**King Henry VIII**



**Who was Henry VIII?**

**Henry VIII** was**King of England and Ireland** from **21 April 1509** until **28 January 1547**, and is perhaps one of the most famous monarchs in English history.

Born on **28 June 1491** at**Greenwich Palace**in London, Henry was the second eldest son to **Henry VII** and **Elizabeth of York**.

The young prince was never expected to become king, but when his older brother, **Arthur, Prince of Wales**, died unexpectedly at the age of 15, Henry became heir to the throne.

Upon the death of his father, Henry was coronated on **24 June 1509** — he was just **17 years old**. He immediately set about marrying his elder brother’s widow, **Catherine of Aragon**.

 **What was Henry VIII like?**

The young King Henry was said to be handsome, clever and fun in contrast to his boring father. He was over six feet tall and loved **jousting**, **hunting**, **composing** **music** and throwing big, expensive parties!

He loved spending money. The **Tudor** era was a time of great change, new ideas were emerging about science, art, design and culture, and great sailing expeditions uncovered new lands. Henry wanted to show off all his wealth and built many magnificent palaces — like Hampton Court Palace — and castles that would impress his subjects and rivals.

But, in his later years, all that indulgence took its toll on his physical health. The older King Henry was hugely overweight and struggled to walk. At the age of **50** he had a **54-inch** (137cm) waist! He also suffered from a gruesome ulcer on his leg that caused him constant pain — which may have explained his bad temper!

Henry is known for being a ruthless King who ruled with an iron fist. Strong-willed and bullish, he handed out **executions** to anyone who stood in his way. In fact, during his 38-year reign, it is said he had more than **70,000** people executed — *yikes*!