

The following is a sample descriptive paragraph for the question above:

Perkin Warbeck claimed that he was Richard, Duke of York, whose murder in the Tower was assumed to have happened, but had never been proven. He arrived in Ireland, probably part of a plan involving Margaret of Burgundy and Charles VIII of France to blackmail Henry if he became too anti-French over Brittany. Warbeck received recognition from Ireland, Scotland and France, but in 1494 he gained the support of the Holy Roman Emperor. Warbeck attempted to land at Deal, in England in 1495, but Henry's agents and quick reaction ensured it failed. Warbeck returned to Ireland, where he laid siege to Waterford without success, before going to Scotland. He was welcomed by the Scottish king, James IV and married his cousin. Warbeck then invaded England but got little support in England and was abandoned by the Scots. He returned to Ireland once more, but failed to get support and so attempted to invade England. His landing in Devon got little support and Warbeck abandoned his followers, sought sanctuary and finally surrendered, ending his threat to Henry.

Although the paragraph is about a relevant factor and does hint at some reasons for the Yorkist failure, the answer does not really focus on reasons for Henry's ability to defeat the Yorkists. Instead the answer accurately describes Warbeck's attempts, but apart from a brief mention of the lack of support, the King's spies and his quick action, it simply describes what happened. At best, there is some implied explanation that the people were unwilling to support him, but this is not developed and linked to the Yorkist failure. The reader is left trying to work out why Warbeck and the Yorkists failed, rather than it being explained directly.

### The opening sentence of each paragraph.

One way that you can avoid a narrative approach is to focus on the opening sentence of each paragraph. A good opening sentence will offer a view or idea about an issue relevant to the question, not describe an event or person. With a very good answer an examiner should be able to read the opening sentence of each paragraph and see the line of argument that has been taken in the essay. It is therefore worth spending time practising this skill.

### Activity

Assess the reasons why Henry VII was able to defeat the Yorkist challenge.

Look at the following opening sentences. Which of these offer an idea that directly answers the question above and which simply impart facts?

- 1 Warbeck landed at Deal in 1495 and attempted to invade England.
- 2 The lack of a credible Yorkist leader reduced their threat to Henry.
- 3 The death of Richard at Bosworth removed the most serious Yorkist challenge to Henry.
- 4 On the death of Warwick, the chief Yorkist claimant was the Earl of Suffolk.
- 5 Although the Emperor and Margaret of Burgundy supported the Yorkist cause they were unwilling or unable to supply sufficient financial or military aid to challenge Henry.
- 6 Philip handed over Suffolk to Henry and he was kept in the Tower for the rest of Henry's reign.
- 7 Henry exhibited the real Earl of Warwick to show that Simnel was a pretender.
- 8 Simnel's challenge was defeated at Stoke in June 1487.

### Question practice

In order to practise this skill write six opening sentences for the following questions:

- 1 'The most serious challenge to Henry VII was weak royal finances.' How far do you agree with this view?
- 2 Assess the reasons why Henry VII was able to reduce the power of the nobility.
- 3 How successfully did Henry VII strengthen government?

## Chapter 7

# Henry VII's foreign policy 1485–1509

This chapter considers Henry VII's relations with the major powers in Western Europe and his attempts to gain foreign recognition and secure his throne. It will consider England's position in Europe at the start of the period and Henry's aims within the context of usurping the throne. It will also discuss the extent to which Henry achieved his aims in dealing with the major powers in Western Europe. The chapter will consider the importance of trade as an issue in England's foreign policy and address a number of key issues that relate to the success of his foreign policy and the establishment of the Tudor regime. The main issues of the period are as follows:

- How secure was England in late fifteenth century Europe?
- What were the aims of Henry VII's foreign policy?
- How successful was Henry VII's policy towards France?
- Why was Henry VII able to avoid conflict with Scotland?
- How far did Henry pursue a consistent foreign policy with Spain and Burgundy?
- How important a factor was trade in Henry VII's foreign policy?
- How successful was Henry VII's foreign policy?

This chapter will consider the importance of a good conclusion. It will explain the need to reach a supported judgement, which is based on the argument and view offered in the rest of the essay. The section will consider how to weigh up factors and reach a balanced judgement about the relative importance of factors and the approach to be taken when the question puts forward a named factor as the most important reason.

### Timeline

|        |           |   |
|--------|-----------|---|
| 1486   |           | Commercial treaty with Brittany   |
| 1487   | January   | Renewal of Treaty with Maximilian, heir to the Holy Roman Empire                      |
| 1489   | February  | Treaty of Redon with Brittany   |
| 1489   | March     | Treaty of Medina del Campo with Spain   |
| 1492   | November  | Treaty of Étapes with France  |
| 1493   | September | Temporary trade embargo on cloth trade with the Netherlands because of Perkin Warbeck |
| 1495–6 |           | Henry joins the League of Venice (later the Holy League)                              |
| 1496   | February  | Trade agreement, <i>Magnus Intercursus</i> , signed with Burgundy                     |
| 1496   | October   | Henry and Ferdinand of Aragon sign further marriage agreement                         |
| 1501   | November  | Marriage of Prince Arthur and Catherine of Aragon                                     |
| 1502   | January   | Peace of Ayton (Treaty of Perpetual Peace) with Scotland                              |
| 1503   | August    | Marriage of Henry's daughter, Margaret, to James IV of Scotland                       |
| 1506   | April     | <i>Malus Intercursus</i> signed with Burgundy   |
| 1508   | December  | League of Cambrai   |

## Overview

Henry's foreign policy was closely linked to his domestic situation. As a usurper, he needed to ensure that he had some support abroad so that he could secure his position at home. With domestic concerns his priority, Henry wanted a peaceful foreign policy, and as a result his policy was more defensive than that of his predecessors. However, Henry also used foreign policy to strengthen his position at home through alliances and marriage treaties.

In the period immediately after gaining the throne Henry was able to secure a one-year truce with France, which was then extended to 1489. Similarly, he was able to secure a three-year truce with England's other traditional enemy, Scotland. Moreover, in 1486 he negotiated a commercial treaty with Brittany and in 1487 renewed Edward IV's treaty with the Holy Roman Emperor. These truces gave Henry the opportunity to consolidate his position on the throne. However, these early successes did not last due to French designs on Brittany. Henry attempted to prevent a French seizure of Brittany by building up an anti-French alliance. This led to England signing the Treaty of Medina Del Campo with Spain in 1489, but the policy failed and the French took Brittany. In response to the seizure, Henry asserted the English claim to the French throne and in October 1492 launched an invasion. This was short-lived as the French were more concerned about developments in Italy and bought off the English with the Treaty of Étaples, giving Henry a series of payments that offset the cost of the campaign. Henry also gained promises from the French not to support **Pretenders** and an alliance with Spain, which led to the marriage of Prince Arthur to Catherine of Aragon.

