

A Day in the Life of a Tudor

Learning objective: To understand the daily life and social hierarchy of people living in Tudor England.

Read the passage carefully about the Tudor period. Use the vocabulary provided to help you understand the text before answering the questions below.

Ellie the elephant has been travelling through time to study the Tudor era. Life in the 1500s was vastly different depending on your status. At the top of the social hierarchy sat King Henry VIII, who lived in grand palaces filled with velvet and gold. He enjoyed lavish banquets where guests feasted on roasted swan and spiced wine. In contrast, the life of a peasant was incredibly difficult. Most ordinary people lived in small, timber-framed cottages with thatched roofs and dirt floors. They spent their days working from dawn until dusk, tending to crops or spinning wool to sell at the local market. Wealthy merchants thrived by trading exotic goods, whilst young apprentices worked long hours to master a craft, such as blacksmithing or weaving. Everyone wore clothes that identified their position in society; laws even dictated the colours and fabrics people could wear. Whilst the rich adorned themselves in silk and fur, the poor relied on simple woollen tunics. Despite these inequalities, the Tudor period remains a fascinating chapter of history, marked by exploration, innovation, and a changing landscape for all citizens.

Word bank: Hierarchy · Merchant · Banquet · Apprentice · Peasant

1. Identify two specific items or materials that wealthy people used in Tudor times that peasants would not have possessed. (2 marks)

2. According to the text, what was the primary daily occupation for most peasants? (2 marks)

3. Explain why you think the Tudor government created laws that controlled what different social classes were allowed to wear. (3 marks)

4. What might happen to the structure of Tudor society if the wealthy merchants suddenly lost all their money? (3 marks)

5. Justify your answer: Was life for a Tudor apprentice more or less challenging than life for a peasant? Use evidence from the text to support your view. (4 marks)

Draw: Draw a split-screen illustration showing a bustling Tudor market. On one side, show a wealthy merchant in colourful, fine clothing, and on the other, show a peasant working hard in simple, practical garments.



Extension challenge: Compare and contrast the life of a Tudor child with your own life today. Consider three areas: education, work, and leisure. Present your findings in a structured table and write a paragraph explaining which century you would prefer to live in and why.