personal monarchy which will characterise any study of the Tudors.

However, there is more to it than just personal aggrandisement, just as there is more to Henry VIII than the bluff bully. The use of high-born pages and esquires, for example, was a feature of medieval courts; what Henry added was the Renaissance expectation to be excellent in a much wider range of human endeavour. The account of his getting up stresses privacy and demarcates very precisely who could actually touch the royal person (the barber is an interesting exception to this). In another two hundred years - ritual at royal courts moves slowly - Louis XIV was to create a whole royal lifestyle out of the levée. By 1700 privacy, not the public attendance of masses of servants, was to be the mark of real privilege.

Note that:

1. Three rooms are mentioned. The "pallett room" is the room where the King actually slept (a pallett is a bed). The "privy chamber" is the private room next to the pallett room (privy means private). The King's Chamber is the big room where he began the day's public life.
2. Some of those mentioned are ordinary people, e.g. servants, grooms, ushers and the barber. But the pages, esquires and gentlemen of the privy chamber were the sons of rich and powerful lords and knights.

### Sources

Image : E344/22 - Returns of the Valor Ecclesiasticus

Sources 1, 2 & 3 - SP 2/B - Transcript of the Ordinances of Eltham

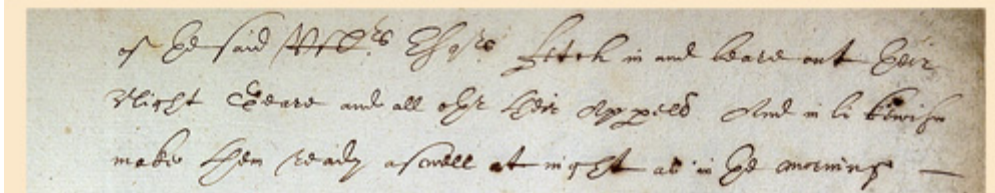
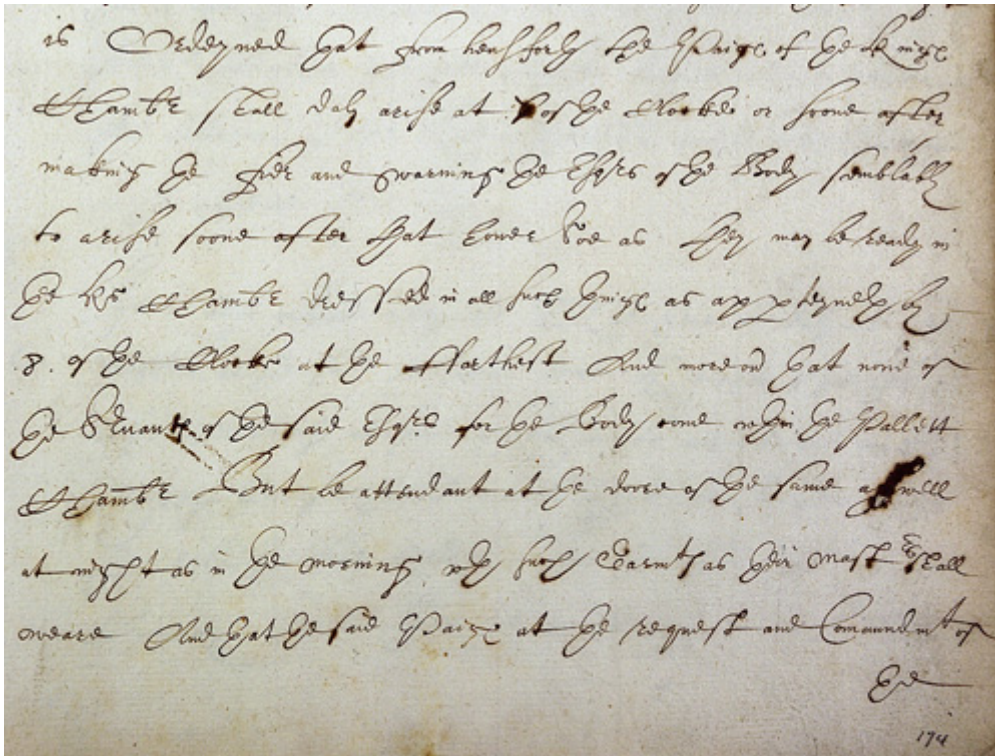
## Schemes of Work

