What was England like in the 1500s?

Textbook: Making of the United Kingdom pp.2-5

CONSIDER THESE BASIC FEATURES ABOUT ENGLAND IN THE PRESENT DAY AND 1500:

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| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **PRESENT** | **1500** |
| **POPULATION** | About 57m. | 2.7m |
| TOWNS | Many towns, some very large, up to 4-500,000 people. | Fewer towns, often little bigger than present day villages. A few hundred people. |
| HOUSES/FURNITURE | Built of varied materials – brick, stone, concrete, steel, glass. Comfortable, soft furniture. | Wood, thatch, lime plaster, dung(!) – stone and new materials brick and glass for those who could afford it. Furniture generally hard. |
| MEALS | Wide variety from home and abroad – balanced diet available. | Mainly meat, vegetables, cheese, bread beer – home grown fruit. No potatoes/rice – unbalanced diet. |
| INDUSTRY | Electronic, automotive, chemical, engineering, textiles. | Cloth making – based on sheep farming for wool. Manufacture in the home or in workshops. |
| JOBS | Huge variety, mainly industrial, professional or service or retail. 11/2% population work on the land! | Subsistence (lived on what you could grow and sell). Skilled crafts and spinning and weaving. 90% of the population lived on the land. |
| COUNTRYSIDE | Managed or farmed  Protected for leisure use or landscape | Largely forested, great areas of wilderness, especially in the north. Open field, village based farming. Danger of wild animals – even wolves! |

Is there anything in 1500 that might indicate a move towards more modern features? How different – if you were able to visit it! – would you find 1500 to the present from just this comparison?

Put the title ‘What was England like in the 1500s?’

1. Read Social Groups on p.3

In your own words, define in a sentence or two the following:

* Gentlemen
* Citizens
* Yeomen
* Labourers

1. Complete tasks 1, 2 and 3 from p.3. You could answer this in the form of a chart.
2. a. How would you describe the activities you see in Source 5?

Are they familiar to you?

b. Choose at least one source from Sources 6, 8, 10 and 13.

What do you find most odd or different from a similar modern day scene? Explain.

1. To finish, complete the Activity on p.5.

Remember to explain your answer carefully.