



Henry V (1413-1422) and The Hundred Years War - The Henrician War

Second Period of English Success 1413-1422

In 1413, Henry V **revived the claim** of Edward III to the throne of France. Like Edward III he saw himself as the rightful king of France.

1. Why did Henry declare war on France?

Personal

1. Henry was very ambitious and wanted to be king of France as well as king of England. This would make him the most powerful man in Europe

Religious

1. Henry was a **religious** man, and he believed that God had given him the task of conquering France and then taking a combined army of English and French soldiers on **crusade** to recapture Jerusalem. This was a powerful justification to go to war.



Economic/Financial

1. France was a wealthy country with considerable resources such as wines, salt etc. More French land would boost England's economy.

Political

1. **England** was **disunited** after the reign of his father, and many of the nobles were causing trouble (Southampton Plot). A war against France might unite them - way of channelling the fighting energies of his nobles.
2. France had again given help to both **Scotland and Wales** during Henry IV's reign encouraging and supporting them in rebellion against England.

Opportunity

1. This was also a good time to attack as the **French were divided** and weakened because of **civil war**.

2. The Southampton Plot

This was an attempt by a group led by Richard, Earl of Cambridge, to kill Henry V and place Edmund Mortimer (Earl of March) on the throne. Conspirators included Sir Thomas Grey, and Henry Scrope.

Edmund Mortimer had been named as heir to Richard II. In 1399 Richard was forced to abdicate in favour of Henry IV, and for the next few decades Mortimer served as a focal point for conspiracies aimed at removing Henry and his heirs from the throne. In 1405 Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland, tried unsuccessfully to oust Henry IV and place Mortimer on the throne. By 1415 the Earl of Cambridge and his friends were ready to try again. The conspirators planned to kill the king and his three brothers as they boarded a ship to France at Southampton. The plot was given away when Edmund Mortimer himself revealed the plot to the king. Cambridge, Scrope and Grey were taken prisoner and executed for treason and their heads were impaled on spikes and kept on public display. Henry sailed as planned to France, and eventual triumph at the Battle of Agincourt.

Henry V wisely - as it turned out - left the lesser conspirators unharmed, and as a result faced no further challenges to the throne during the rest of his brief reign. As for Edmund Mortimer, he remained loyal to the crown. He fought with Henry in France, and in 1423 he was named lieutenant of Ireland.

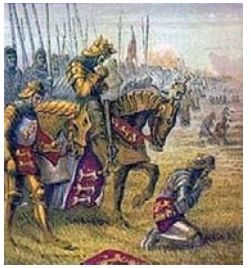
On receiving the declaration of war from Henry V, the King of France, trying to intimidate and humiliate, sent Henry some tennis balls, telling him to stick to something he was good at and leave the fighting to the men! This act strengthened Henry's resolve. Henry sent back some cannon balls!



3. First Campaign 1415

On Aug 11th 1415, Henry invaded Normandy with an army of 10,000.

- He planned to take Harfleur on the Seine estuary before marching on Paris. Harfleur would give Henry control of another Channel port that would be vital in order to run successful campaigns in France. Supply lines + escape route!



a) Siege of Harfleur (17th August and 7th October 1415)



- Henry expected the siege to last about two weeks. However, the citizens of Harfleur put up a spirited defence despite being heavily outnumbered. They were also expecting help from the French king, but in the end none came! To add to this problem, the English besiegers were camped in swampland and disease ravaged the camp.
 - Finally, after six weeks, Harfleur fell but at a serious cost. Of Henry's original army of 10,000, 2,000 had died and a further 2,000 wounded and sick had to be returned to England.

