

## Quills and Frills

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## Fact File

# Quills and Thrills: The Tudors



The Tudor Age took place between 1485 and 1603, about 500 years ago

The Tudor Age took its name from Henry Tudor, also known as King Henry VII, who was the first Tudor King. The people who lived during this time became known as the Tudors.



Think! If you became King or Queen, what would the age be called?



During the Tudor Age, there were 5 Kings and Queens: Henry VII, Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary I and Elizabeth I. Henry VIII and Elizabeth I are still very famous and known throughout the world.





Do you know how many wives King Henry VIII had? Was it 2, 4, or 6?



Do you know the famous sea battle that Elizabeth I fought and won? Was it the Battle of Hastings or the Spanish Armada?

Did you know that Queens Elizabeth I and Mary I were the first Queens to rule in their own right?



# Eating and Drinking



Food and drink was very important to the Tudors and used to show how wealthy they were.



All Tudors ate a lot of pottage. Pottage was a mixture of grains and water, sometimes with other added ingredients. The poor would add herbs and vegetables, the rich would add red wine, meat and spices.



Bread was also eaten by everyone. The poor or servants would eat the burnt base of bread, which was cooked on the floor of the oven, whilst the wealthy ate the top bit of the bread. The rich are still known as the “upper crust”.



Water was often dirty and made you ill so most people drank beer instead. Beer was safer because the water used to make it was boiled. Even children drank beer! However, the beer for drinking during the day and by the young was very weak and called "small beer".



The Tudors did not have a drawer of cutlery like we do today. Every person carried with them a knife and spoon – forks hadn't been invented yet – and people were often given a spoon as a child which they would have throughout their lives. Spoons are still given as Christening gifts today.



Did you know that Tudor tables were trestle tables with the top not attached to the legs? This is why we are still told not to put our elbows on the table – in the past it would have caused the table to collapse.



The Tudors enjoyed various pastimes and sport. Many of these we would consider too violent and cruel today.

## Pastimes



Football was very popular during the Tudor Age, despite Henry VIII trying to ban it. However, football was very different in the Tudor Age from today's game.



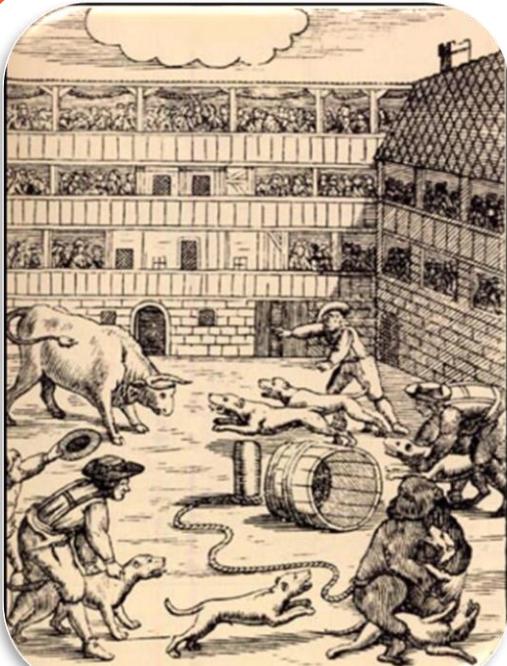
There was no limit to the number of people on each side. The goals could be a mile apart. You could pick up and throw the ball, as well as kicking it.



The ball itself was either a pig's bladder blown up like a balloon or it was made of leather and packed with straw. Competitors could be seriously hurt or even killed playing football.

Football is more a fight than a game....sometimes their necks are broken, sometimes their backs, sometimes their legs.....football encourages envy and hatred....sometimes fighting, murder and a great loss of blood.





Blood sports such as cock-fighting and bear-baiting were very popular. Both involved animals fighting until one of them died. Bear-baiting involved chaining a bear to a post and then setting a pack of dogs on it. Such sports are illegal today.



Seeing criminals get executed was also a popular past time and large crowds, including children, would gather to watch.



Bowls, fox and geese, dice, cards and Real Tennis were also popular and although there were attempts to ban some of them, they continued to be played.



Did you know that Anne Boleyn was watching a game of Real Tennis when she was arrested and it is thought that her husband, Henry VIII, was playing tennis when he was brought the news that she had been executed?



# The Historic Game of Fox and Geese

Fox and Geese is a two-player game of capture that dates back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The name “Fox and Geese” was first mentioned in literature in 1633, in Marmion’s “A Fine Companion”.



