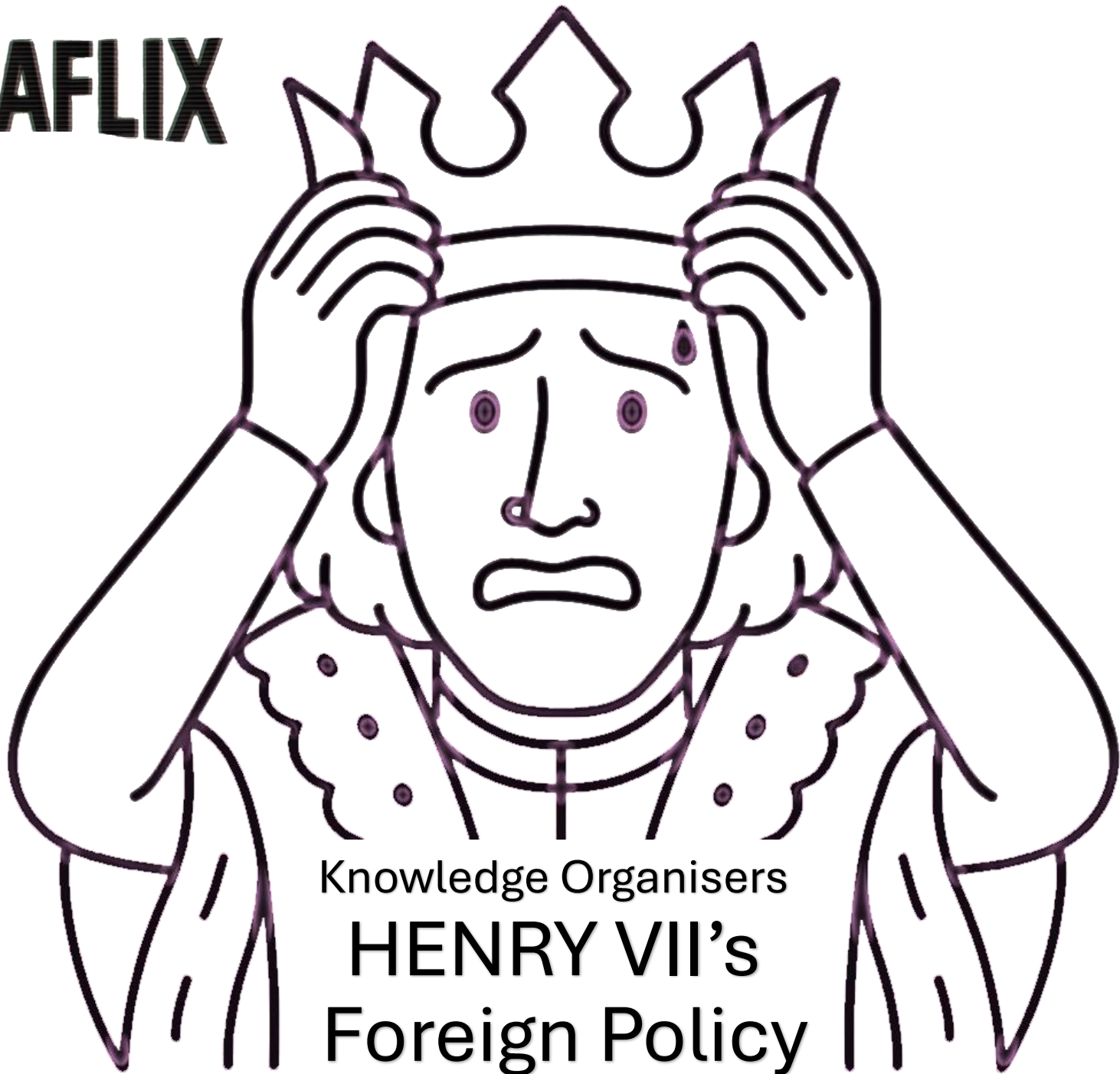


SOCRAFLIX



Knowledge Organisers

**HENRY VII's
Foreign Policy**

SOCRAFLIX

BECAUSE NOBODY USES TEXTBOOKS ANYMORE

My name's Laura — former Head of History with fifteen years of classroom experience. And I'm looking to start a revision revolution with Socraflix.