b) The March to Calais

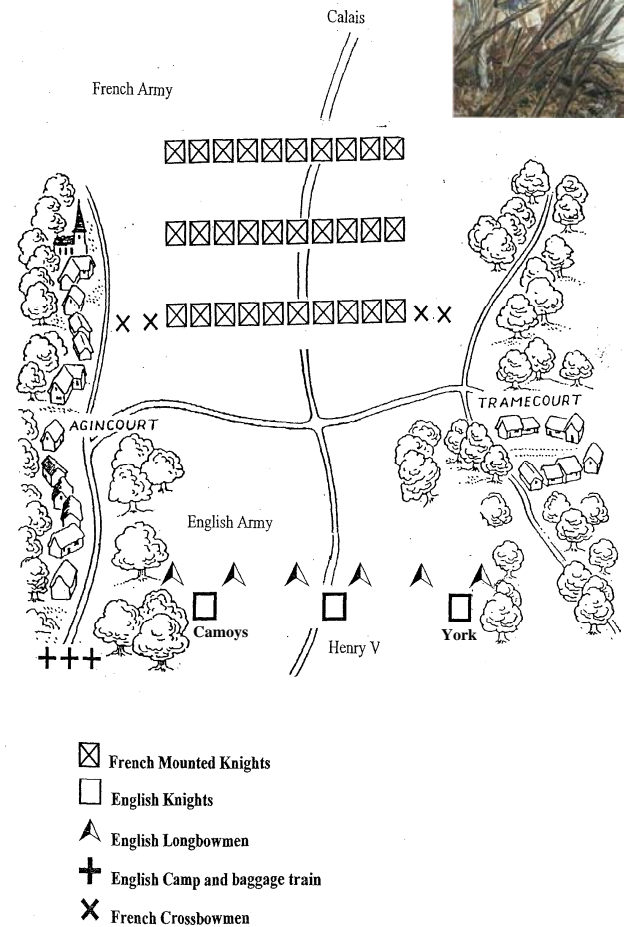
- Henry could have sailed back to England but that would have been a humiliating climb down – Remember the tennis balls! Some English barons see it as a sign of weakness
- Henry realized he no longer had the strength to march on Paris and instead decided on a **chevauchée**, a march through enemy territory designed to annoy the enemy by causing carnage but avoid battle.
- He would take his remaining troops 100 miles along the coast to Calais. The 6,000-man army hoped to reach it quickly taking provisions for only 7 days.
- A message was sent to the Captain of Calais to send a 300 strong force to secure the crossing at Blanchetaque on the River Somme. But on reaching Blanchetaque, they found French troops guarding the crossings, forcing them to march further inland to find a safe crossing.
- Eventually on 19th October an unguarded crossing was found at Bethencourt. Unfortunately, this involved a 50 mile diversion, doubling the time of the planned march. The journey was further slowed by heavy rains that turned the roads to mud.
- Once the Somme was safely crossed, the army continued its journey. The consequences of the delay now became apparent. The army was short of food but worse, the French had managed to raise a huge army near the village of Agincourt, blocking the path to Calais.



4) The Battle of Agincourt 25th October 1415. St Crispin's Day



1. At 6am on 25th October 1415, both armies had been in position all night.
2. If had been **raining all night**. The battlefield was sodden with heavy, **clinging mud** and many of the French knights had spent the night in the saddle in order to keep dry and were now standing around to keep their armour from getting muddy. Other knights had spent the night partying, taunting the English across the lines and dicing for the English prisoners.
3. The **French** had chosen the worst possible position from which to attack: they were **between two woods**: Tramecourt and Agincourt, which stood about three-quarters of a mile apart, (1200 metres) but **closed at the point** where the French would meet the English to about half a mile (750 metres). Into this gap the French would be funnelled. The errors of Crécy were to be repeated again.



4. The **English** were not much better off. In the previous 17 days they had ridden or walked the **270 miles** from where they had landed, with only one day's rest. For 8 of those days they had been carrying heavy stakes. It had rained most of the way and they had had little to eat but nuts and half-cooked meat. Many of them were suffering from bronchitis and dysentery.
5. The armies took up their battle formations. The **French**, whose **25,000** included **15,000** mounted knights, drew their riders up in three ranks, with a few crossbowmen in among them.
6. The **English** force of **6,000**, formed three groups, four ranks deep, of dismounted men-at-arms, with wedges of archers between them. On the wings, facing inward, were two more groups of archers. For nearly 4 hours nobody moved.
7. **French knights were arguing** about whether or not to charge and there was a lot of jostling. Every French knight wanted to be in the first rank. They thought it was going to be an easy win! Insults were exchanged. Arguments flared as the disorderly nature of the army, drawn from all over France, became clear.
8. At 11am **Henry had moved his men forward** to within bowshot of the French, about 300 metres away. The stakes the English had carried for eight days were stuck in the mud, angled towards the French, points up.
9. Still the French did not move; **Henry** decided to make their minds up for them, and **ordered his archers to fire into the air**. (A trained archer could shoot 12 arrows a minute (6 aimed) that could wound at 400 metres, kill at 200 and penetrate armour at 100 metres.)
10. Arrows from a thousand bows rained on the French, spooking the horses and wounding the tightly packed mass. The English had separate arrowheads for penetrating armour while others were designed to kill or maim horses.
11. Suddenly, **the First French line of knights charged**, without any central order, straight across the mud at the English. The French were so crowded that they could not use their crossbowmen and cannons for fear of hitting their own men.