**What were the differences between the lives of rich and poor people in Tudor times?**

### Key Stage 2, Unit 8



## Source 1a : Extract from the Ordinances of Eltham, January, 1526 SP 2/B f219 & 220



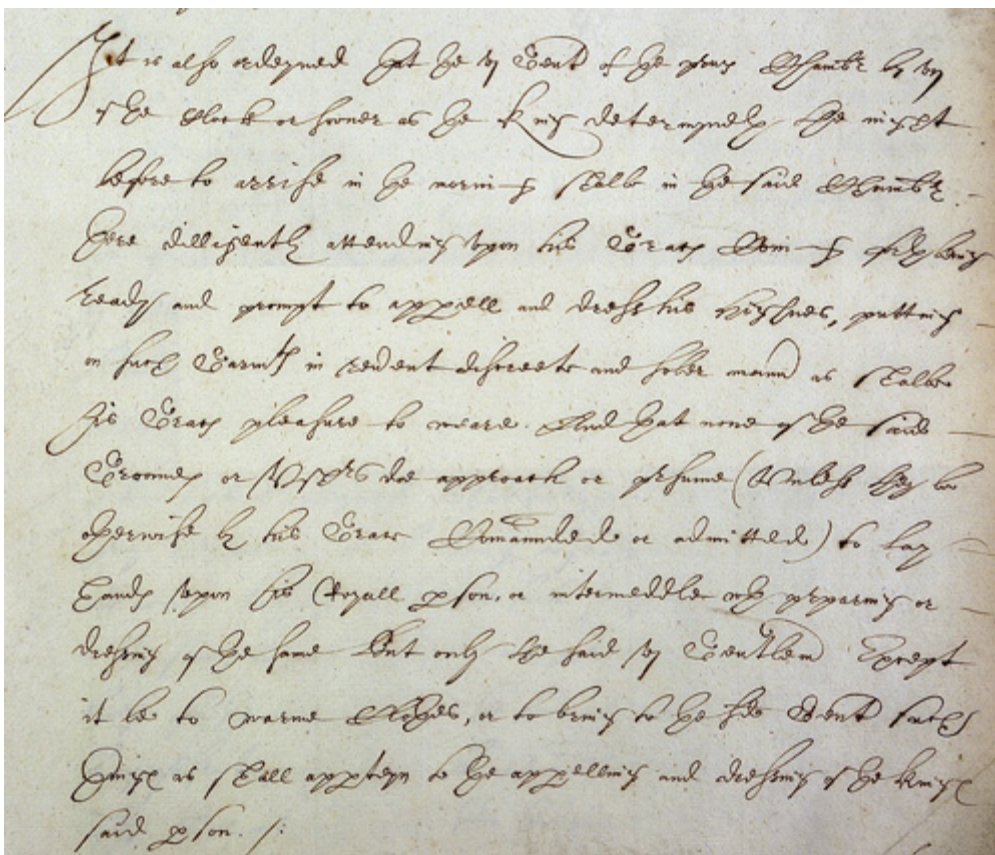
## Source 1a : Transcript of extract from the Ordinances of Eltham, January, 1526 SP 2/B f219 & 220

[it] is ordeyned, that from henceforth the pages of the Kings chamber fhall daily arife at feven of the clock, or foone after; making the fire and warneing the equires for the body fembably to arife foone after that houre, foe as they may be ready in the King's chamber, dreffed in all fuch things as appreteyneth, by eight of the clock at the furtheft. And moreover, that none of the fervants of the faid equires for the body come within the pallet chamber, but be attendant at the doore of the fame, as well as pages, at the requeft and commandment of the faid equires, fetch in and beare out their night geere, and all other their apparel; and in like wife make them ready, as well at night as in the morning

