

# The Changing Ways of Henry VIII

**Directions:** Read the documents relating to the English Reformation and answer the questions.

**Document #1** - Henry VIII's Letter to Pope Leo X on the subject of his book "Assertio Septem Sacramentorum" criticizing Martin Luther. 1521

Most Holy Father:

No duty is more important for a Catholic ruler than to preserve and increase the Christian faith and religion by his example and by preventing it from being destroyed by any assailant of the Faith or in any way impaired. ...we shall ever defend and uphold the Holy Roman Church, not only by force of arms but by the resources of our intelligence and services as a Christian.

Your Holiness' most devoted and humble son,  
Henry, by the grace of God King of England and France, and Lord of Ireland

**At this time, what was King Henry's view toward the Catholic Church?**

**Document #2**- Letter from King Henry VIII to Lord Benedetto, Henry's contact to the Pope. Henry was sending his ambassador to ask for a divorce. 1529

Our most dear friend, greetings. In the past we have received kind treatment from you. We feel we owe you such kind treatment in the future, and will not be happy until we are able to do so. We now sincerely beg that you continue to show us your most fair treatment. We are sending another ambassador of ours to His Majesty for important business of ours and we pray you treat him with the same kind treatment and listen to what he has to say as if it were us who were speaking in person.

A fortunate farewell.  
From Our court at London, 18 January 1529

**Why do you think Henry is being so polite in this letter? What is his objective?**

**Document #3** - The Act in Restraint of Appeals Made by English Parliament 1533

England is an empire governed by one supreme King who has the power of an imperial crown. Through his government the King has the following of people who owe him humble obedience second only to their obedience to God. Just as importantly, the King is given his power, importance, authority, and the right to render justice within his realm by Almighty God himself.

From now on when any cause of the divine law happens to come in question or of spiritual learning, it will be interpreted by the English Church, without the intermeddling of any exterior person or persons, such as the Pope.

The King of this realm may also make laws for the conservation of the rights and liberties of the imperial crown of this realm. This will keep us safe from the annoyance and attacks from Rome and any other foreign

ruler attempting to weaken or destroy this realm.

This includes laws that have been created because of disagreements with Rome about matrimony and divorces, required payments and gifts to the Church. These cause great trouble and costs of the King's Highness and the English people.

This must all happen because the great distance and difference between England and Rome makes it impossible for Rome to know the true cause of an English problem and therefore cannot help solve the problem.

**According to this act of Parliament, who gives the English King the right to rule?**

**How did this act change the relationship between the English Church and the Pope in Rome?**

**Based on the document and what you have learned, what issue or issues sparked this drastic change?**

**Document #4 - Henry VIII's Act of Supremacy (1534)**

The King's Majesty justly and rightfully is and ought to be the supreme head of the Church of England, and so is recognized by the clergy of this realm. By the authority of this Parliament, the king, his heirs and successors, shall be taken, accepted, and reputed the only supreme head in earth of the Church of England, called Anglicans Ecclesia.

**According to this act, the head of the Church of England is \_\_\_\_\_.**

**Document #7- Account of the executions of John Fisher and Thomas More written by the Tudor chronicler Edward Hall 1535**

This year three monks were condemned of high treason against the king, and sentenced to be drawn, hanged, disemboweled, beheaded and quartered. John Fisher, bishop of Rochester, was also condemned for treason against the king. The jury ruled he should be hanged, cut down alive, his bowels taken out of his body and burnt before him, his head cut off, and his body be divided into four parts and his head and body be set in such places as the king should assign. The effect of the treason was denying the king to be Supreme Head of the Church of England, according to a statute, The Act of Supremacy, made in the last session of Parliament. This year also, Sir Thomas More, sometime chancellor of England, was arraigned for high treason and condemned. He was beheaded and his head was set on London Bridge. The effect of his death was for the same cause that the bishop of Rochester died for.

**Who were these people and why were they punished in this way?**