The period from 1493 to 1502 was more successful for Henry. Henry was not included in the anti-French

League of Venice in 1495, but in 1496 he was invited to join it when it was revamped as the Holy League. In the same year, Henry also concluded a further agreement for the marriage of Catherine and Arthur, while also being able to sign a commercial treaty with France and the *Magnus Intercursus*, which restored trading relations with Burgundy. Relations with Scotland were improved after the Warbeck rising, with the Truce of Ayton in 1497, and this was sealed by the marriage of Henry's eldest daughter, Margaret, to James IV of Scotland. Henry also saw the fulfilment of the diplomatic marriage alliance with Spain as Arthur married Catherine in October 1501.

The last years of Henry's reign were less successful in terms of foreign policy. The death of Arthur in 1502 appeared to shatter the alliance with Spain, although there were soon attempts to get papal approval for Prince Henry to marry Catherine. The death of Henry VII's wife in 1503 meant it was unlikely that he would have any more children and attempts to marry a European princess failed. Henry's security was further challenged by the implications of the death of Isabella of Castile in 1504. In 1505, in order to secure allies, it led Henry to try to improve relations with Burgundy as relations with France deteriorated and Ferdinand of Aragon's influence appeared to be in decline. However, in 1506 links with Spain were restored, but Henry was unable to develop this into an anti-French alliance of England, Castile and Burgundy. Once this became impossible, Henry attempted in 1508 to create an anti-Ferdinand alliance, but this also failed, and when the League of Cambrai was established in the same year, Henry was excluded and isolated. However, the League did not threaten England and Henry had, during the course of his reign, gained European recognition without costly wars.

### How secure was England in late fifteenth century Europe?

The last chapter considered how vulnerable Henry was domestically, particularly as a result of his usurpation and the continued Yorkist threat. Partly because of the internal problems caused by the Wars of the Roses, England had largely avoided European entanglements since the loss of the Hundred Years War with France in the 1450s, which had resulted in

England losing all land on the continent except Calais. England's military power was also weak as it had no standing army and was therefore vulnerable to attack from both its near neighbours, Scotland and France. It was also important for the country to retain friendship with the Netherlands because it was the centre of the cloth trade, England's most important export.

### Brittany and France

Despite these weaknesses, Henry VII did have some support on the continent. The independent Duchy of Brittany had provided Henry with refuge when he had fled England in 1471. It was an important area for England as not only did France want to incorporate the Duchy into the kingdom, it would also have meant that all the Channel coast was in the hands of the French. However, France had also given Henry financial aid for his invasion in 1485 and support for Brittany might antagonise the French. This was dangerous for Henry as France had the largest and most professional army in Europe and was financially much stronger than England. France was England's traditional enemy following the Hundred Years War, but the situation was made more dangerous because France was also allied to England's other neighbour, Scotland.

### Scotland

Although Scotland had a much smaller population and financial income than England, its alliance with France ('the Auld Alliance') meant that England could be attacked on two flanks simultaneously. Even when there was not a full-scale invasion, raids across the border were common and forced England to keep expensive military bases in the form of border garrisons with troops based at Berwick and Carlisle. Therefore, although Scotland was not as powerful as England, it was still a nuisance, rather than a serious threat.

### Spain

Spain was the new major power in Europe. The marriage of Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile had brought together their two kingdoms and turned them into an international power. However, their priorities were to drive the Moors (Muslims) out of Granada, which was accomplished in 1492, secure their northern border with France by retaking land that France had taken and to secure the claims of Ferdinand in Naples. These aims meant that Spain was more likely to come into conflict with France than England, and might even see England as a useful ally against France.

### Burgundy

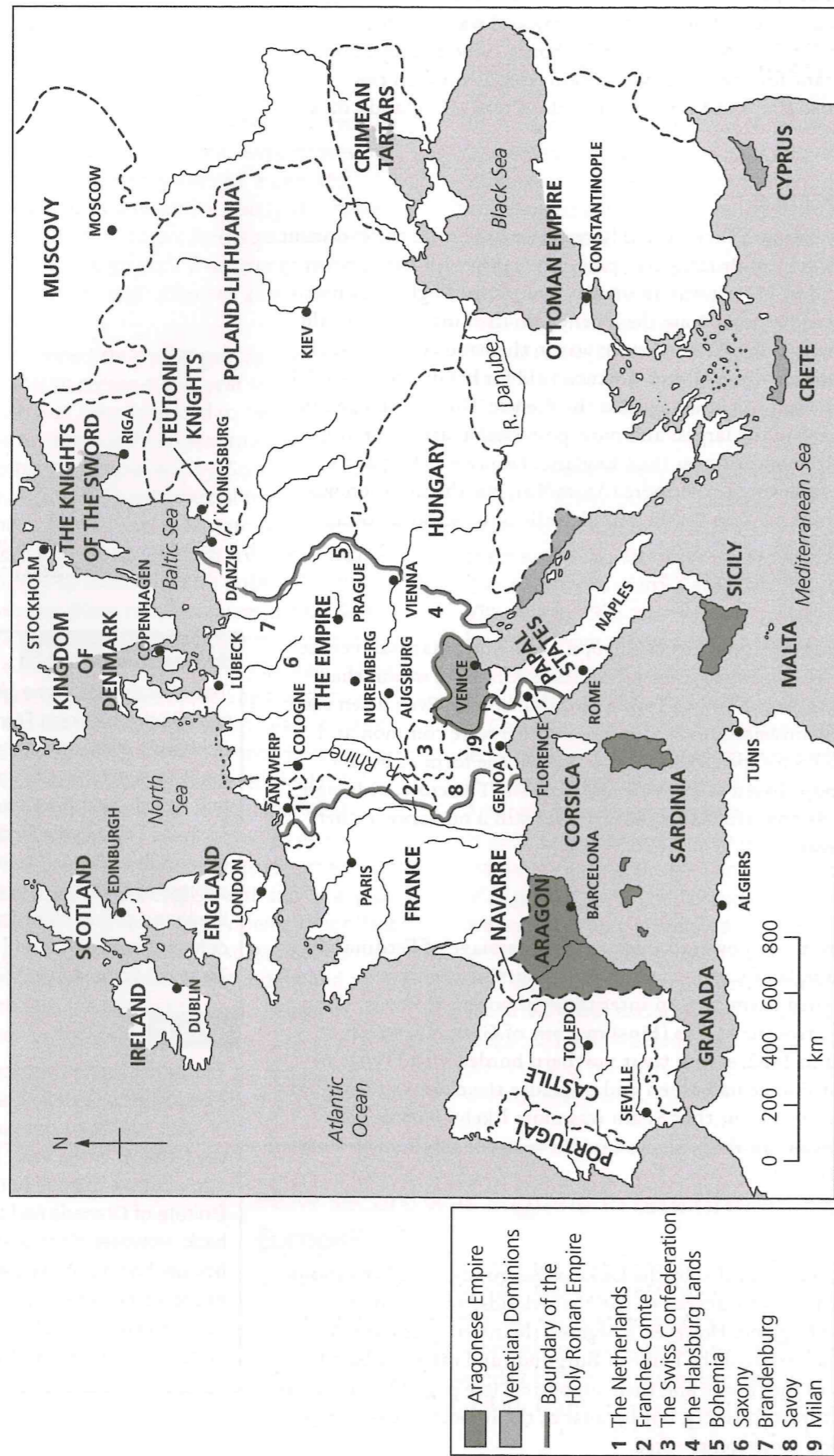
In terms of trade, the area ruled by the Duke of Burgundy, called at various times Burgundy, the Low Countries or the Netherlands, was the most important area for England. However, Margaret, the sister of Edward IV and Richard III, had married the Duke of Burgundy and offered a base for Yorkist claimants to the throne and their supporters (see page 134). This was therefore a direct threat to Henry, but because of the importance of the cloth trade it made action more complicated.