- 12.** This time **Henry's archers** fired for the horses, bringing down riders in hundreds. **Many suffocated** in the mud, unable to move in their armour, as other French knights piled on top of them.
- 13.** The **Second line** of French knights, unaware of what was happening up ahead, pressed forward through the mud, piling up on the dead and wounded at their front. Those who did reach the front had to climb a wall of dead and dying men and horses before they in turn were slain. Taking advantage of this confusion, the English archers put down their bows and finished off many of the stranded knights by sliding **daggers and swords** between the joints in their armour. Hand to hand fighting took place outside the spikes. Nearly 1700 prisoners were taken.
- 14.** The third rank of French knights left the battlefield in disgust. **By noon, the battle was over.** The remainder of the French army started to slip away into the countryside. One of the few consolations for the French was that the English were too tired and too few in numbers to chase after them.
- 15.** The **English had lost 500 men; the French 10,000.** The myth of the invincible knight was again shattered. The **longbow had been decisive again.**

*Some of the local villagers decided they wanted their share of the spoils and attacked the poorly guarded **English camp** and baggage wagons. Henry believing it was a rear attack from French knights, ordered the killing of 1700 prisoners in order to free his men from guarding duty, so that they could fight off the rear attack. The guards refused at first, not on humanitarian grounds but because they would lose ransom money. Henry had to withdraw 200 bowmen to force the guards to carry out his order. The killing only stopped when Henry realised the truth and that only villagers had attacked.*

*The English troops collected **so much loot** on the battlefield that the army simply could not move. Henry ordered almost all of it to be placed in a local barn along with the English dead and this was then set ablaze.*



5. Consequences of the victory at Agincourt

- Importantly, half the French barons had been killed or captured, so the French army and government were weak for years to come.
- Henry V was easily able to conquer much of northern France as the French were unable to mount effective resistance since they had no one to lead their armies

6. 2nd Campaign 1415-1420

- On August 1st 1417, Henry V invaded Normandy with a well-equipped force of 10,000 men.
- Over the next three years, he systematically captured Caen, Argentan and Alençon in 1417 and Cherbourg, Evreux and Rouen in 1418.
- By now civil war had broken out between France and Burgundy after the murder of the John the Fearless, Duke of Normandy. The Burgundians captured Charles VI, King of France.
- In 1420, The English, Burgundians and the captured Charles VI agreed the **Treaty of Troyes**.

Treaty of Troyes 1420

This treaty marked the high point of English success in France. It was agreed that:

- a) **Henry V** was to be **Regent** of France during the lifetime of the now mad Charles VI.
- b) Henry was to **become king of France** on the death of Charles VI.
- c) Henry was to **marry Katherine of France**

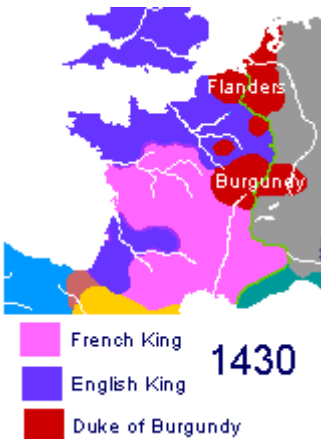
7. Why did Henry V win the battle?

1. Henry had **planned his expedition carefully** and his army was not typical of the times. Henry's army was specially recruited; his men were well paid, well trained and disciplined. Most of his army comprised expert archers using the English longbow. Henry preferred a small, professional army to a large untrained force.
2. Henry was a **charismatic commander**, popular with his men and able to motivate his troops.
3. Henry was an **excellent strategist and tactician**. He used his troops and the ground to his best advantage.
4. The **French army** although, outnumbering the English was **feudal** and made up from all over France. It **lacked the discipline** of the English.
5. King Charles VI was weak and mentally ill. The **Constable** (Charles D'Albert) **and the Marshal** (**Boucicault**) of France both experienced soldiers were given command. However, many of the **French nobles refused to acknowledge** their superiority and ignored their commands.
6. The **French arrogance** in believing that they only had to turn up to beat the English, meant that they did not think carefully enough about their position. The narrowing line of battle reduced French effectiveness and did not allow them to use their numerical supremacy.
7. The French had **failed to learn** from the mistakes made at the Battles of **Crécy** (1346) and **Poitiers** (1356). The continued to use out of date tactics that played into the hands of the English longbowmen.
8. A number of French knights were unprofessional and regarded warfare as almost sport.