What is Socraflix? Right now, it's one woman and her two cats. But it's also my vision for what revision **could** be. I believe:

1. Revision shouldn't be boring.
2. You don't need a mountain of facts to succeed.
3. It should make you **understand** more, not just **remember** more.

Over the 2025/26 academic year, I'm building a subscription-based platform for History teachers, offering KS4 and KS5 resources designed to support both teacher workload and student wellbeing — all for just £12.99 a month (the same as a Standard Netflix subscription!)

Most of what I make are short, bingeable videos — the revision equivalent to the latest true crime drama. There's also a growing collection of printables and downloadables: Knowledge Organisers, quirky revision tools, flashcards, wall displays, and “copy-and-paste” PowerPoint slides for quick lesson tasks.

This Knowledge Organiser is part of **Tudor Twistory** — my flagship A-Level Tudors course. Henry VII's story is ready to go, and the rest of the Tudor soap opera will arrive in regular instalments until Christmas.

So, use this however works for you — highlight it, scribble on it, stick it on the wall, or fold it into a Tudor-themed paper aeroplane.

But if you want more, here's where to find me:

[@socraflix](http://www.socraflix.com/tudortwistory)

on TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube (*or just look for the neon Tudor rose — that'll be me*)





This Knowledge Organiser goes with my Henry VII video series. Every Socraflx course gets one – but unlike the standard KO (wall of text + grainy Google image), this one's built to ease the pain. Clean motifs, key points, one memorable example, and the occasional joke to make revision feel less like detention. Goal: knowledge, understanding, and sanity intact.

Course topics:

HENRY VII DOMESTIC POLICY

1. Why was Henry so paranoid?
2. How did Henry survive the first two years of his reign?
3. How dangerous were pretenders and claimants?
4. How did Henry handle the nobility? (Two parts)
5. Did the economy change at all under Henry VII?
6. What was Early Tudor society like?
7. Were popular rebellions just about tax?

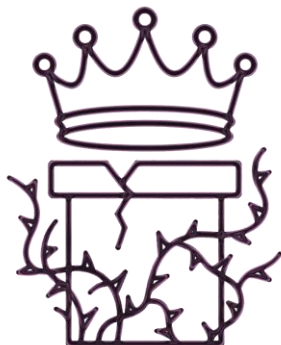
HENRY VII FOREIGN POLICY:

1. How did Henry manage a tricky dilemma with France?
2. Did Henry boost prestige through his alliance with Spain?
3. How strong was Henry's relationship with Scotland?
4. Why was the cloth trade important?

WHY WAS HENRY VII SO PARANOID?

Weak bloodline

Henry VII's claim came via his mother, Margaret Beaufort — descended from John of Gaunt's affair-turned-marriage. The Beaufort line was legitimised, but barred from inheriting. His father had no English royal blood, only a French link — awkward, given England's 100-year war with France. Henry's bloodline was giving "Wi-Fi signal in the countryside."



Time in exile

Henry became Lancastrian heir by luck — his father died suspiciously while in captivity before he was born, and his teenage mother remarried a Yorkist who would change sides at Bosworth. At 14, Henry fled to Brittany, spending years dodging assassins and playing courtly chess— he even pretended to be a monk for a while. The quiet life, with extra paranoia.



Wars of the Roses

After half a century of civil war, the English crown was less a prize and more a cursed object nobody could hold for long. Nine major battles, three usurped kings, and a couple of mysteriously dead princes later, being king meant dodging swords, betrayals, and cousins with stronger claims — like playing endless musical chairs, except the music was war drums and the loser didn't just lose their seat, they lost their head.



Right by Conquest

Henry VII's right to rule came from his victory at Bosworth, not by royal blood — a crown won on the battlefield. Essentially, the first successful invasion of England since 1066. He framed it as divine providence, God's personal endorsement of his reign. After all, nothing says heaven's plan like your rival's horse bolting at the worst possible moment.



2. HOW DID HENRY SURVIVE THE FIRST TWO YEARS OF HIS REIGN?

Bosworth – 22nd Aug 1485

Outnumbered but lucky, Henry Tudor won when Yorkist nobles like the Stanleys abandoned Richard III. The battle showed nobles' power to decide outcomes, teaching Henry to keep them close—especially those prone to switching sides mid-fight.