#### 'The Auld Alliance'

The affectionate name given to the alliance between France and Scotland which started in 1295 and was signed by all Scottish and French monarchs, except Louis XI. The alliance had begun as a result of Edward I's military success against the Scots and the likelihood of complete Scottish defeat. It continued until the Treaty of Edinburgh in 1560.

#### Moors

The term used to describe the Muslims who lived in Spain. Much of Spain had been conquered by the Muslims in the early Middle Ages, but by 1264 all but the Emirate of Granada had been won back. However, since then the frontier had not moved and co-existence had existed, but in 1492 Ferdinand and Isabella launched an invasion and took the state.



▲ A political map of Europe in 1490.

### Holy Roman Empire

The Holy Roman Empire covered much of central Europe, or modern-day Germany, but was composed of a number of different states. Although it appeared to be large and strong, the power of the emperor was limited, although Frederick III (1448–93) and Maximilian (1493–1519) did much to strengthen it. The Empire had acquired Burgundy in 1477 when Maximilian married Mary of Burgundy and therefore it had taken on a greater importance in terms of its relationship with England. It also had claims to lands in Italy and it was there that the major conflict of this period would occur.

### Italy

Italy did not exist as a country in 1485, but was a collection of states, of which the most important were Milan, Venice, Florence, Naples and the Papal States. The rulers of France, Spain and the Empire all had claims to land there and it was the outbreak of the Italian wars in 1494 that diverted European attention away from Northern Europe to the Mediterranean and made Henry's position less vulnerable.

### Activity

Using the information above, copy and complete the chart below to help you understand how vulnerable Henry's position was in 1485.

| Country              | Evidence it was a threat to England in 1485 | Evidence it was not a threat to England in 1485 | Overall judgement: Threat or Not a threat? |
|----------------------|---|---|--|
| Brittany             |   |   |  |
| France               |   |   |  |
| Scotland             |   |   |  |
| Spain                |   |   |  |
| Burgundy/Netherlands |   |   |  |
| Italy                |   |   |  |

### What were the aims of Henry VII's foreign policy?

The previous chapter suggested that Henry's position as king was insecure because of the Yorkist threat and his weak claim to the throne. As a result, his foreign policy was subordinate to ensuring the obedience of his subjects and his attempts to achieve internal security. This internal weakness was made worse by the support given to his opponents by other European powers, particularly Burgundy. As a consequence, one of his main concerns, particularly at the start of his reign, was to secure his throne from both domestic and foreign threats. Henry was also a usurper and therefore he wanted to gain recognition for the Tudor dynasty from other European powers. His weakness, again particularly at the start of his reign, was made more acute because of his financial position and this encouraged Henry to adopt a more defensive foreign policy than his predecessors and avoid war if at all possible. This approach allowed him to protect the kingdom from possible invasion in support of other

claimants to the throne and build up his financial resources so that he could fund any necessary defensive measures.

### The threat of invasion and its impact

Not only was there the threat of invasion from other claimants, but there was also the threat of invasion from England's traditional enemies of France and Scotland. These two countries could exploit Henry's weak position in order to launch attacks either on England's northern frontier or the south coast. Scotland was seen as the 'back door' to England and the northern border was a frequent area of border raids, if not full-scale invasion. With France allied to Scotland a joint invasion was also possible, which was even more threatening to the king as he would face a war on two fronts.

### Dynastic threats and their impact

Henry's claim to the English throne was weak; he was seen as a usurper and not only did he face challenges to his throne from within England, but some European rulers might exploit this weakness to undermine him or, as with Margaret of Burgundy, restore the Yorkist line to the throne. As a consequence, Henry wanted to improve relations with the major powers and gain allies to discourage attacks. He therefore sought alliances with a number of foreign powers in order to gain protection, recognition and guarantees that they would not support other claimants to the English throne. One of the methods used most frequently to achieve this was marriage alliances and Henry sought to marry his children to the sons and daughters of other European rulers in order to develop closer ties.

### The weak financial position and its impact

The dynastic threats to the monarchy and its weak financial position also meant that the avoidance of war was a major aim of Henry. War was very costly, and while the royal coffers lacked funds, Henry sought to avoid conflict whenever possible. In particular, Henry wanted to avoid war with France as not only was it a close neighbour and allied to Scotland, but it was also financially stronger than England.

### Economic goals

Although national security was a major concern for Henry, he also wanted to improve England's economic position as increased revenue from trade would strengthen the monarchy. Therefore, Henry wanted to maintain the cloth trade with Burgundy and develop closer trading relations with other nations, such as Spain. However, trade was secondary to national security and Henry suspended the cloth trade with Burgundy when it supported Warbeck (see pages 135–6).

