



© Philip Mould Ltd, London/Bridgeman Images

KATHERINE OF ARAGON

WATCH-ALONG GUIDE

BEFORE WATCHING

Key themes

✚ Religion

In the Tudor period, most people in Europe followed the Roman Catholic Church. But new religious ideas started spreading (Protestantism).



✚ Migration

People travelled and migrated to England in the Tudor period. Some travelled from Europe whilst others travelled from Asia and Africa.

✚ Women's power

In the Tudor period, society was controlled by men. However, some queens had power when they acted as regent.

Who was she?

Katherine of Aragon was a Spanish princess whose mother was a powerful queen. She was one of the first female ambassadors, ruled as regent, inspired an army, and stood up for herself and her daughter.

She was Henry VIII's first wife, and they were married for 24 years. They had one child, Mary, the future Mary I.

SIX the Musical

A modern musical that retells the stories of the wives of Henry VIII's. In this video, an actor from the show explores the real history behind her character with a historian.



Source used in the video

An account of court Katherine's speech in court, recorded many years after the event.

Vocab

✚ Ambassador

The official representative of a foreign ruler at the royal court

✚ Annulment

The ending of a marriage, a bit like a divorce, but it means the marriage never happened in the first place

✚ Protestant

A type of Christianity that believes people do not need officials (like the Pope or Bishops) to communicate with God

✚ Roman Catholic Church

Christian religion with the Pope as its head

WHILE WATCHING

00:47 Why is Katherine often remembered only as “divorced”?
What’s missing?

Talking points: oversimplification; male-focused narratives; ignores character and influence

01:38 What might it have been like for Katherine arriving in England aged 15?

Talking points: language barrier; new culture; isolation; resilience

02:34 What does Catalina’s story suggest about diversity in Tudor England?

Talking points: global connections; presence of Africans/Asians; overlooked histories

03:29 How does Katherine’s life challenge ideas about Tudor women’s roles?

Talking points: held powerful roles (ambassador, regent, military leader); unusual for the time

04.46 Why do you think someone chose to record Katherine’s speech?

Talking points: importance of event; influence of monarchy

06.36 How do you think Katherine of Aragon should be remembered today, and why?

AFTER WATCHING

How do we know?

Use the Source Bank to explore the portrait of Katherine of Aragon or the record of her speech in court, defending her marriage.

Key events

1485 – Born in Spain, daughter of a powerful queen

1501 – Came to England to marry Prince Arthur, son of Henry VII

1502 – Arthur died after six months; Katherine remained in England

1507 – Acted as Spain’s ambassador to England

1509 – Married Henry VIII

1513 – Served as regent while Henry was away

1516 – Gave birth to daughter Mary

1527 – Henry began seeking an annulment

1529 – Defended her marriage in court

1531-1536 – Separated from her daughter and removed from court; marriage annulled

1536 – Died aged 50