Reward loyal allies – late Aug 1485

Henry handed out Orders of the Garter like party favours to loyalists. Die-hard Lancastrian John de Vere got Oxford back; Lord Stanley got thanks for his “well-timed” betrayal. Building a loyal noble network meant fewer Yorkist rebellions — and more friends at Christmas dinner.



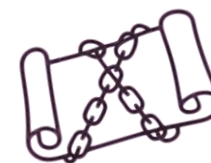
Coronation – 30 October 1485

Henry's coronation dripped with religious symbolism, showing God was firmly in his corner. He was anointed by Archbishop Morton, signalling divine approval and the church's support. With a family tree more tangled than a box of Christmas lights, Henry needed heaven's PR team on speed dial — and this was the perfect launch.



Parliament – November 1485

Henry called Parliament after his coronation to make it clear he ruled by God's grace, not popular vote. Still, he needed their backing for legitimacy. The Act of Attainder stripped 28 nobles of land, offering mercy over execution. Basically: “Grovel, and you might just get your stuff back.”



Marriage to Elizabeth of York – 18 January 1486

Planned before Bosworth, this wedding united Lancastrian and Yorkist blood, making rebellion awkward for Yorkists. A political and PR masterstroke, it projected national stability—and turned the royal bedchamber into the safest room in England.



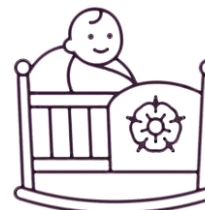
Act of Resumption – 1486

Henry's land grab rolled property ownership back to pre-Wars of the Roses boundaries, swiping estates from Yorkist nobles. This bolstered royal finances and clipped the wings of would-be rebels. Think of it as asset management, but with a crown and more passive-aggressive paperwork.



Birth of Arthur – September 1486

Arthur arrived just eight months after the royal wedding — cue a few raised eyebrows in court. Still, a baby prince meant dynastic unity in a bonnet. Henry now had a living, gurgling insurance policy against rebellion, even if the timing hinted at some pre-marital... diplomacy.



Battle of Stoke – 16 June 1487

Henry's win over Lambert Simnel's rebellion snuffed out serious Yorkist threats. The real danger wasn't Simnel but the Earl of Lincoln, Richard III's heir presumptive. Two battlefield wins in two years gave Henry more than survival — they gave him bragging rights and possibly a divine loyalty card.



3. HOW DANGEROUS WERE PRETENDERS & CLAIMANTS?

Why Was It So Easy to Fake Being a Prince?

The missing princes vanished as kids, so nobody knew what they'd look like as they moved into adolescence. No photos, no IG, no proof. Any vaguely posh boy in a nice outfit could claim royal blood. It was 15th-century catfishing — only with more crowns and fewer awkward coffee dates. Plus, these pretenders had Margaret of Burgundy—Richard's sister—in their corner, ready to hand them a fake Yorkist court to cosplay in, complete with deep insider knowledge and all the backstage gossip from Yorkist rule.



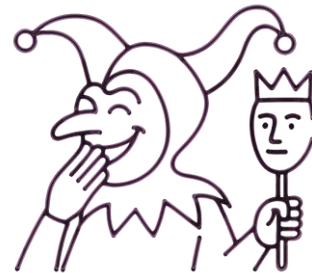
Lambert Simnel, 1487

Lambert, a ten-year-old nobody, was trained to impersonate the Earl of Warwick — awkwardly, still alive in the Tower. Crowned in Dublin, backed by Margaret Burgundy (who sent mercenaries) and Yorkist claimant the earl of Lincoln. Resulted in Battle of Stoke. Henry won, killed Lincoln, and spared Lambert — who only then became a royal kitchen servant. From fake king to mutton rotisserie boy, quite the career pivot.



Perkin Warbeck, 1491-99

Warbeck posed as Prince Richard and toured Europe like a glitch in royal security, collecting sponsors from France, Burgundy, the HRE, and Scotland (where James IV even married him to a noblewoman). In 1497, Cornish rebels crowned him on Bodmin Moor, hoping for lower taxes. Unfortunately, he delivered Yorkist restoration speeches instead — and their enthusiasm waned. Captured and eventually executed, he proved you can be crowned in a field and still end up on the scaffold.