Historians such as S.B. Chrimes (quoted in Rogers and Turvey, page 128) have divided Henry's foreign policy into three phases:

- 1485–92: a period when Henry followed a policy of diplomacy to secure the throne.
- 1493–1502: a period when peace with Scotland was eventually secured and Henry's position appeared to be stronger and his policy more successful.
- 1503–09: a period when Henry's position weakened and Henry ultimately became more isolated.

As you study his relations with the European nations it will be helpful to see how far his aims were maintained in each phase or whether his priorities changed.

## How successful was Henry VII in achieving these aims in the early years of his reign?

In the early years of his reign, Henry's major concern was to consolidate support and secure his position on the throne. Initially at least, Henry was successful in securing support abroad. France had supported Henry's seizure of the throne in 1485 and he was initially able to negotiate a one-year truce with France, which was later extended to 1489. Brittany had also supported Henry during his years of exile and he was able to use this link to secure a commercial treaty with it in 1486. Henry was also successful in securing better relations with Scotland and signed a three-year truce in 1486. Relations with Scotland were made more secure by the assassination of James III in 1488 as it brought his young son, James IV, to the throne. The final country with which Henry was able to secure an agreement was the Holy Roman Empire. In 1487 Maximilian, the heir to the Holy Roman Empire, renewed Edward IV's treaty for one year. As a result, Henry could be fairly confident that other countries would not assist rival claimants and that he had been accepted as king by a number of countries.

However, this successful start to the reign did not last as the appearance of Lambert Simnel caused various diplomatic problems which would challenge Henry's security and the initial agreements he had made.

The next sections of the chapter will consider Henry's relations with individual countries. As you study these relations it will be helpful to consider how accurately the division of his reign into the three phases above reflects his relations with that country.

## How successful was Henry VII's policy towards France?

### How effective was Henry's handling of the Breton Crisis?

It was the situation in Brittany that initially changed England's peaceful relations with France and forced Henry to adopt a more aggressive policy. Brittany was the only part of the historic kingdom of France that still had its independence. In order to bring Brittany into the French kingdom, the **regent** of France proposed to marry her brother, Charles VIII, to the daughter and heir of the ageing Duke of Brittany. Although the Duke had already arranged for his daughter to marry Maximilian, the French regent ignored this and sent a force into Brittany in 1488 to enforce their aim. This provoked a response from both Maximilian and Ferdinand of Aragon, who sent troops to aid Brittany. At the same time, the Duke of Brittany asked England for help. This presented Henry with a serious problem: it was in the security interests of England to stop the whole of the Channel coast coming under French control, but France had given Henry financial aid to seize the throne in 1485. Although Henry attempted to negotiate between Brittany and France, the Bretons refused to negotiate and were then defeated by a French army. The death of the Duke of Brittany meant that his daughter, Anne, became ruler, and the French promptly seized her.

Unless Henry acted, Brittany would lose its independence and be absorbed into the French kingdom. However, England could not take on France alone. Although war would give Henry the opportunity to reclaim English lands

### Activity

The section on pages 155–7 has outlined the foreign policy issues facing Henry. As a royal adviser, write a briefing paper for the king outlining the foreign policy challenges he faces and recommendations as to how to tackle each.

**Normandy and Guyenne**

These were lands that England had originally ruled over in France but had been lost.

**Campaigning season**

Armies usually only fought in the period from late spring to early autumn because of the weather.

lost in the Hundred Years War in France and gain glory if he was victorious, England was simply not strong enough. Initially Henry renewed the treaty with Maximilian and this was followed by the Treaty of Redon with Brittany in February 1489. Under the terms of this treaty Henry agreed to send 6,000 men, paid for by the Bretons, to help in their defence. Historians have traditionally argued that the small number of men Henry committed to Brittany was a sign of his unwillingness to be dragged into the conflict and evidence of his peaceful policy. More recently this view has been challenged and it has been suggested that Henry hoped that it would ultimately lead to the reconquest of Normandy and Guyenne, but the Bretons limited the number he could send.

However, in July 1489 Maximilian made peace with France and then, despite the Treaty of Medina del Campo (see page 162), Spain also made peace with France so that it could continue its attack on the Moors in Granada. Finally, in December 1491 Brittany accepted defeat and Anne of Brittany was married to Charles VIII of France. This left Henry in a very difficult position. He had gone to war to protect Brittany and had failed, but there was now the danger that with France in control of most of the Channel coast they would launch an invasion of England. At home, Henry had raised a considerable sum of money to fund a war which had not been fought and had invested his credibility in fighting the French, which would be lost if he simply made peace.

**How successful was Henry's invasion of France in 1492?**

Although a lengthy war against France would be costly and might make Henry's position at home vulnerable, particularly if France supported Yorkist claimants, he announced his intention to assert his claim to the French throne. English kings had constantly asserted this claim since Edward III's reign and Henry VII appeared no different. A year was spent gathering together an invasion force, which finally crossed the Channel in October 1492. This was a master stroke by Henry. By the time the force arrived in France the campaigning season was almost over and therefore any conflict would be short. Henry was also fortunate that the French king was more interested in invading Italy and therefore wanted to be rid of English troops. As a result, Charles soon offered Henry peace and on 3 November signed the Treaty of Étapes, by which he agreed to:

- give no aid to English rebels – particularly Warbeck
- pay the arrears of Treaty of Picquigny
- pay most of Henry's expenses in Brittany.

The result was an annual pension for Henry of approximately £5,000 per year. Although Henry had been unable to prevent the loss of Breton independence, there had been some success. Charles had promised not to aid Perkin Warbeck and Henry had gained considerable financial benefits that amounted to some 5 per cent of royal income.

**How effective was Henry's policy towards France in the period after the Treaty of Étapes?**

The League of Venice was established in 1495 with the aim of driving France out of Italy. At first Henry was excluded from this, probably because the area of war was outside England's usual sphere of activity. However, when the

**League of Venice**

This was an anti-French alliance which included the pope, Ferdinand of Aragon, Maximilian and the states of Venice and Milan. Its aim was to drive France out of Italy. It was later re-named the Holy League.

