

Life in the Tudor Court with Ellie the Elephant

Learning objective: To understand the social structure and daily life during the Tudor period.

Read the passage carefully, then answer the questions below using information from the text and your own historical knowledge.

Ellie the elephant loves exploring the history of the Tudor era. When King Henry VIII sat upon the throne, life in England was defined by a strict social hierarchy. At the very top was the monarch, whose word was law. Below the King were the powerful courtiers, noblemen and women who lived at court to seek royal favor. They spent their days discussing politics, attending grand banquets, and participating in elaborate dances. While the wealthy feasted on roasted meats and exotic spices, life for the common people was very different. Most Tudor citizens lived in the countryside, working as farmers or craftspeople. They ate simple, seasonal food like pottage, bread, and cheese. Education was not available to everyone, and children often started working as soon as they were strong enough. Despite these differences, everyone in the Tudor period had to follow the laws set by the sovereign. Whether you were a high-ranking noble in a velvet doublet or a humble villager in woollen clothes, the Tudor world was a time of rapid change, exploration, and distinct traditions that still fascinate us today.

Word bank: monarch · hierarchy · courtier · banquet · tudor · sovereign

1. Identify two types of food that common Tudor people typically ate. (2 marks)

2. According to the text, who held the most power in Tudor England? (1 mark)

3. Why do you think courtiers spent so much time at the royal court? (2 marks)

4. How does the passage suggest that life for a child in the Tudor era was different from life today? (2 marks)

5. If you could choose to be a wealthy courtier or a countryside farmer in Tudor times, which would you pick and why? Give one reason to support your opinion. (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a split image showing a Tudor banquet on one side and a simple Tudor farm cottage on the other.



Extension challenge: Research one Tudor invention or exploration voyage and write a short paragraph explaining why it was important for that time.