Edmund de la Pole: Real Blood, Not So Real Threat

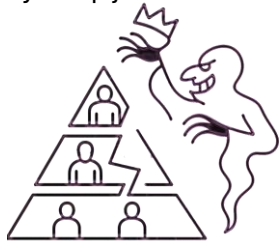
A genuine Yorkist with an actual claim, Edmund lacked troops, money, and a clear plan. Fleeing abroad in 1501 triggered Henry VII's paranoia until a storm in 1506 washed Philip of Burgundy ashore. Henry seized the moment, trading hospitality for Edmund's return. Locked in the Tower for years, he was executed by Henry VIII in 1513 — proving even "safe" threats eventually get tidied up.



HOW DID HENRY VII HANDLE THE NOBILITY? (PART 1)

Bastard Feudalism

Over-mighty nobles using private armies to challenge the crown. Think medieval pyramid scheme with swords. So Henry's laws, fines, and bureaucracy weren't paranoia—they were medieval damage control. The crown was basically a risky temp job.



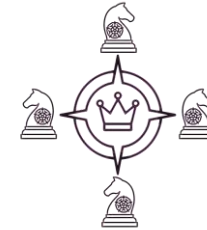
Statute Against Retaining, 1487

Henry cracked down on “retaining” – nobles’ private armies in matching colours and emblems. Nobles now needed licences for each sword, with Henry fining whatever he fancied. It didn’t destroy noble power—just kept it on a short, pricey leash.



Delegation to trusted nobles

Henry didn't try ruling every inch of land himself. He placed loyal allies like John de Vere in East Anglia, Jasper Tudor in Wales, and Giles Daubeney in the West Country. These weren't token jobs—they were smart moves to extend control using men who'd passed the mud-and-blood loyalty test.



Thomas Howard's rehabilitation

Thomas Howard's dad died for Richard III, so Henry threw him in the Tower and stripped his titles. But Howard played the long game—loyal, quiet, maybe bored stiff. He proved his worth by crushing the Yorkshire rebellion so, Henry slowly restored his power, starting with promotion to President of the North



Betrayal of William Stanley

William Stanley, Henry's step-uncle, helped win Bosworth and became Lord Chamberlain—basically the king's bodyguard. But in 1495, he backed pretender Perkin Warbeck. Henry's reaction? No trial, no mercy—just head off. It proved Yorkist danger still lurked and that, in Tudor politics, loyalty had an expiry date.



HOW DID HENRY VII HANDLE THE NOBILITY? (PART 2)

Fiscal Feudalism

Henry VII didn't kill Bastard Feudalism; he gave it a cash-grab makeover. Fiscal feudalism revived ancient dues like wardships, marriage licenses, and inheritance tax. Because these payments bypassed Parliament, he dodged unpopular tax votes and the riots they risked. Medieval greed, now with extra paperwork.



The Chamber & Reginald Bray

Henry moved finance from the Exchequer to his palace chamber — the ultimate “home office” flex. Loyal fixer Reginald Bray, a gentry man rather than noble, ran the Council Learned to wring every penny from feudal dues. Choosing gentry over overmighty magnates was deliberate — nobility demoted, spreadsheets promoted.



Turning Point

After 1503, and the deaths of Prince Arthur, Reginald Bray, and Elizabeth of York, Henry withdrew from public life and became more paranoid. He locked up suspects like Edmund de la Pole for the crime of “might do something.” Public appearances plummeted — Medieval FOMO, but for imagined threats, not missed banquets.



Empson & Dudley

Under Dudley and Empson, the Council Learned stopped being boring admin and became state-sanctioned extortion. By Henry's death, over half the nobility were under bonds — many for offences dredged from obscure medieval laws. Think Better Call Saul, but with more Latin, fewer wigs, and a side order of paranoia



Bonds & Recognisances

Lord Bergavenny was fined £70,000 in 1507 for keeping a private army — the medieval equivalent of getting ticketed for having too many mates over. He paid only £5,000, proving the point wasn't payment but deterrence. Even Margaret Beaufort, the king's mother, was fined for retaining servants without license because nothing says trust issues like fining your mum!