League was revamped in 1496 as the Holy League, England was invited to join. Ferdinand of Aragon was concerned that it was dangerous to exclude England and feared that by doing so England would support France; an indication that England's position in Europe was changing. Its importance in European affairs was given further credence when Henry was allowed to join the League on the condition that England was not bound to go to war against France, suggesting that the League would rather have a neutral England than one allied to France. At the same time, Henry also secured a trade agreement with France, but did not lose his friendship with the League. Henry had been able to not only preserve his improved relations with France after the Treaty of Étapes but to negate the Auld Alliance between France and Scotland during his lifetime.

Towards the end of his reign it appeared as if this friendship with France had developed further as Henry tried to create a three-way agreement between England, France and the Netherlands. Henry's aim was to establish an anti-Ferdinand alliance. By 1508 it appeared as if Henry had succeeded in developing such an agreement with his French and Habsburg friends against Ferdinand of Spain through the League of Cambrai. In theory this agreement was supposed to be a league to finance a **crusade** against the Turks, but the reality was very different as it was an anti-Spanish alliance. However, the European diplomatic situation changed rapidly. Just before the conclusion of the agreement, Louis XII, King of France, decided he dared not join for fear of antagonising Ferdinand. Louis and Ferdinand had reached an agreement over Italy and Louis did not want to put it at risk by signing an anti-Spanish agreement. He therefore bribed Ferdinand to join him in establishing a new agreement.

This change in the European diplomatic situation ended Henry's hopes of an anti-Spanish agreement. When the new agreement was signed the League that it established was anti-Venice and not anti-Spain, as Henry had wanted. Moreover, it was England who was isolated, as it was not invited to join the new League. Therefore it can be argued that at the end of his reign Henry had failed, he was diplomatically isolated and his attempt to create an alliance in which England was at the centre had failed. However, although the League excluded England, the members still supported Henry and the League did not threaten any of England's interests. Most importantly, relations with France had improved and this in turn meant that Scotland was less of a threat.

**Activity**

1 In order to judge the success of Henry's policy towards France, copy and complete the chart below.

| Aim                               | Was the aim achieved?<br>Yes/No? | Evidence |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------|
| National security                 |                                  |          |
| Recognition for the Tudor dynasty |                                  |          |
| Avoiding war                      |                                  |          |
| Improving trade                   |                                  |          |
| Gaining allies                    |                                  |          |

## Why was Henry VII able to avoid conflict with Scotland?

Scotland was a traditional enemy and the northern border was a regular area of conflict and raids. Edward IV had seized the border towns of Berwick and Dunbar, which the Scots were determined to win back and this increased the possibility of hostility between the two countries. More importantly, the Auld Alliance between France and Scotland, first signed in 1295, increased the danger on the border as England could face an attack on two fronts. Support from France for Scotland was also vital because Scotland was financially much weaker than England and also had a much smaller population.

As with France, Henry wanted to avoid conflict, particularly in his early years, when his major concern was gaining support at home and establishing the dynasty. Henry was fortunate in that Scotland was more favourably inclined towards him than Richard III, who had supported raids into Scotland, and this, along with Henry's desire and need for peace, resulted in a three-year truce being signed in July 1486. The assassination of James III after the Battle of Sauchieburn in 1488, fought against rebellious Scottish nobles, made conflict between the two nations less likely because James' son, James IV, was only fifteen years old; because of his age, and therefore his inability to lead an army, he was far less likely to wage war against Henry. However, the regents ruling Scotland were less friendly towards Henry and the situation was more precarious because Henry's support for Brittany against France encouraged relations between France and Scotland to tighten. To try to lessen the hostility, Henry maintained contacts at the Scottish court with the Scottish nobility, led by the Earl of Angus, who favoured better relations with England. Meanwhile, Henry gave shelter to those Scottish nobles who had been ousted from power and in 1492 aided the successful attempts to overthrow the anti-English regents. The coup brought the pro-English Earl of Angus back to power and resulted in the signing of a nine-year truce between the two countries in 1493.

Despite this success, the achievement was short-lived as James IV came of age in 1495 and wanted to assert himself by going to war against the traditional enemy. James' desire for war was aided by the arrival in Scotland of Perkin Warbeck in July 1495 (see pages 135–7). He was given a royal welcome by James, was married to his cousin, Lady Catherine Gordon, and given military support for an invasion of England in September 1496. Although Scottish support for Warbeck increased his threat, the invasion was a fiasco as he received no support in England, and James realised that Warbeck was of limited value to him. Moreover, England was now free from other foreign policy difficulties and James was concerned that the English parliament had voted funds for an attack on Scotland. He was fearful that if such an attack took place it would be very damaging for Scotland. As a result James did not use the Cornish rising (see page 133) as an opportunity to launch a further attack on England. Instead, when Henry offered terms on which a treaty could be based James was willing to take them up. This, and the departure of Warbeck, resulted in the Truce of Ayton being signed in 1497 and with Warbeck's execution in 1499 it became a full treaty.



◀ James IV and his wife, Margaret Tudor.

The Peace of Ayton was a significant achievement for Henry as no peace treaty had been signed between the two countries since 1328. The Peace extended the earlier truce and was reinforced by the marriage of Henry's eldest daughter, Margaret, to James IV in August 1503. The marriage brought Henry and the Tudors recognition from another European power and helped to consolidate his position on the throne. Although this agreement resulted in the avoidance of full-scale war for the rest of Henry's reign, it did not live up to its other name of 'The Treaty of Perpetual Peace' and solve the Scottish problem. Scotland did not abandon the Auld Alliance and border raids continued. Just as significantly, James' expansion of his navy increased tensions between the two countries in Henry's later years and it could therefore be suggested that Henry had not secured his northern border, but had only been able to stabilise the situation, despite the significance of the treaty.

## How far did Henry pursue a consistent foreign policy with Spain and Burgundy?

The two Spanish kingdoms of Aragon and Castile had become more united through the marriage of their two rulers, Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile, in 1469 and their victory in civil war in 1479. This marriage created a new European power and played a central role in Henry's foreign policy as he sought to strengthen his links with them in terms of both trade and dynastic concerns. This was made easier as the two nations also had a common enemy in France and this allowed England and Spain to ignore their commercial rivalry.

### Activity

- 1 Make a list of the reasons why Henry was able to avoid full-scale war with Scotland. For each reason, explain how it contributed to the avoidance of war. Which do you think was the most important reason? Write a paragraph to explain your choice.
- 2 In the section on France you completed a chart to enable you to judge the success of Henry's policy (see page 159). Draw up and complete a similar chart for his relations with Scotland.
- 3 In light of the two charts, do you think Henry was more successful in his policy towards France or Scotland? Write a paragraph to explain your decision.

