

What was Henry VIII really like? Using the evidence

The following descriptions of Henry were written by people living at the same time as Henry.

1

He is rich, ferocious and greedy for glory.
(Machiavelli, who had never met the King, described him in this way.)

2

He is interested only in girls and hunting.
(A Spanish gentleman remarked about the King.)

3

He is England's most cruel and abominable tyrant. (This is what the Pope, the Head of the Catholic Church, said about Henry.)

4

If I had served my God just one half as well as I have served my king, He would not have left me to die in this place.

(This was said by Cardinal Wolsey when Henry had had him arrested and locked in a cold, damp stone prison cell in Leicester.)

more on the next sheet

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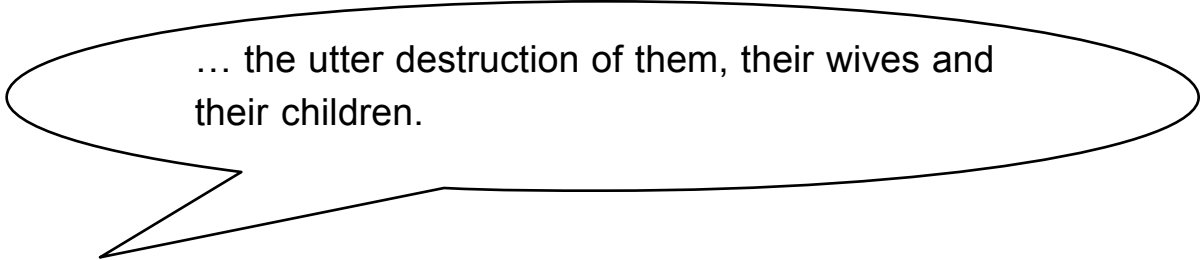
The following descriptions of Henry were written by people living at the same time as Henry.

5 When Henry discovered that Anne of Cleves was not quite as beautiful as her painting had led him to believe, he called her the...



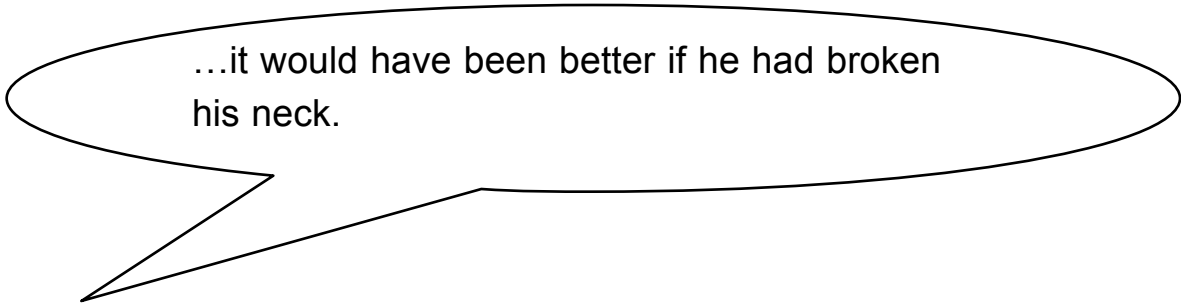
...Flanders mare!

6 In 1537 two men disagreed with Henry making himself Head of the English Church, instead of the Pope. Henry was so angry that he promised ...



... the utter destruction of them, their wives and their children.

7 Following Henry's fall from his horse during a jousting competition, a man from Sussex said that he was sorry that Henry had recovered and that...



...it would have been better if he had broken his neck.

Fact: Henry reigned for 38 years. In that time, about 72,000 people were executed. That's about 1,900 a year, or 5 every day.