Henry's legacy

By 1509, Henry VII had secured the crown, boxed in the nobility, and made rebellion too costly to contemplate. Stability was his legacy, not popularity. His paranoia defined the final years, but for most of his reign he ruled effectively — trading affection for security in England's post-war recovery.



DID THE ECONOMY CHANGE AT ALL UNDER HENRY VII?

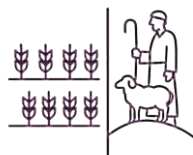
Continuity with tweaks

Henry VII's economy looked medieval—plough, parish, and weather still ruled—but small shifts in wool, cottage industry, and cod hinted at change. Regional variation, harvest dependency, and cautious royal policy kept the system familiar yet evolving. Same fields, new hustles—basically a Tudor Etsy store without the passive-aggressive customer reviews.



Regional Variation

Lowlands grew grain; uplands herded livestock. This split meant royal policies landed unevenly—Norfolk and the Pennines reacted differently to the same tax. It's your go-to for showing limits to central authority: England wasn't one economy. You can't plough the Pennines—unless you fancy turning your ox into a mountain goat.



Harvest Dependency

One bad harvest and grain prices soared; two and unrest brewed. Henry couldn't command the sun, so politics always had a weather limit. This "meteorological ceiling" meant stability depended as much on clouds as Parliament. Think hangry peasants: history's earliest social-media outrage mob—minus the Wi-Fi, plus pitchforks.



Wool Trade Dominance

By the 1490s, cloth made up 90% of exports, swelling royal customs. Enclosure was emerging but minor—just a few fences, not yet crisis. The wool trade tied rural labour to royal revenue. Sheep were basically walking ATMs—only fluffier, and more likely to bite your tunic.



Cottage Industry Growth

Families spun and wove wool at home for merchants, earning extra income alongside farming. This side hustle diversified livelihoods while keeping the rural economy rooted in tradition. Farmer by day, spinner by night—Tudor shift work without the zero-hour contract, though the HR department was probably your nan.



Newfoundland & Cod

John Cabot's 1497 voyage grabbed Newfoundland's cod, bypassing the Hanseatic League—a powerful cartel of North German merchant cities controlling Baltic and North Sea trade. Cod was cheap, protein-rich, and Lent-friendly. Henry expanded horizons without Columbus-level risk.



WHAT WAS EARLY TUDOR SOCIETY LIKE?

Nobility

Henry VII didn't scrap the nobility; he just micromanaged them. Bonds and recognisances kept over 36 noble families toeing the line. They still had land and titles, but needed royal permission to sneeze. Less "storm the castle," more "smile politely while the king reads your receipts."



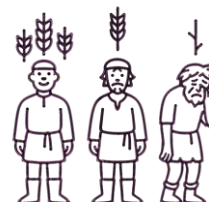
Gentry

The gentry quietly replaced the sheriff as the crown's main local enforcers, serving as Justices of the Peace. By 1509, nearly all JPs were gentry. They ran the Assizes courts, kept rural order, and settled sheep disputes. Socially, they sat just below the nobility — wealthy, landed, but without fancy titles.



Peasants

Over 90% lived in the countryside, working the land. Yeomen owned decent plots, husbandmen had smaller ones, and landless labourers worked for others — risking vagrancy if jobs dried up. Change was minimal: same mud, same hierarchy, and same gamble that the harvest wouldn't ruin you.



Role of the Church

The Church ran spiritual life, welfare, and community events, from baptisms to over 50 holy days a year. Monasteries, shrines, and saints shaped daily priorities. Continuity was total — politics mattered less than whether St Cuthbert would heal your sheep's limp or your cousin's suspicious rash before market day.



Town merchants

Merchants, fuelled by wool exports (over 80% of trade), gained wealth and influence in towns. They funded chapels, schools, and uni places for their kids. This was early urban change — more "spreadsheet empire" than sword fight. Capitalism here was like a group chat before it gets toxic: quiet, but gathering momentum.



WERE POPULAR REBELLIONS JUST ABOUT TAX?

Tax: the trigger

Under Henry VII, there was no regular income tax — just surprise subsidies when the king faced a potential war. Parliament agreed, but peasants with “one goat and a bad attitude” resented paying for battles they’d never see. Result? Grumbling, resistance, and the odd pitchfork cameo.