In 1488 Henry had suggested to Spain a marriage between his son, Arthur, and Ferdinand and Isabella's youngest daughter, Catherine of Aragon, even though Catherine was only three at the time (but was still six months older than Arthur). The proposal was of great significance to Henry because if it was agreed it would give him recognition from a major European power and signify that Spain thought his position on the English throne was secure. However, negotiations were slow as both nations wanted the most favourable agreement.

Finally, in March 1489 the Treaty of Medina del Campo was signed. This was the most significant foreign policy achievement of Henry's reign. The treaty agreed that:

- Arthur and Catherine would marry
- Catherine's **dowry** would be £40,000 (200,000 crowns), which would be paid to Henry VII in instalments
- Spain would not help any English rebels
- there would be benefits for English trade with Spain
- if either country was at war with France, the other was to intervene immediately.

This last point was significant: war between France and Spain was likely as Spain wanted to regain lands on its Pyrenean borders. In return Spain offered to help England regain Normandy and Aquitaine. Although Spain was able to regain its border lands by 1493 it gave little help to Henry. However, this did not appear to concern him. Henry may have realised that the reconquest of lands in France was unrealistic or, having usurped the throne, that it was more important to have secured recognition from a major European royal family. This view is given greater credence by Henry's decision to celebrate the agreement by minting a new gold sovereign on which he was portrayed wearing the prestigious imperial crown, suggesting he considered his power and position more secure. However, the final marriage agreement with Spain was not made until 1496 and Catherine did not arrive in England, with 100,000 crowns of her dowry, until 1501. This delay was in part due to Henry's insecure position and the problem of Warbeck; Spain was not willing to send Catherine to England while there was still the possibility that Henry would be removed from the throne. However, the marriage agreement and alliance had taken on an even greater significance. First, Henry hoped to be able to use the closer ties with Spain to gain access to the new Spanish Empire, and second, Catherine's sister, Joanna, had married Philip of Burgundy, which had brought Spain and Burgundy closer together and might offer the possibility of another ally should Henry need it. Although Arthur and Catherine were soon married, within five months Arthur was dead.

The importance of the marriage is clearly seen in Henry's subsequent suggestion that Catherine should marry his second son, Henry. The king did not want to lose the Spanish alliance and prestige the marriage had brought and, after discussions and **papal dispensation**, Catherine was betrothed to Henry in June 1503. However, changes in Spain meant that it would be another six years before the actual marriage took place.

#### Papal dispensation

The written permission from the pope allowing two people to marry (or divorce). In this instance it was needed because Prince Henry would be marrying his dead brother's wife.

Developments within Spain had a profound impact on Henry's foreign policy, which had been closely linked with Spain throughout most of his reign. The death of Isabella of Castile in November 1504 resulted in the Castilian succession crisis which would last until 1506. The death of Isabella ended the anti-French alliance of England, Spain and the Netherlands. Isabella's will stated that their eldest daughter, Joanna, should inherit Castile, while Ferdinand would return to rule just Aragon. Joanna had married Archduke Philip of Burgundy, heir to the Holy Roman Empire, and he now claimed Castile for her. But Ferdinand was unwilling to abandon the more prosperous kingdom of Castile. This created a problem for Henry, who wanted to preserve trade links with the Netherlands and did not want to antagonise Philip or his father. They were sheltering the Yorkist claimant, the Earl of Suffolk, and Henry feared that they would support Suffolk in an attack on England to claim the throne for the Yorkists (see page 136). On the other hand, Henry was also worried about losing links with Spain. This development also meant that if Castile came under Burgundian influence, rather than remained as part of 'Spain', the marriage between Prince Henry and Catherine would bring England less benefit, as Aragon was less influential than the whole of Spain. The conflicting demands ensured that the last years of Henry's reign were more difficult and policy direction was subject to quite rapid changes in direction.

Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, as Aragon and France were usually hostile to one another, Ferdinand had turned for support to Louis XII of France. This had prompted Philip to sail for Castile to secure Joanna's inheritance. The closer relations between France and Spain forced England into a closer relationship with Burgundy and Henry lent Philip money to finance his expedition. It appeared as if relations with Spain were deteriorating as Henry VII, following the death of his wife, considered marrying Margaret of Savoy, Philip's sister. Henry also antagonised Ferdinand as he kept Catherine's dowry despite requests to return it and the young Henry was persuaded to complain that marriage to his dead brother's wife was against his conscience!

It was at this point that luck, or rather the weather, intervened. Bad weather drove Philip on to the English coast and he was forced to take shelter. While a guest of Henry's, Philip was persuaded to sign a treaty with England by which:

- the Earl of Suffolk should be handed over to England
- Prince Henry would marry Philip's sister.

However, at the very moment when England appeared to be abandoning Spain for a Burgundian alliance the situation changed again. In April 1506 Philip and Joanna arrived in Castile and received a warm welcome. French support for Ferdinand failed to materialise and he was forced to withdraw to Aragon. It appeared that his attempts to maintain his rule in both Castile and Aragon would fail. However, in September 1506 Philip died. This enabled Ferdinand to retake Castile, Maximilian took over the regency of Burgundy for his young grandson, Charles, and Joanna had a breakdown. The prospect of a Spanish marriage between Prince Henry and Catherine was now more appealing.

Henry also feared that France would seize the opportunity of weak regency rule in Burgundy to try to gain land there so he attempted to restore links with Spain by proposing his own marriage to Joanna. This change of policy to try to restore the English–Burgundian–Spanish alliance did not work and Ferdinand refused to agree to Henry's marriage or send the rest of Catherine's dowry.

In these circumstances, the direction of foreign policy changed again and in 1508 Henry abandoned the attempts to restore the English–Spanish–Burgundian alliance. Instead he now tried to get an agreement between England, France and Burgundy. He revoked the *Malus Intercursus* concession to speed up the prospect of marrying his daughter Mary to Charles of Ghent and to try to win Burgundian support, even though its revocation was not in English interests as it heavily favoured English merchants. Henry also succeeded in arranging a marriage agreement between Archduke Charles, son of Joanna and Philip, and his daughter, Mary. Meanwhile to further embarrass Spain, Henry offered his son to the niece of Louis XII of France. It therefore appeared that by 1508 Henry had not only abandoned Spain, but also created an anti-Spanish alliance.

However, at the very moment of his apparent triumph, Louis XII decided he could not antagonise Spain and reached an agreement with Ferdinand, which became the 1508 League of Cambrai, leaving England excluded and isolated (see page 159).