## Source 1a : Simplified Transcript of extract from the Ordinances of Eltham, January, 1526 SP 2/B f219 & 220

[it] is ordered, that from now on the pages of the Kings chamber shall daily arise at seven of the clock, or soon after; making the fire and warning the esquires for the body similarly to arise soone after that hour, so as they may be ready in the King's chamber, dressed in all such things as relate, by eight of the clock at the latest. And moreover, that none of the servants of the said esquires for the body come within the pallet chamber, but be attendant at the door of the same, as well as pages, at the request and commandment of the said esquires, fetch in and bear out their night gear, and all other their clothing; and in the same way make them ready, as well at night as in the morning

## Source 1b : Extract from the Ordinances of Eltham, January, 1526 SP 2/B f228



## Source 1b : Transcript of extract from the Ordinances of Eltham, January, 1526 SP 2/B f228

It is also ordeyned that the six gentlemen of the privy chamber, by seven of the clock or sooner, as the King the night before determineth to arise in the morning, shall be in the said chamber there diligently attending upon his Grace coming forth; being ready and prompt, to apparel and dreffe his Highnesse, putting on such garments, in reverent, discreet and sober manner, as shall be his Grace's pleasure to weare; and that none of the said groomes or ufers doe approach or perfume (unlesse they be otherwise by his Grace commanded or admitted) to lay hands upon his royall person, or intermeddle with preparing or dreffing of the same, but onely that said six gentlemen : except it be to

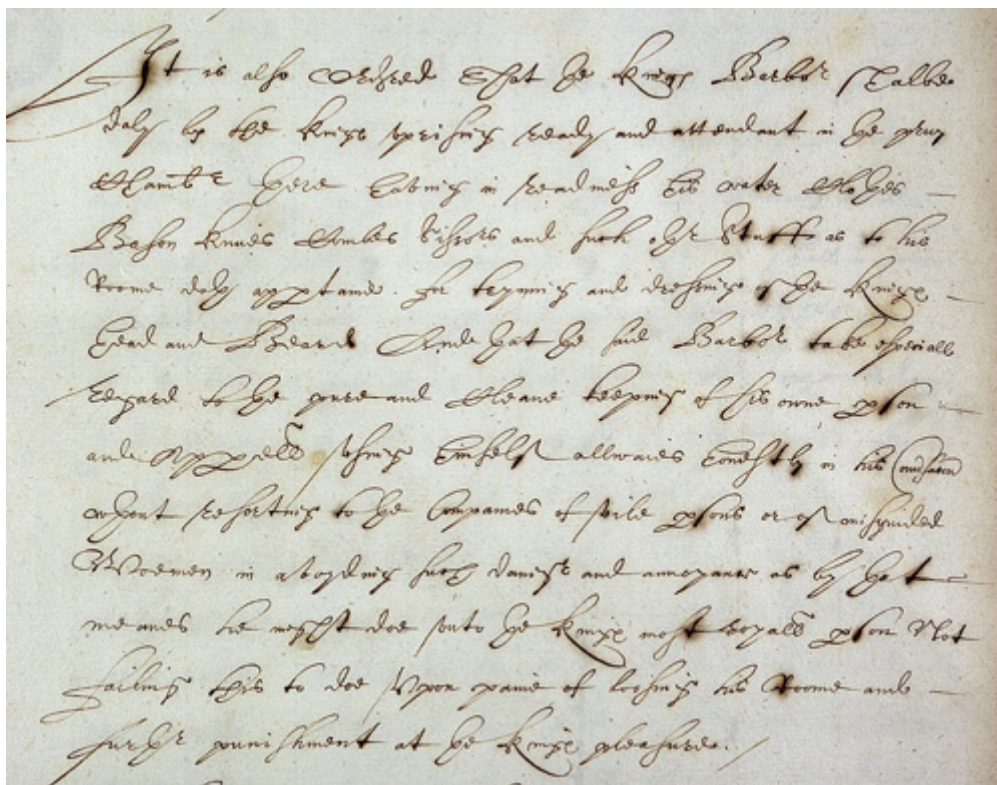


warme cloaths or to bring to the said gentlemen such things as shall apperteyne to the apparelling and dreffing of the King's said perfon.