The regional fuse

Yorkshire and Cornwall were far-flung, fiercely local, and about as close to London as Mars. Cornwall even had its own language. When Westminster sent demands, the mood was less “splendid idea” and more “why are we paying for that?” Early proof the capital didn’t “get” the regions.



Yorkshire 1489

Henry VII wanted cash for war with France; Yorkshire, fresh from a bad harvest, refused. Collector? The Earl of Northumberland — exempt himself, Yorkist turncoat, and deeply unpopular. Locals killed him, aided by rogue Sir John Egremont. Henry sent troops; rebellion fizzled. Lesson: don’t send a freeloading traitor to collect tax.



Cornwall 1497 (Tax rebellion)

Cornwall refused to fund a Scottish war, angry at suspended Stannary Courts and tin taxes. 15,000 miners marched to Blackheath led by Baron Audley, a real noble. Henry dropped the subsidy, reopened stannary courts, and swapped war plans for a marriage alliance — cheaper than invading Scotland anyway.



Cornwall 1497 (Warbeck)

After getting booted out of Scotland, Perkin Warbeck landed in Cornwall, crowned himself “Richard IV” in Bodmin, and promised revenge. But with only 6,000 ragtag followers, no noble support, and Henry’s army closing in, he bolted to a monastery. Double win for Henry: rebellion fizzled, and Warbeck sent straight to the Tower.



HOW DID HENRY MANAGE A TRICKY DILEMMA WITH FRANCE?

The dilemma

Charles VIII was Europe's main character, bent on expanding into Brittany and Italy. Brittany mattered to Henry—they sheltered him in exile. Henry faced a loyalty-versus-self-preservation dilemma. Like having to choose between your oldest mate and your biggest, scariest neighbour.



Treaty of Redon, 1489

Henry took the middle road—support Brittany with 6,000 troops, but only if they paid. It looked loyal, avoided open war with France, and kept control over English forces. The medieval equivalent of, “Sure, I’ll pay for soldiers, but you’re paying the Uber.”



Warbeck's invitation

France retaliated by hosting Perkin Warbeck. His presence at Charles VIII's court was a clear jab at Henry's legitimacy, intended to pressure him into withdrawing his support for Brittany. Imagine your enemy giving your ex a microphone and a stage just to see what happens.



Treaty of Etaples, 1492

Henry timed his military campaign perfectly—late enough to avoid heavy fighting, early enough to negotiate. Charles paid 50,000 crowns, ejected Warbeck, and promised no more rebel support. Downside: France kept Brittany. Upside: Henry got paid to leave. Basically, “Here’s your cash, now please take your soldiers and go home.”



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DID HENRY BOOST PRESTIGE THROUGH HIS ALLIANCE WITH SPAIN?

Europe's power couple

In 1469, Queen Isabella married King Ferdinand, uniting Castile and Aragon. Spain became Europe's newest influencer rich, devout, and smug. For Henry VII, allying with them created a solid alliance and gave him the recognition he craved.



Treaty of Medina del Campo, 1489

Provided mutual defence, rejection of pretenders, and Prince Arthur to wed Catherine of Aragon. It was a dynastic jackpot with a £100,000 dowry — basically the Tudor equivalent of an anti-French insurance policy with built-in continental street cred.



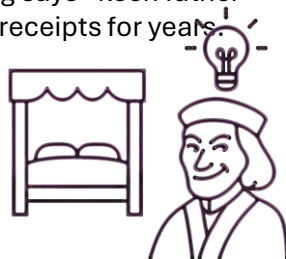
Wedding bells

Arthur wed Catherine in 1501 but Ferdinand paid just £50k of the dowry. Arthur's death five months later let Ferdinand freeze payment, citing consummation doubts. This was the 16th-century version of asking for a refund without a receipt — proving even royal in-laws can be world-class at dodging the bill.



Papal dispensation

Henry VII, ever shrewd, claimed his son hadn't consummated the marriage so they could apply for a papal dispensation and Catherine could marry Prince Henry. Spoiler — this causes drama 25 years later. Ferdinand stalled — because nothing says “keen father-in-law” like haggling over receipts for years.



Treaty of Windsor, 1506

In 1504, Queen Isabella's death triggered a Castilian succession crisis. Joanna and her husband Philip were shipwrecked off English coast, leading Henry to back them via the 1506 Treaty of Windsor. Philip's death and Joanna's “madness” let Ferdinand reclaim Castile.



