**Question:** What led the Pilgrims to leave England and sail to America for a new life and religious freedom? How did England go from a Catholic nation to a Protestant nation?

**Big Picture**: England’s change from a Catholic to a Protestant nation led to the new American colonies having a strong Christian Protestant identity, including the “Protestant work ethic”.

Henry the VIII-King of England (1509-1547)

Who was he? Henry was a Catholic King of England from 1509 to 1547. He married **Catherine of Aragon**, daughter of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain. After 6 years of marriage, Henry and Catherine finally have a child-a daughter, ***Princess Mary***, born in 1516.

Henry wanted a son and in his anger blamed Catherine for having a girl. He leaves her alone in the palace for months. Meanwhile, Henry meets and falls in love with **Ann Bolyn**. Soon Bolyn gets pregnant by Henry. Henry now has a major problem: he’s still married to Catherine. Solution: get the marriage to Catherine annulled by asking the Pope for a divorce. New Problem: the Pope is close friends with Catherine’s parents, the King and Queen of Spain and refuses Henry the divorce.

Henry became very angry with the Pope’s decision. He sends another letter to the Pope asking him to reconsider. The pope again refuses. Henry then threatens to evict the Catholic Church from England. The Pope threatens Henry with excommunication (banishment from the Church) if he does. Henry does anyway. He then declares himself Supreme head of the new Church of England, makes a close advisor the new Bishop of Canterbury, and has his marriage to Catherine annulled. Ann Bolyn becomes the new Queen of England in 1533.

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| [Catherine of Aragon](http://tudorhistory.org/aragon/)m. 1509 – 1533Child: MaryDivorced[Jane Seymour](http://tudorhistory.org/seymour/)m. 1536 – 1537Child: Edward IVDied from childbirth[Kathryn Howard](http://tudorhistory.org/howard/)m. 1540 - 1542Executed | **THE SIX WIVES OF HENRY VIII**[Anne Boleyn](http://tudorhistory.org/boleyn/)m. 1533 – 1536Child: ElizabethExecuted[Anne of Cleves](http://tudorhistory.org/cleves/)m. 1540 Jan. - JulyDivorced[Katherine Parr](http://tudorhistory.org/parr/)m. 1543 - 1547Widowed |

New Problem: Ann also has a girl, ***Princess Elizabeth***. Again Henry is very upset and blames Ann for not giving him a son. Henry goes off to war in France where he meets **Jane Seymour** and falls in love. Problem: Henry is still married to Ann. Solution: Accuse her of treason and have her executed. In 1536, Ann Bolyn gets beheaded. Jane Seymour becomes the new Queen of England and in 1537, Henry finally has his son, ***Edward VI***. Problem: Jane dies right after Edward is born.

Henry next marries **Anne of Cleves** without meeting her first. When he sees her, he is disgusted with her looks and finds her plain and boring. He soon declares that he hates his own wife and gets a divorce. Henry then meets **Catherine Howard** and marries her. Soon after, Henry finds her unattractive and boring. He accuses her of being unfaithful and orders her execution. In 1542, Catherine is beheaded as was Ann Bolyn. In 1543, Henry marries **Catherine Parr** and dies in 1547.