## 1. Fear and grief

Many people suffered great anxiety and fear, worrying about whether their husbands or sons or friends would come home safe from battles.

Every person who was killed or wounded was part of a family and a circle of friends so the shock and sorrow rippled outward to many people. Many more people were affected by the Wars than only those who fought in battles.

## 2. The Tudors

The Tudors, a new dynasty of kings and queens, ruled England from 1485 onwards. No-one had expected the first Tudor, Henry VII, to become king because he was not closely related to the kings at the time.

If the Wars had not taken place there would have been no Henry VIII, no Queen Elizabeth and England might have stayed part of the Catholic Church plus many other differences too.

## 3. Daily Lives

People's daily lives were only a little affected by the Wars. Many people were better off than their parents and grandparents because wages were higher.

Many churches were rebuilt, making them larger and lighter. Castles were improved – not to give them stronger defences but to make them more comfortable to live in with larger, lighter windows.

## 4. Executions

During the Wars it became much more common for the winning side in a battle to kill the leaders of the other side, either during the fighting or by executing them afterwards. This had rarely happened in earlier centuries.

## 5. Plays and entertainment

The Wars inspired William Shakespeare to write plays about them. *Richard III* is one of his best known and most entertaining plays which has entertained millions of people for the last 400 years.

Today many people enjoy reading novels and watching films or TV programmes about the Wars including the mystery of what happened to the Princes in the Tower.

## 6. Difficult decisions

Many individuals and their families had to make incredibly difficult decisions about whether to support the king or support his opponents. Should they fight out of loyalty to the king or their lord – or stay at home and stay safe out of loyalty to their family? Who came first – their family or their king? This kind of choice was very difficult.

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## 7. Attitudes to war and rebellion

By the time Henry Tudor became king as Henry VII in 1485 people certainly wanted peace. The Tudor monarchs therefore had an easier task as the nobles did not want to join rebellions which risked their lives and caused more problems for the country. Even when there were rebellions against Henry VII nearly all the nobles supported the king.

## 8. Doing well out of the Wars

Some families did very well from the Wars. For example, the Howard family supported Richard III and were rewarded with more power and wealth. John Howard became the Duke of Norfolk. Although he was killed at Bosworth his family kept their lands and titles and remained very powerful – and are still Dukes of Norfolk today.

## 9. Words and phrases

The Wars gave us phrases that we still use today – like 'War of the Roses' or 'Roses clash' to describe a cricket, rugby or football match between teams from Yorkshire and Lancashire. A 'kingmaker' is someone who makes other people very powerful – just like Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, was the kingmaker who first made Edward IV king, then brought Henry VI back as king.

## 10. Tudor fears

The Tudors monarchs were very afraid that they might be deposed by someone who was related to past kings. This was because so many kings were deposed during the Wars of the Roses – there were 5 violent changes of kings in 24 years between 1461 and 1485. This shocked everyone – only 2 kings had been deposed in the 350 years before that.

Therefore the Tudors were very suspicious of anyone who was even remotely related to earlier kings. Even in 1539, over fifty years after the last battle of the Wars, Henry VIII executed several people, one a 67 year old lady, because he feared they could be rivals for his crown.

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# Conclusions: Time to pause and reflect

It's always tempting to rush on to the next topic. New topics always look exciting because they're new. However it's really important to pause at the end of a topic and reflect on what you have learned about the topic you've just finished.



The first question to ask yourself is:

> What are the most important things I have learned, that I want to TAKE AWAY and remember?

## Choosing your take-aways about the Wars of the Roses

You have much more chance of remembering the really important points if you identify them carefully.

1. Choose 3 takeaways that you think are the most important to remember. You can choose them from this list or choose your own.

2. Explain why your 3 takeaways are really important to remember.

A. The Wars were fought in an intermittent civil war – not 30 years of continuous warfare

B. Nobody wanted to depose Henry VI – he was a poor king for many years before he was deposed. It was very hard to know what to do with a poor king.

C. People prided themselves on their loyalty to kings and risked their lives out of loyalty to the crown.

D. The nobles and everyone else wanted a strong and clever king who could give them peace and security.

E. Fear of losing lands or being attacked was an important cause of some battles.

F. The wars did not end immediately that Henry Tudor became king in 1485.

G. The wars began in 1455 and the last major battle was in 1487.

H. There was little destruction or looting. However many people were very afraid about husbands, sons or friends who fought in battles.

I. People's daily lives were only a little affected by the Wars. Many people were better off than their parents and grandparents because wages were higher.

J. The wars affected the decisions and attitudes of kings and nobles for many years to come.

## Completing your Answer

Here is the question we began with – now is the time to sum up your answer.

**How would you describe the people of the Wars of the Roses?**

## And finally …. Impress yourself with how much you have learned!

What ideas about the Wars of the Roses did you have before you started this work?

How have those ideas changed or developed?

What has been the most surprising thing you have learned?

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