### Key topic 2: Henry VIII and Cromwell, 1529–40

**Cromwell’s rise to power, 1529–34**
- Cromwell’s background, e.g. as the son of a Putney innkeeper and brewer; his career as a successful lawyer and merchant; his travels in Europe and support of Protestant ideas; and his service to Wolsey from 1516, becoming a trusted adviser.
- His election as MP for Taunton from 1529 and his membership of the Privy Council from 1530.
- Cromwell’s tactics in handling the annulment, e.g. the 1533 Act of Appeals, preventing appeals to Rome.
- Archbishop Cranmer’s declaration of the marriage to Catherine as invalid.
- Cromwell’s responsibility as Chief Minister from 1534 for major changes in government and in national religious life.
- Cromwell, and the king’s marriages. Factors which combined to account for Anne’s fall, e.g. her falling out with Cromwell over the dissolution of the monasteries in 1536; her failure to provide Henry with a male heir, the birth of Princess Elizabeth in 1533.
- Cromwell’s use of evidence of Anne’s adultery to put her on trial for treason. Anne’s execution, 1536.
- Henry’s marriage to Jane Seymour a few weeks after Anne Boleyn’s execution.
- Jane’s delivery of a son, later Edward VI, 1537, but her death from complications in childbirth.
- Influence of Jane’s two brothers.
- Cromwell as a reformer, e.g. his reform of the Council of the North and improvements to the government of Wales; creation of a professional civil service; removal of local powers, with national administration centred in London; enhancement of the role of the Exchequer; establishment of courts to manage income from the monastic lands; and massive increase in royal income.
- Development of the role of parliament by Cromwell so that it approved very important changes in Church and state.
- Cromwell’s effectiveness in managing parliament and the significance of the increased use of parliament.
- Cromwell and the marriage to Anne of Cleves, e.g. his hope that the marriage would strengthen Protestant influences in England; his role in arranging the marriage; the damage to his influence as a result of the king’s reaction to Anne.
- Factors which combined to bring about his fall, e.g. opposition to Cromwell’s use of power to steer the Church into a more Protestant direction;
- Opposition from factions at court and from the powerful Duke of Norfolk, who wished his niece Catherine Howard to become queen and suggested to the king that Cromwell had become too powerful.
- Cromwell’s execution for treason in 1540.