However, the earliest evidence of this type of game is from a board carved into the walls of Gloucester Cathedral, dated to the 14th century.



The game consists of a leather board and wooden “men”.



Did you know that Sir Francis Drake was said to be playing bowls at the seaside on Plymouth Hoe when he learned of the approach of the Spanish Armada?



# Education

Only middle class boys went to school. Girls only had a couple of years at school and then after that, they remained at home where they were taught the skills needed to run a house and look after a family.



Poor boys did not go to school because their family needed them to go out and work. Wealthy boys stayed at home and were tutored.

Did you know that the future Queens, Elizabeth and Mary, were both taught the same education as wealthy boys at the time? They learnt many subjects including Mathematics, languages and Classics.



Did you know that boys took beer to school?

Did you know that future Kings had a whipping boy? Because it was thought wrong for a tutor to beat a future king for being naughty, princes had a whipping boy, another child who took their punishment. Although this seems very unfair, whipping boys generally grew up to be given important and trusted roles in the King's Court.



# Clothes



Rich Tudors had colourful clothes made of fine fabrics which tended to be richly embroidered with gold and silver thread to show off their wealth. Status was very important to the Tudors, and the colours and materials you were allowed to wear depended on this. Only the richest people were permitted to wear silk clothes, and only the royal family was allowed to wear anything purple.

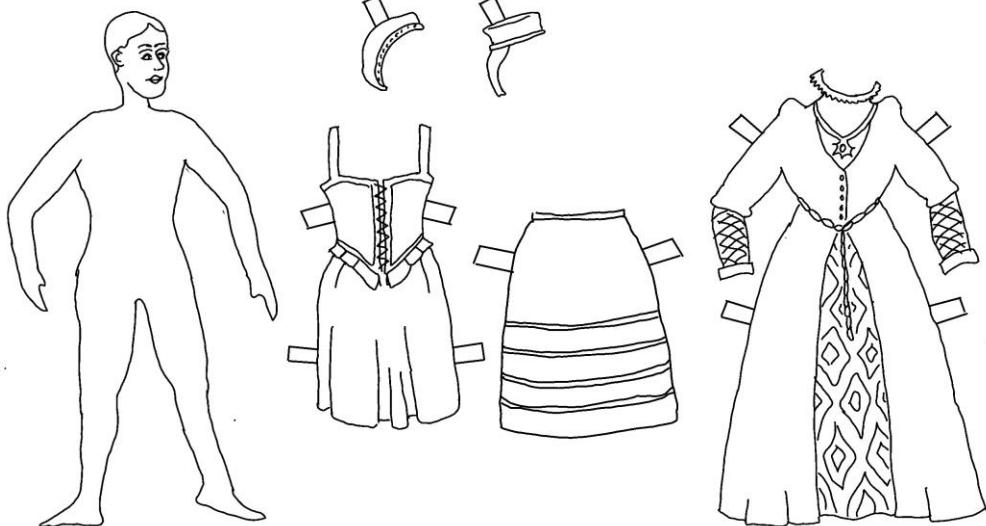
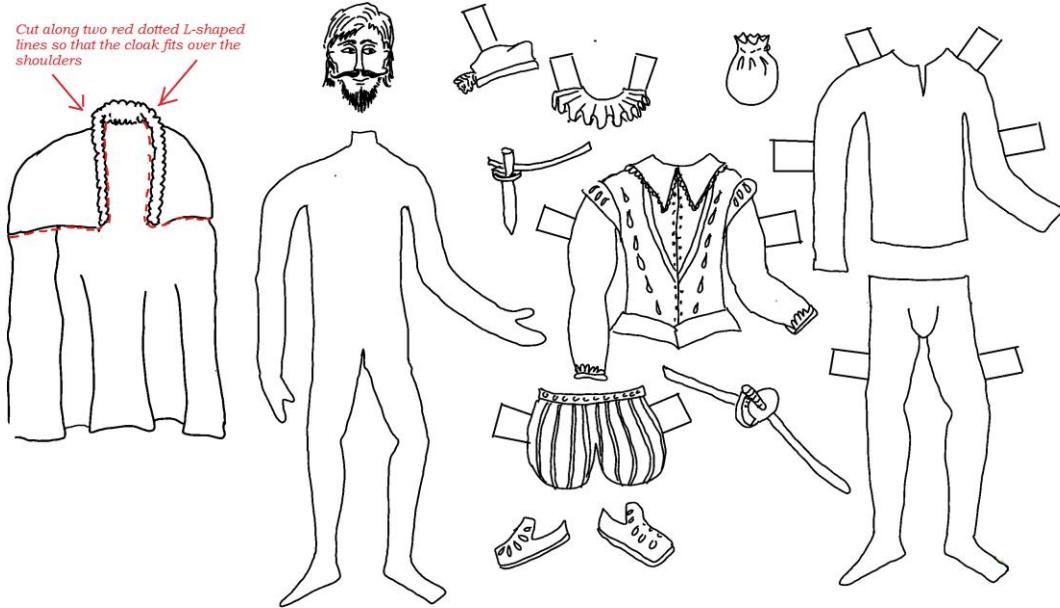