## Source 1b : Simplified transcript of extract from the Ordinances of Eltham, January, 1526 SP 2/B f228

It is also ordered that the six gentlemen of the privy chamber, by seven of the clock or sooner, as the King the night before decides to arise in the morning, shall be in the said chamber there diligently attending upon his Grace coming forth; being ready and prompt, to apparel and dress his Highness, putting on such garments, in reverent, discreet and sober manner, as shall be his Grace's pleasure to wear; and that none of the said grooms or ushers do approach or presume (unless they be otherwise by his Grace commanded or admitted) to lay hands upon his royal person, or intermeddle with preparing or dressing of the same, but only that said six gentlemen : except it be to warm clothes or to bring to the said gentlemen such things as shall apply to the apparelling and dressing of the King's said person.

## Source 2a : Extract from the Ordinances of Eltham, January, 1526 SP 2/B f232



## Source 2a : Transcript of extract from the Ordinances of Eltham, January, 1526 SP 2/B f232

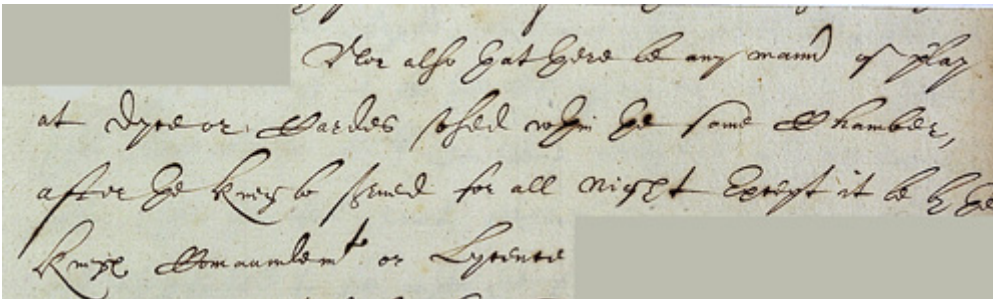
It is also ordered, that the King's barbor shall be dayly by the King's upriseing, ready and attendant in the privy chamber there having in readineffe, his water, cloths, knives, combes, fiffors, and fuche other ftuffe as to his roome doth apperteyne, for trimming and

dreffing the King's head and beard. And that the said barber take especial regard to the pure and cleane keeping of his own perfon and apparell; ufing himfelfe alwayes honeftly in his converfation, without reforting to the company of vile perfons, or of mifguided women, in avoyding fuch dangers and annoyance as by that meanes he might doe unto the Kinge's moft royall perfon; not failing this to doe, upon paine of loofeing his roome, and further punifhment at the King's pleafure.

## Source 2a : Simplified transcript of extract from the Ordinances of Eltham, January, 1526 SP 2/B f232

It is also ordered, that the King's barber shall be daily by the King's uprising, ready and attendant in the privy chamber there having ready, his water, cloths, knives, combs, scissors, and such other stuff as he needs, for trimming and dressing the King's head and beard. And that the said barber take special regard to the pure and clean keeping of his own person and apparel; using himself always honestly in his conversation, without resorting to the company of vile persons, or of misguided women, in avoiding such dangers and annoyance as by that means he might do unto the King's most royal person; not failing this to do, upon pain of loosing his room, and further punishment at the King's pleasure.

