**Henry VIII – Renaissance Prince**

**Henry VIII’s Aims**

As a young man, Henry’s main aim was to win glory and power for himself and England by waging successful wars against France. He had read histories of past wars with France and his heroes were great warrior kings such as Edward III, who had beaten French armies in famous battles.

Henry also wanted to prevent rebellions breaking out, as this had happened while Henry VII (his father) was King. To achieve this, Henry would need to win the support of key nobles and parliament. Additionally, having sons to secure the line of succession (having heirs) was important to this, as it would make people confident that the Tudors were in control.

Henry wanted to enjoy being King!

**Henry VIII’s Character**

Henry VIII was confident that he could rule the country without any experience. The young king was handsome, approachable and very different to his father. Many people described him as affectionate, friendly and generous. Henry immediately fired the two ministers who had been linked with his father’s much hated financial policies. This showed he had a ruthless streak.

Henry was a great athlete, strong and powerful. His favourite sports were jousting, wrestling, hunting, archery and riding. Henry VIII liked to have fun and often put pleasure above that of state affairs. Henry enjoyed music, was a good singer, a fine dancer and even composed his own songs. Henry VIII was very intelligent and liked to debate with scholars of the time. He was very gifted in languages and spoke Latin, French and Spanish. Henry VIII believed in fine clothes, dressed well and showed off the jewels of England. Henry saw his hobbies and wealth as very important, as these would impress the nobles who he wanted to support him.

**Henry’s views on the Tudor Monarchy**

Henry VIII was a Roman Catholic and he was a deeply religious man. Henry regularly attended Mass and never failed to give money to charity. As king, Henry VIII started to believe that his royal opinion was the only one that mattered in English government. Kings at that time believed in ‘Divine Right’ – that they were chosen by God to be the monarch. Nobody questioned God so nobody should question King Henry VIII. Henry was an inexperienced leader, often stubborn in his beliefs and his Chief Advisers (Wolsey and Cromwell) often struggled to give him advice when his mind was made up and he hated paperwork. While Henry respected the power of the church and supported the Pope, he expected that the Pope would agree to any requests that he would make.

Henry VIII wanted to have a royal court that would show off the wealth, pomp and glamour of England to all foreign visitors. Henry VIII embraced all new music, culture, arts and learning. He also wanted to remind people of England’s glorious past – he particularly liked to remember the glorious victorious battles and wished to add his own achievements to the mix. He expected to make all the key decisions e.g. when to go to war, who would be given important positions. However, he disliked the smaller jobs of a monarch and relied heavily on key advisors to complete these jobs.

**How did Henry VIII rule England?**

Only the King could make the final decision on domestic and foreign policy for England. Henry VIII also relied upon the House of Lords and House of Commons – this was called Parliament. Henry had a Court which consisted of Courtiers – members of the nobility who lived at the court and supported the king. The size of Henry VIII’s court was designed to impress visiting dignitaries from foreign countries. Henry VIII relied upon JPs (Justice of the Peace) to keep law and order in England. Henry VIII was politically advised by a small group of trusted men called the Royal Council – they were a mix of nobility and clergy. The Privy Chamber was made up of a small group of the King’s closest friends who gave advice to Henry VIII about foreign and domestic politics. The Royal Household was a mix of servants and nobility who ensured that Henry VIII had everything that he needed.