8. 2nd Period of English Decline 1429-1453

Sadly, Henry became ill with dysentery and died in 1422, before Charles VI.



English hopes of success faded with the death of Henry V. Henry knew that he was dying and made plans to protect his kingdom both in England and France. His nine month old son Henry became Henry VI. He appointed

1. Younger his brother, **John**, Duke of Bedford as Regent in France,
2. His other brother, **Humphrey** of Gloucester as Regent in England,
3. **Thomas Beaufort**, Duke of Exeter to be guardian of his 9 month old son.

However, these appointments caused quarrelling between John and Humphrey that was to affect the English performance in France. Humphrey deliberately limited the supply of men and equipment to John in France.

England now had a child on the throne and the cycle of turmoil that came with it reappeared in England

- When Charles VI died a few months later, the baby Henry VI of England should have become king of France according to the Treaty of Troyes and although Henry VI was the grandson of Charles VI (his mother was Charles' daughter), the French did not accept him as their king.
- Charles VI's son, the Dauphin, claimed the throne as Charles VII (1422–1461), however he was not able to be crowned as the town where French coronations always took place, Rheims (say: reemz), was in English hands.
- Henry VI's uncle, John continued the war finding a valuable ally in the French Duke of Burgundy (eastern France).
- This meant that the forces of the Dauphin (Charles VII) were concentrated in central France and surrounded on both sides.

9. Joan of Arc (more detailed notes on next page)

- It was at this time in 1429 that one of the most unusual characters in medieval history appeared on the scene – Joan of Arc. Jeanne d'Arc
- This peasant girl claimed that she had seen visions of the saints urging her to fight the English and force them out of France.
- Joan and her fellow villagers had suffered greatly from the violent raids of English soldiers in her area and this gave her a burning hatred of the English.
- Although she had no military training, her determination and strong personality gave encouragement to the French.
- She led a French army to the help of the besieged city of Orléans in 1429.
- Later that year she led the Dauphin into Rheims where his delayed coronation took place.
- However Joan was captured by the English and burnt at the stake in 1431.
- Although her military career was short lived her influence was huge.

10. The last years of the War

- In 1435, at the treaty called the **Peace of Arras**, the Duke of Burgundy allied himself with his fellow Frenchmen and the English chances of winning in France were doomed.
- French successes now came thick and fast and the final battle of the Hundred Years' War was fought at Castillon in 1453.
- There was no treaty to bring the war to an end; the English just gave up and withdrew their army.
- The English were only able to hold onto the port of Calais, which was finally recaptured by the French in 1558 during the reign of Mary Tudor.

11. Joan of Arc

In the autumn of 1428, Bedford with the help of the Burgundians began to siege the town of Orleans. From here was to emerge the most unexpected of French leaders, her name **Joan of Arc or Jeanne d'Arc** (1412-1431)

Joan was the daughter of a farmer from Domrémy in Lorraine. As a young girl she liked to wander through the woods and fields close to her father's farm. Whilst on these walks she claims she saw visions and heard voices. Joan believed that St Michael told her that she was to lead an army that would set her country free from foreign invaders. Then the Dauphin could take the French throne. Eventually, Joan managed to convince the commander of her local town about what she had seen and heard. Joan was invited to meet the Dauphin.

"Most noble Lord Dauphin, I am Joan the Maid, sent by God to help you and the Kingdom. By this order I announce that you will be crowned in the city of Rheims."

At first most people were skeptical about what Joan was saying. She was asked many questions and gave good answers to them all. At last people believed her and decided to give her a chance. She dressed up like a boy, put on a suit of armour and set out for the besieged town of Orleans.

Joan led an army of soldiers into the city and encouraged the soldiers there to fight harder. She led by example fighting in the front line, getting injured but still returning to fight more. Soon the siege was broken and under 'The Maid of Orleans' the French gained more victories against the English, notably the Battle of Patay (1429) where over 2,000 English died. On 17th July 1429, the Dauphin was crowned King of France at Rheims Cathedral.

The war continued and Joan was captured by the Burgundians at Compiègne. She was then handed over to the English. The English decided to put Joan on trial for heresy, for many believed that she made use of the devil's power in her victories against the English. The churchmen who interrogated her claimed that she was defying the church by claiming that she had heard voices and seen visions. Eventually, probably under torture, she broke down, admitted she had done wrong and promised never to make any more claims about visions and voices. She was sentenced to life imprisonment, with only bread and water for food. In prison, dressed in woman's clothes she received unwanted attention from her jailers. Having had enough, she began to dress again in boy's clothes. This was seen as a return to her heretic ways and she was sentenced to be burnt to death.

