**The Topic: Tudors**

From exploration and execution to religious conflict and conspiracy, the reign of the Tudors is a fascinating period of British history.

The Tudor era saw England move from a monarchy with more medieval practices to an early modern form of monarchy who wielded huge power. In addition the Tudor monarchy saw both powerful Kings and Queens take the stage and make decisions with enormous implications for the power of the Crown, the society of England, and the wealth that England would go onto build.

But where did the Tudor era start from? The Answer lies in the Wars of the Roses. This first part of your transition is about learning a topic in some depth.

**Gaining Depth on the Context of the Tudors: The Wars of the Roses**

The Wars of the Roses were essentially a period of political instability at the top of the ruling system, involving the king and the nobility. This came about because the monarch who ought to dominate and be the clear leader, was at this time weakened because the nobles had grown in strength. A king could thus be overthrown by a rival if the nobility chose to be loyal to the rival instead of the king. The key houses at war were the Houses (wealthy magnates/nobles) of Lancaster and York-known as the Lancastrians and Yorkists. The instability and rivalry between these two houses flared up into open civil war on a number of occasions. The principle outbreaks were 1459-64, 1469-71, 1483-87. The participants cannot be clearly divided into Yorkists and Lancastrians; many members of the senior nobility were involved and **many changed sides**!

**How did the nobility become so powerful that as a group if they worked together they could bring down a king?**

Edward III (1327-77) had used the nobility to help win the 100 years war (1337-1453) against France, and had done this at a price to future kings. He had a policy of granting concessions to the nobility in order to gain their support. This meant his successor (the king after him), Richard II, who tried to control the ‘over mighty’ nobility was deposed by them.

From now on if a monarch was weak, then the nobility would now pounce. The War of the Roses appeared to start from this situation. Henry VI took the throne in 1422 at only 9 months old after his father Henry V died. Henry V had managed to win the Crown of England and France so Henry VI was monarch of both. When he actually began to rule for himself rather than have a council rule on his behalf, it spelt disaster. He was weak and dominated by his advisors and his wife. He left a power vacuum (where no one really knew who was in control of England as he was so weak) and the nobility fought to attempt to fill the gap. Worse still, the French defeated the English at Castillon in July 1453 ending the 100 Years War in English defeat. Henry VI suffered from a mental illness (catatonic schizophrenia) which left him unable to speak. His Lancastrian Queen called Margaret of Anjou became locked in rivalry with the Yorkist Richard.

**So what happened during the years of the Wars of the Roses?**

**TASK: Read through the Timeline below and answer the comprehension Questions…**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Lancastrian Control | Yorkist Control |
| 1422 Henry VI He was weak and dominated by his advisors and his wife. He left a power vacuum and the nobility fought to attempt to fill the gap. Worse still, the French defeated the English at Castillon ending the 100 years war in English defeat. Henry VI suffered from a mental illness (catatonic schizophrenia) **1459 OPEN CIVIL WAR**  1470 Henry VI reinstated as a figurehead by Lancastrians and some former Yorkists who wanted to control the kingdom (Earl of Warwick for example).  1485 Henry VII defeats Richard at the Battle of Bosworth with support from some Yorkists as well as Lancastrians. The Yorkists were so shocked at what Richard III had done that they had switched sides as they didn’t consider him to be legitimate any longer. | 1461 Edward, son of Richard, Duke of York, became Edward IV. This occurred because Richard marched on London and claimed the Crown. Then following a series of battles he was killed. His son however marched on London successfully becoming Edward IV**. In 1464 the period of open Civil War halted. It began again in 1469**.  However, Edward returned in 1471 and had Henry VI’s son Edward and Henry VI himself put to death. **Open civil war once again ended (1471)**. The only remaining Lancastrian, Henry VII fled to Brittany to live with his uncle Jasper Tudor. Edward consolidated control through confiscating lands off rebel nobles so he no longer had to fear them. He provided law, order and effective government. He avoided unpopular taxation. He governed through a council of his OWN choosing – the NOBILITY DID NOT DOMINATE HIM. He had two sons (Edward and Richard) and so the throne seemed secure. BUT in April 1483 – Edward IV died suddenly from a massive stroke following pneumonia.  April 1483 – Edward V came to throne. 12 years old.  1483 – Edward V’s uncle (Edward IV’s brother) Richard locks up the two princes in the tower and made parliament proclaim him Richard III. Probably then ordered the murder of the two princes, who were never seen again. **1483 Instability flared into war again…** |

**Show your understanding of the Wars of the Roses....**

**Write out Questions and answers onto a sheet of paper to hand in!!!**

1. Which key houses faced each other in the Wars of the Roses?
2. Which monarch was crowned king of both France and England?
3. Why was Henry VI a disastrous king?
4. He took the Crown off him in 1461?
5. Once the Yorkists decisively took control in 1471, where did Henry VII (a Lancastrian) flee to?
6. 1483 who usurps the throne off of Edward V?
7. Which year did Henry VII win the Battle of Bosworth?