**Activity**

The changing relationship between England, Spain and Burgundy during Henry's last years is quite confusing. In order to help you understand when and why policy changes, reread the section and for each change of policy identify the date and the reason for the change. Use a chart like the one below to help you see the changes:

| Date | Event                      | How and why does policy change? |
|------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1489 | Treaty of Medina del Campo |                                 |
| 1504 |                            |                                 |
| 1506 |                            |                                 |
| 1508 |                            |                                 |
| 1508 |                            |                                 |

**How important a factor was trade in Henry VII's foreign policy?**

Although national security was the most important factor influencing Henry's foreign policy, he did, whenever possible, protect and promote English trade because of the financial benefits that it brought both England and the monarchy. However, given England's relatively weak position Henry was usually not strong enough to offer favourable trade agreements to other countries and had to react to events; nonetheless,

that did not mean that he did not give serious consideration to the impact his foreign policy would have on commerce and many of his treaties contained important trade clauses, such as the Treaty of Medina del Campo, which allowed the export of goods from Spain in foreign ships. As a result, the income from customs revenue rose from £33,000 in 1485 to £40,000 in 1509.

The main focus of English trade was with Burgundy because of the importance of the cloth trade through Antwerp. Henry wished to expand the trade but it appears that England's share remained largely the same throughout the period, despite attempts to improve this through the *Magnus Intercursus* in 1496. Henry placed an embargo on trade with Burgundy between 1493 and 1496 when Margaret of Burgundy gave support to Perkin Warbeck and ordered the merchants who exported most of their cloth through Antwerp to move their trade to Calais. The *Magnus Intercursus* which ended the embargo allowed English merchants to sell their goods wholesale anywhere in Philip's lands, except Flanders, without paying tolls or customs. Then, in 1506, when Philip of Burgundy was forced to seek shelter from storms in England and also wanted English support against Aragon, Henry was able to negotiate the very favourable *Malus Intercursus*. This gave English merchants the considerable advantages that:

- trade with Burgundy would be free
- Philip was not to impose any duties on the sale of English cloth
- Philip was not to exclude English cloth from his lands
- Philip's subjects still had to pay the duties outlined in the *Magnus Intercursus*.

The terms of this treaty were so favourable to English merchants that it was very unpopular with Burgundy, so much so that by 1507 the previous state of affairs under the *Magnus Intercursus* was restored.

Henry also used other treaties to try to improve England's trading position. Not only did the Treaty of Medina del Campo have trade clauses, but Henry also renewed an earlier treaty with Portugal which encouraged trade. In his dealings with Spain Henry had initially confirmed the Spanish privilege of exemption from the duties payable by other foreigners on the import of English goods, but he had then imposed the **Navigation Acts** of 1485–86, which limited foreign control of English trade. However, Spain retaliated and forbade the export of goods from Spain in foreign ships if Spanish ships were available. The Treaty of Medina del Campo ended the restrictions, with both countries enjoying the same rights in the other's country and duties were fixed at a low rate. However, Spain did not allow England access to trade in the **New World**, which had been one of Henry's hopes, though he did have some success in his attempts to develop trade in the Mediterranean, in part because of the outbreak of the Italian wars. Much of the trade in the Mediterranean was dominated by the Venetians, who imposed heavy duties against English ships that carried Malmsey wine from the Levant to England. Henry retaliated by imposing heavy duties against the Venetians and also approached Florence as an alternative trading partner, signing a treaty in 1490. This established an English **staple** or market for cloth at Pisa and limited English sales of wool

**Navigation Acts**

At the start of the period most of the English trade was carried in foreign ships, but the Navigation Acts of 1485–86 aimed to limit this. The Acts prohibited English traders sending their goods on foreign ships when English ships were available.



to Venice. In response, Venice, who was Florence's enemy, dropped the duty on English ships. This favourable position remained as Venice became embroiled in the Italian wars.

After Antwerp, the Baltic was probably England's other important area of trade, but Henry was less successful in his enterprises here. This area was dominated by the Hanseatic League, which was a group of German ports and cities that controlled most of the Baltic trade. In 1471 the League had gained considerable privileges from the English, such as lower taxes, because they had supplied Edward IV with ships which had allowed him to regain the throne after his deposition by Henry VI in 1470. At various times Henry tried to limit these privileges, first through the Navigation Acts, but this had little impact. He also tried to get English merchants direct access to northern trade, signing treaties with Denmark and Norway in 1489 and 1490. A similar policy was attempted with Riga in 1499, but they rejoined the League and the treaty collapsed. In the end, despite attempts to limit their privileges, Henry was forced into a settlement in 1504, which restored the favourable position the Hanseatic League, or Hanse, had enjoyed under Edward IV. The most likely reason for this was dynastic considerations, as Henry was concerned that the Hanse might give support to the Yorkist Earl of Suffolk in the same way they had supported Edward IV; once again suggesting that trade was important but was secondary to dynastic security.

**Activity**

Copy and complete the following chart in order to help you judge the success of Henry's policy towards foreign trade. In the fourth column use your evidence from columns 2 and 3 to award a mark out of 6 for the success for the policy; the higher the mark, the more successful the policy. In the final column use the mark to reach a judgement as to the relative success of the policy.

| Country      | Evidence of success | Evidence of failure | Mark for success/6 | Explanation/Judgement |
|--------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Burgundy     |                     |                     |                    |                       |
| Spain        |                     |                     |                    |                       |
| Portugal     |                     |                     |                    |                       |
| Venice       |                     |                     |                    |                       |
| Florence     |                     |                     |                    |                       |
| Hanse/Baltic |                     |                     |                    |                       |

**How successful was Henry VII's foreign policy?**

There are a number of ways in which the relative success of Henry's foreign policy can be judged. It can be judged by considering how far his aims, outlined on pages 155–7, were achieved. An assessment of his relations with each country could be made and they could be judged against his aims or, as Chrimes has done, his reign could be broken down into three phases and a judgement made about the relative success of his policy in each phase of his reign (see Rogers and Turvey, *Henry VII*, page 128).

**Activity**

The following activities will allow you to reach your own judgement as to the success of Henry's foreign policy.