Poor people needed practical clothes they could work in and which kept them warm. They wore any clothes they could find or were given. These were usually made of wool and were very simple. The colours were dull, and they didn't have any frills or decorations like the rich people's outfits.



For the poor, fashion was much less important than having clothes which would last for a long time. They wore loose-fitting clothes which were made from woollen cloth. Most men wore trousers made of wool and a tunic which came down to their knees. Women wore a dress of wool that extended down to the ground. They often wore an apron over their dresses and a cloth bonnet on their heads. Tudor children wore smaller versions of their parents' clothes.

# Colour and cut out your own rich Tudor model. Only use purple if your model is a royal person!



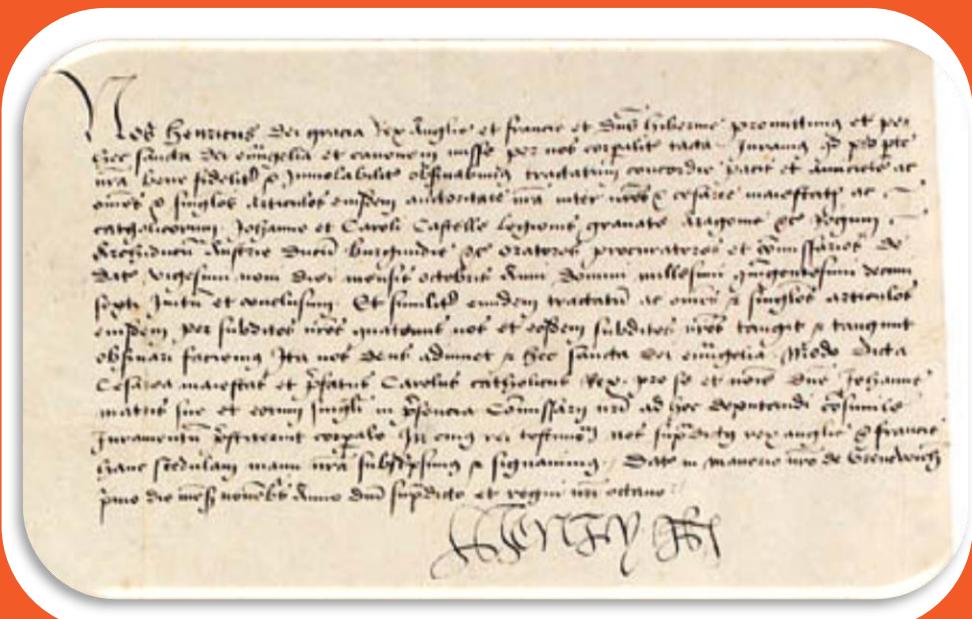
# Writing

# The most famous British writer in the Tudor period was of course

William S. Gaynor



Most people couldn't read or write because education was available only for very privileged people.



People who could write used a quill which they dipped into a pot of ink. Their writing is difficult for us to read because some of their letters are quite different from modern writing. Also – they often wrote in Latin and to make things even more difficult, they didn't have fixed spellings like we do today. The same word – even people's names – could be spelled in several different ways.





Have a go at reading this nursery rhyme written in Secretary Hand. This is what Tudor writing was called.

### Sing a song of Sixpence

Sing a song of Sixpence  
A pocketful of Rye

Four and Twenty Blackbirds  
Baked in a Pie

When the pie was opened  
The birds began to sing

The wif<sup>t</sup> had<sup>t</sup> but a shiny tiff  
She<sup>t</sup> set<sup>t</sup> before<sup>t</sup> the King

The King was in his counting house  
Counting out his money

The Queen was in the parlour  
Eating Baked and Jamsy

The maid was in the garden  
Hanging out the clothes

When down came a Blackbird  
And pecked off her nose