



JANE SEYMOUR

WATCH-ALONG GUIDE

BEFORE WATCHING

Key themes

✚ Religious changes

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

✚ Women's power

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

Using sources as evidence

✚ Historians use sources to understand the past, but when there are very few sources, they must carefully interpret limited and sometimes biased evidence.

Who was she?

Jane Seymour worked as a lady-in-waiting and tried to protect Catholics and monasteries. There are not many historic sources from Jane herself, so much of her personality remains a mystery.

She was Henry VIII's third wife, and they were married for one year before Jane died. They had one child, Edward, the future Edward VI.

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

A portrait of Jane Seymour and Henry VIII's family.

Vocab

✚ Ambassador

The official representative of a foreign ruler at the royal court

✚ Catholic

Member of the Roman Catholic Church – a type of Christianity that follows the teachings of the Pope

✚ Lady-in-waiting

One of the queen's companions who is there to do as the queen wishes

✚ Monasteries

Buildings where religious communities of men called monks live and worship



WHILE WATCHING

00:59 Why is Jane often only remembered as “the queen who died”?
What’s missing?

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

02:52 Why is it difficult for historians to understand Jane’s personality?

Talking points: few sources; no personal writings; reliance on others

03:38 What do Jane’s actions about the monasteries suggest about her beliefs?

Talking points: Catholic views; bravery; limited evidence; inference

04:04 How much influence do you think Jane had over Henry VIII?

Talking points: very little influence regarding the monasteries; but little evidence overall so uncertain

05:58 Why must historians question sources like this painting?

Talking points: not an accurate moment; created later; has a specific purpose; potential bias

06.30 How do you think Jane Seymour should be remembered today, and why?

AFTER WATCHING

How do we know?

Use the Source Bank to explore a portrait of Jane Seymour and Eustace Chapyus’s letter about her.

Key events

c.1508 – Jane Seymour is born into a noble Catholic family in Wiltshire

c.1529 – Arrives at court as a lady-in-waiting to Katherine of Aragon

c.1533 - Becomes lady-in-waiting to Anne Boleyn

c. March 1536 – Jane refuses Henry VIII’s gift

May 1536 – Marries Henry VIII shortly after Anne Boleyn’s execution

c. October 1536 – Jane begs Henry not to close the monasteries

12 October 1537 – Gives birth to Edward

24 October 1537 – Dies shortly afterwards aged about 29