1 a Copy and complete the following chart to assess how far Henry's aims were achieved.

| Aim of Henry's foreign policy | Evidence of achievement | Evidence of failure | Judgement |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|-----------|
| National security             |                         |                     |           |
| Securing the Tudor dynasty    |                         |                     |           |
| Financial gain                |                         |                     |           |
| Improving trade               |                         |                     |           |

b You should now write a paragraph which gives an overall judgement as to how far he achieved his aims.

2 a Copy and complete this second chart below to allow you to assess how far he achieved his aims with regards to each country.

| Country  | Evidence of achievement | Evidence of failure | Judgement |
|----------|-------------------------|---------------------|-----------|
| Spain    |                         |                     |           |
| France   |                         |                     |           |
| Scotland |                         |                     |           |
| Burgundy |                         |                     |           |
| Brittany |                         |                     |           |

b Having completed the chart, place the countries in rank order according to which country he was most successful in achieving his aims in, to the least successful. Explain why you have placed them in the order you have chosen.

3 a Finally, for the three phases of his reign, copy and complete this third chart to judge how successful he was at different periods.

| Phase     | Evidence of achievement | Evidence of failure | Judgement |
|-----------|-------------------------|---------------------|-----------|
| 1485–92   |                         |                     |           |
| 1493–1502 |                         |                     |           |
| 1503–09   |                         |                     |           |

b During which period was he the most successful and during which period was he the least successful? Explain your answer.

**Historical debate**

**How successful was Henry VII's foreign policy?**

Historians have adopted different views of the success of Henry's foreign policy. The two extracts below from recent works identify two different elements of the interpretation. Read the two extracts carefully.

The last chapter considered the extent to which Henry secured his dynasty internally, but he was aware that if there was to be a serious challenge to

his position it was more likely to come from abroad, with aid being given to another challenger to the throne. The first extract focuses on the link between foreign policy and his attempts to secure his position internally. The second stresses how fortunate Henry was, but also how he was able to exploit situations and the changing European scene to his advantage.

## Passage 1

The avoidance of war was equally no panacea for a new monarchy, since war was more popular than not, and was therefore backed by money and manpower, especially when successful. Even Henry's foreign policy, though astute, was more problematic than it needs to have been as a result of his own need for dynastic security, which was prolonged by his inadequate internal governance. In his quarter-century of instability and uncertainty, Henry never secured the loyalty of the realm through stable and representative rule, and therefore never escaped from the consequences of being a usurper. The consequences for the realm were constant disorder and insecurity, which must have maintained the sense of temporariness throughout the reign and always made a Yorkist revanche conceivable.

B. Thompson (ed.), *The Reign of Henry VII*, 1995, page 8

## Passage 2

If to some extent he was trapped in an international web, Henry was resourceful and astute enough to ensure that he was never caught. He was also immensely fortunate in the fact that the centre of the European web, for the majority of his reign, was Italy. The remorseless dissection of that peninsula's states spared England the same experience. Henry's foreign adventures suggest that he was a realist, aware of England's limited resources, power and influence. His invasion of France in 1492, for example, was deliberately too late in the year to be able to escalate into a damaging conflict. The lucrative pay-off he received from the French for evacuating the country rewarded his caution. Henry's astute handling of foreign affairs meant that most situations were turned to his advantage and so helped his reign.

D. Rogerson, S. Ellsmore and D. Hudson, *The Early Tudors*, 2001, page 56

## Activity

Using this chapter, Chapter 6 and your own knowledge, which of the two views above is the most convincing about Henry's foreign policy? Explain your answer.

The following questions will help you:

- What is the view of Passage 1?
- What do you know that agrees with Passage 1?
- What do you know that challenges Passage 1?
- What is the view of Passage 2?
- What do you know that agrees with Passage 2?
- What do you know that challenges Passage 2?

## Chapter takeaways

- As a usurper Henry recognised that the greatest challenge to his position as king would come from abroad. Foreign support had helped him gain the throne and support for an alternative claimant could also remove him.
- Henry's foreign policy was closely linked with his domestic policy and the need to achieve security. It was therefore mostly concerned with limiting the threat of the Pretenders.
- The avoidance of war also allowed Henry to increase royal finances which would further strengthen his position on the throne as he would have more money available to pay for armies to defend his position.
- The alliance gained with Spain in the early years of his reign was the most significant treaty he signed; not only did it give Henry the recognition he desired for his dynasty, but it linked England to the new power in Europe.
- Even if Henry did not always gain the support of foreign powers in the early years of his reign, he was largely able to neutralise their threat.
- Through a carefully calculated policy of threatening war against France, Henry was able to make financial gains, but also develop a more war-like image without the risk of a long and possibly costly war.
- Henry was able to avoid a two-pronged attack from the Auld Alliance which would have seriously stretched his resources.
- In his relations with Scotland Henry was fortunate that in his early years the country was ruled by a minor, who later married his daughter, which minimised the risk of attack, although border raids from both sides remained a constant feature of the period.
- As with France, the threat of war over Warbeck was sufficient to cause a re-think of support in Scotland for Warbeck and resulted in the first peace agreement since the fourteenth century.
- Although the agreement for the marriage between Arthur and Catherine brought England and Spain closer together, the period following the death of Isabella of Castile in 1504 resulted in a deterioration in relations and Ferdinand's unreliability as an ally meant that an Anglo-Spanish axis never fully developed.
- Despite the difficulties that followed Isabella's death, Henry should be given credit for recognising the potential of a Spanish alliance.
- Although the encouragement of trade was important to Henry, it was secondary to dynastic security. Trade was used to help prevent support for challengers to his throne, as was seen in his relations with Burgundy.
- Although Henry's foreign policy lacked glamour, it was probably the only realistic policy available given his domestic position and his weak hold on the throne, which never fully went away.

## Study skills: Writing a conclusion and overall essay writing for AS and A Level

The types of question set for AS and A Level essays will be the same and therefore all the advice in this section applies to both examinations.

What is the purpose of a conclusion? A conclusion should come to a judgement that is based on what you have already written and should be briefly supported. It should not introduce new ideas – if they were important they should have been discussed in the main body of the essay. You must also take care to avoid offering a contrary argument to the one you have pursued throughout the rest of the essay as that will suggest to the examiner that you have not thought through your ideas and are unclear as to what you think.

It might be that you are largely re-stating the view you offered in the vital opening paragraph, or in stronger answers there might be a subtle variation to the judgement – you confirm your original view, but suggest, with an example, that there were occasions when this was not always correct.

If the question has named a factor then you should give a judgement about that factor's relative importance, either explaining why it is or is not the most important and the role it played in the events you have discussed. If the