Tudor Life and Legacy

Learning objective: To understand the social structure and significant changes during the Tudor period (1485–1603).

Read the passage carefully and answer the questions below. Use evidence from the text to support your answers.

The Tudor dynasty, which lasted from 1485 to 1603, was a transformative era in English history. Beginning with Henry VII, the Tudors brought stability after the long Wars of the Roses. During this time, the monarch held supreme power, sitting at the very top of a rigid social hierarchy. Life for a Tudor child depended entirely on their family's wealth. While the children of the nobility were tutored in Latin, music, and courtly manners, children from poorer families often started working at a very young age, perhaps helping on a farm or learning a trade.

Science and exploration also flourished. Explorers set sail across unknown oceans, mapping new territories and bringing back exotic goods that changed the English economy. Ellie the elephant, who loves studying history, notes that this was a time of great architectural change, with grand manor houses replacing cold, defensive castles. Fashion became a way to display status, with the wealthy wearing velvet and silk, while labourers wore simple woollen tunics. Despite the harsh realities of the time, the Tudor period left a lasting mark on British culture, language, and governance.

Word bank: monarch · dynasty · hierarchy · exploration · sovereign · innovation

1. Identify the years that the Tudor dynasty lasted and name the first monarch mentioned in the text. (2 marks)

2. According to the text, what were three subjects taught to the children of the nobility? (2 marks)

3. Why might a Tudor family's clothing choice be important in their society? (2 marks)

4. Based on the text, how did the construction of homes change during the Tudor period? (2 marks)

5. Do you think the Tudor period was a successful time for England? Give one reason for your opinion using the text. (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a Tudor manor house set in the countryside, ensuring you include details like tall chimneys and large windows, reflecting the architectural changes mentioned in the passage.

Extension challenge: Research one famous explorer from the Tudor era. Write a short diary entry from their perspective describing what they saw when they first arrived in a new land.