## Source 2b : Extract from the Ordinances of Eltham, January, 1526 SP 2/B f221



## Source 2b : Transcript of extract from the Ordinances of Eltham, January, 1526 SP 2/B f221

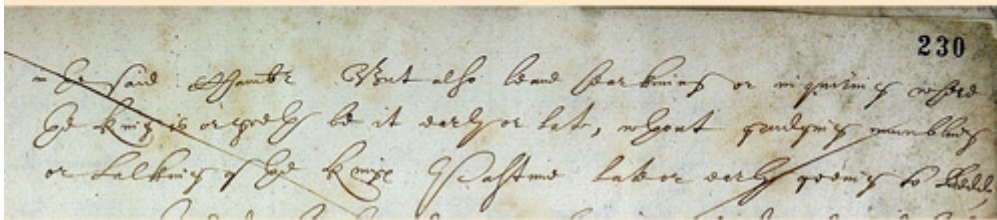
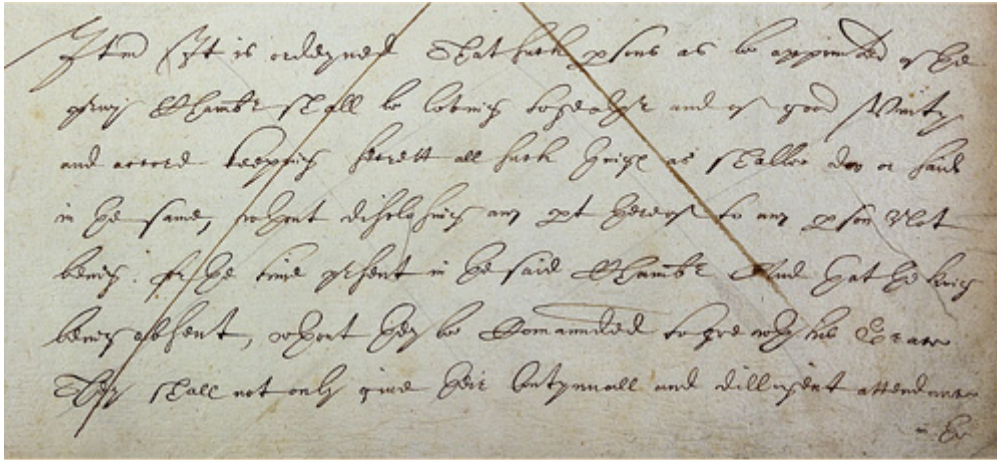
nor alsoe that there be no manner of playing at diffe or cards, ufed within the fame chamber, after the King be ferved for All-night, except it be by the King's commandment or licence.

## Source 2b : Simplified transcript of extract from the Ordinances of Eltham, January, 1526 SP 2/B f221

nor also that there be no manner of playing at dice or cards, used within the same chamber, after the King be served for All-night, except it with the King's permission.



## Source 3 : Extract from the Ordinances of Eltham, January, 1526 SP 2/B f230



## Source 3 : Transcript of extract from the Ordinances of Eltham, January, 1526 SP 2/B f230

ITEM, it is ordeyned that fuch perfans as be appointed of the privy chamber, fhall be loving together, and of good unity and accord keeping fecret all fuch things as fhall be done or faid in the fame, without difclofeing any parte thereof to any perfon not being for the time prefent in the faid chamber, and that the King being abfent, without they be commanded to goe with his Grace, they fhall not onely give their continuall and diligent attendance

in the faid chamber, but alfo leave harkening and enquiring where the King is or goeth, be it early or late, without grudgeing, mumbling, or talking of the King's pafstime; late or early going to bed

## Source 3 : Simplified transcript of extract from the Ordinances of Eltham, January, 1526 SP 2/B f230

ITEM, it is ordained that such persons as be appointed to the privy chamber, shall be loving together, and of good unity and accord keeping secret all such things as shall be done or said in the same, without disclosing any part thereof to any person not being for the time present in the said chamber, and that the King being absent, without they be commanded to go with his Grace, they shall not only give their continual and diligent attendance

in the said chamber, but also leave asking where the King is or is going, be it early or late, without grudging, mumbling, or talking of the King's pastime; late or early going to bed