Marriage to Henry VIII, 1509

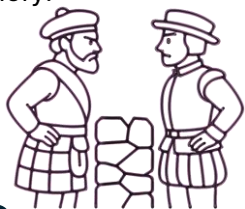
Catherine stayed in England in “princess poverty” — far from peasant hardship, but shabby for a Spanish royal. Once Henry died in 1509, Henry VIII married Catherine with Ferdinand's belated blessing, proving nothing says ‘true love’ like a haggled-over dowry and an eight year wait.



HOW STRONG WAS HENRY VII'S RELATIONSHIP WITH SCOTLAND?

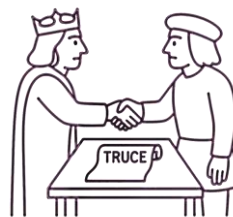
Auld enemy

In 1485, Scotland wasn't an immediate danger, but centuries of bad blood meant they were always ready to stir trouble. The Auld Alliance with France was the real risk — a Franco-Scottish double act whenever England wobbled. Scotland still happily raid if France egged them on. Think grudge neighbour with a very long memory.



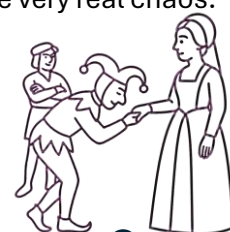
Three Year Truce, 1486

Henry's 1486 truce with James III was less trust, more mutual exhaustion. Henry had rebellions to calm; James had a rebellious teenage son (also called James, naturally). It bought Henry breathing space to stabilise at home. Not foreign glory — just survival. Sometimes the best diplomacy is avoiding eye contact across the fence.



Perkin Warbeck

James IV replaced his murdered father and quickly backed Perkin Warbeck, even marrying him to Lady Catherine Gordon. Talk escalated to invasion, sparking Henry's war taxes — which in turn triggered the Cornish Rebellion before a single battle began. Proof that in the 1490s, even a pretend prince could cause very real chaos.



Truce of Ayton, 1497

This ended over a century of hostility — the first formal peace since 1328. Henry sealed it by offering his daughter Margaret to James IV, swapping a fake-prince sideshow for a real-princess alliance. Warbeck was ejected from Scotland, and Henry got stability without a costly war. Sometimes dad-mode wins over battle-mode.



Treaty of Perpetual Peace (1502)

Sealed with Margaret Tudor's marriage to James IV, promised to end border flare-ups. It worked — briefly. "Perpetual" here meant "until Flodden, 1513," proving medieval peace deals had the shelf life of a Tudor truce. Still, it tied the crowns and secured the dynasty.



WHY WAS THE CLOTH TRADE IMPORTANT?

The Wool Trade and the Economy

In 1485, most English people cared more about surviving winter than foreign policy. But cloth exports to Burgundy—especially via Antwerp—were vital for revenue and urban jobs. For Henry, sheep were his cash cows; upsetting Burgundy risked both the wardrobe and the wallet.



Margaret of Burgundy:

Margaret was Yorkist royalty with resources and a vendetta, hosted anti-Henry plots and championed Perkin Warbeck. This wasn't family drama—it was treason with foreign funding. Think of her as the original toxic relative: doesn't come to Christmas, but still sends chaos in the post.



The 1493 Trade Embargo

Henry retaliated with a trade embargo, banning English cloth exports to Antwerp. It hurt Burgundy and English merchants alike, but sent the message: back my enemies, lose your profits. Essentially, Tudor diplomacy boiled down to “Play nice—or I’ll ruin your Etsy store.”



Magnus Intercursus (1496)

With Philip of Burgundy coming of age - and seeing how much trade was suffering - Burgundy agreed to the Magnus Intercursus, restoring favourable trading rights for both sides. Stability returned, revenue resumed, Warbeck lost a safe haven. Basically, it was like unblocking someone on social media because you remembered they have their uses.



Malus Intercursus & Treaty of Windsor (1506)

A storm dumped Philip of Burgundy in England, and Henry pounced. The Malus Intercursus gave English merchants absurdly generous rights—but Burgundy never ratified it. Philip died soon after, proving Henry's policy sometimes relied less on strategy and more on stormy weather.