She was brought to the market place in Rouen on the 30th May, 1431, and even here her courage did not fail her. An eye-witness account follows.

"She asked to have a cross and an English soldier who stood near made a little one of two pieces of wood. He held it up to her at the end of a stick and she took it reverently and kissed it and put it near her breast. She pleaded that I go and fetch the crucifix from a nearby church and hold it before her eyes until her death... Even while in the flames she continued to call out and confess the Blessed Name of Jesus"

The bravery she displayed affected many who were there and one English soldier is reported to have remarked, 'We are lost. We have burnt a saint'

The English scattered her ashes in the River Seine to avoid her relics being used to encourage revolt. The spirit of Joan has passed into the history of France. Her death united France in a fervour of patriotism. In 1455, her trial was again carried out in Paris, but this time she was found not guilty. In 1920, she was canonised as a Saint.

12. Why did England lose the Hundred Years War?

The Hundred Years War was a series of wars and like with many things it's often the last one that counts. England may well have been winning at the end of the **Edwardian War 1337-1360** but towards the end of the **Henrician War 1415-1435** things changed dramatically.

France has constant advantages throughout the war.

Larger population 20m – 4 million = more taxes, larger armies and more reserves.

Fighting on home ground – knew land better, easier to supply and transport troops. The English could only maintain a presence in France by stationing thousands of troops there as the French would certainly resist English rule. Moving goods and men across The Channel was expensive and limited

Patriotism - The French were spurred on by patriotism, they had more to lose,

At the end England's king was Henry VI a **weak and mentally ill** king, married to Margaret of Anjou (French princess – influence!)

French advantages

France was ruled by Charles VII a **strong and very able king**

Better leaders - like Joan of Arc (when ...battles?) helped France to do well.

Better army - The French army - more modern than English. French had many more guns than the English who relied too much on longbow. (Castillon). Also French army now more organised and better led than before. They eventually learned from defeat at Crécy (1346), Poitiers (1356) and Agincourt (1415)

English disadvantages

Arguments over who should rule England, which were to lead to The Wars of The Roses, and this made England weak.

Weaker army - not enough money to make enough guns, relied too much on longbow. Longbowmen became expensive to hire

When the **Duke of Burgundy** left the English side and joined the French at the Peace of Arras in 1435, France became too strong for England as it got all Burgundy's men and supplies. France no longer had to fight on two sides.

THIS = MAIN REASON FOR FRENCH WIN.

Changes in England

The English lost the Hundred Years' War simply because the **original motivation** of the conflict, that the English kings should also be kings of France, now seemed pointless and had little support in England. English tax payers saw no return.

By the end of the war, the English were much **more inward looking** because for the first time since the Norman Conquest, owning **French lands were not important** or necessary to English government

The English also had problems of their own as **Henry VI suffered from mental** illness and this would lead to an English civil war (the Wars of the Roses). By a supreme irony, this madness was inherited from his French grandfather, Charles VI.

13. What were the consequences (how were they effected) of the war for England (losers) and France (winners)?

FRANCE BECAME STRONGER

- France would slowly become an **important power in Europe**
- More land - France, which had started the war as a small kingdom, was now a large, united country under the control of one king.
- Regained all English lands (Gascony, Guienne, Normandy?) except Calais.
- Got more money - More land brought more trade, taxes, rents etc.
- However, it took a long time for France to recover from the war.
- The power of the nobles remained strong. France remained a feudal society until the French Revolution in 1789. By 1420 the feudal system had disappeared in England.

ENGLAND BECAME WEAKER

Lost land

- Lost lands it had before (Gascony and Guienne) and during the war (i.e. Normandy) and left with just Calais, (finally lost in 1558).

Lost money

- Cost of war / loss of wine growing areas / trade etc.

Lost power in France and England

- Only Calais left, so England was now very weak in France

The fears of Edward II and Henry V were correct. As soon as the distraction of a foreign war had disappeared, old conflicts returned and in 1455 civil war broke out. Failure in 100 Yrs war added to some barons' anger at Henry VI, and so helped to start the Wars of the Roses.

The Hundred Years' War marked the beginning of English national feeling: Edward III had considered himself French and spoke French at the start of the conflict, but Henry V, the victor of Agincourt, spoke English.

In the long run England was better off. Kings and queens could concentrate on more important problems at home. The foundations for the British Empire were already being laid.

