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Princess Elizabeth Tudor (later Queen Elizabeth I) was the daughter of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn (depicted in this image). The King's portrait, created by Hans Holbein the Younger, shows how Henry appeared circa 1536 (when Elizabeth was about three years old). The portrait of Anne Boleyn is by an unknown artist. Online via Wikimedia Commons.

Even though Henry VIII desperately wanted a son, his new child - with his new queen, Anne Boleyn - was a daughter. Elizabeth was born at London's Greenwich Palace on the 7th of September, 1533. She had her father's coloring: golden-red hair and very fair skin.

Before the little girl was three years old, her mother was beheaded on the Tower Green. Accused of various crimes, Anne's worst offense may have been the birth of a stillborn son.

Princess Elizabeth was strong-willed, even as a child. Initially, her father made the little girl his heir, bypassing his elder daughter Mary.

Then Henry had his longed-for son, Edward, with his newest queen (Jane Seymour). When the King decided to change his succession (designating his son as heir-to-the-throne), Elizabeth was effectively demoted from "princess" to "lady."

On hearing the news, the little girl reportedly told the husband of her governess (Lady Margaret Bryan):

*How haps it, Governor, yesterday my Lady Princess, and today but my Lady Elizabeth?*

When she was four, the future queen had a new governess: Catherine Champenowne. Kat, as she was known, married Sir John Ashley. An extremely important part of the child's formative years, Kat Ashley was also one of Elizabeth's teachers. The two became so close that when Elizabeth was crowned queen, she made Kat "First Lady of the Bedchamber."

Although her father ultimately had six wives, the last one - Catherine Parr - insisted that her step-daughter needed an excellent education. Elizabeth and Edward both studied with Roger Ascham, one of Britain's most-respected scholars at the time.

Under Ascham's tutelage and strict approach to learning, the already-precocious Elizabeth flourished. Before her late-teen years, she could speak six languages.

Of his famous pupil, Ascham - employing attitudes and using language of the time - wrote:

*Her mind has no womanly weakness ... her perseverance is equal to that of a man ... She readeth more Greek every day, than some Prebendary [a church official] of this Church doth read Latin in a whole week.*

After their 55-year-old father died, at Whitehall, Elizabeth's nine-year-old half-brother was crowned Edward VI. He'd succeeded his father on the 28th of January, 1547. His short-lived rule, however, ended less than seven years later, in 1553.

Now Elizabeth's half-sister Mary would become queen, and life would become much more difficult for Anne Boleyn's daughter.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/PRINCESS-ELIZABETH-Elizabeth-I-The-Golden-Age>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/PRINCESS-ELIZABETH-Elizabeth-I-The-Golden-Age>

## Media Stream



Portrait of King Henry VIII

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Portrait-of-King-Henry-VIII>



Elizabeth I - Place of Birth, Greenwich Palace

Image online, courtesy [tudorhistory.org](http://tudorhistory.org) website.

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View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Elizabeth-I-Place-of-Birth-Greenwich-Palace>



Young Prince Edward - Future Edward VI

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Young-Prince-Edward-Future-Edward-VI>



### Lady Elizabeth's Governess - Catherine Champernowne

Image online, courtesy [tudorplace.com](http://tudorplace.com) website.

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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Lady-Elizabeth-s-Governess-Catherine-Champernowne>



### Sir John Ashley - Husband of Kat Champernowne

Image of painting, depicting Sir John Astley (Ashley), by the English School (c. 1560). The original painting is currently owned by the National Trust.

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### King Henry VIII's Last Wife - Catherine Parr

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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### Edward VI - Son of Henry VIII

This image is included in *The National Portrait Gallery History of the Kings and Queens of England* by David Williamson. Online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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### Princess Elizabeth - Good Queen Bess as a Young Princess

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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### Roger Ascham - Teacher of Edward VI and Elizabeth I

Image from *Library of the World's Best Literature*, edited by Charles Dudley Warner. Online, courtesy Project Gutenberg.

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### Deathbed Scene - Henry VIII

Image online, Wikimedia Commons.

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### Princess Mary Tudor - Age 28

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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### Edward VI - Teenaged King

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

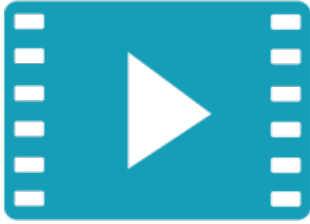
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## Elizabeth I - Her Childhood and Formative Years

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