How effectively did Henry VII handle the nobility?

Henry VII aimed to handle the nobility through dual policies of Inducements (rewarding loyalty) and sanctions (penalising those who offended him).

- Particularly effective in his policy of rewarding loyalty
- Although largely effective in handling the nobility through sanctions, the harshness of his policies were such that historians have argued that Civil War may have broken out had he not died in 1509.

**Inducements**
- He was willing to give Yorkists a second chance following Bosworth, restoring Duke of Northumberland to his old position → encouraged other Yorkists to support Henry
- Although most nobles with a claim to the throne had been killed in the Wars of the Roses in the 1450s and 60s, Henry still faced potential challenges from men such as John de la Pole, Earl of Lincoln
  - Lincoln given a place at King's Council after he had professed loyalty to Henry
- Display of loyalty to king → grant patronage (honour and status without direct financial loss to the crown)
  - Final reward summons to Council
  - Reintroduced Order of Garter and created 37 Knights of the Garter
- → Largely successful as it meant loyalty to the king from nobles, but crown didn't suffer material loss

**Sanctions**
- Dated start of reign from day before Bosworth so that those who fought against him were traitors → therefore he had power over those nobles to seize their land.
- Reduced the military and financial power of the military
  - Limits placed on noble retainers
    - needed a licence to keep retainers followed by a heavy fine of up to £5 a month for each illegal retainer kept → Lord Burgavenny fined over £70,000
  - 1486 Act of Resumption
    - Recovered all property given away by Richard III since 1455
    - meant that no single noble was wealthier than the king nor had the ability to pose a military challenge due to the restrictions on restraining noble retainers
    - Tied up 32/62 noble families in bonds and recognisances -
      - written agreements whereby nobles which had offended the King paid him money or paid money as security for future good behavior
    - Acts of Attainder placed on 51 noble families -
      - if they were disloyal they would lose all right to their family lands and possessions
- Decisively crushed Lovell and Stafford's rising in the North, executing Humphrey Stafford

**However**
- Failed to abolish retaining entirely
- By end of Henry's reign, there was significant disquiet among the nobles with the 51 Acts of Attainder meant that no single noble was wealthier than the king nor had the ability to pose a military challenge due to the restrictions on restraining noble retainers
- Many historians have argued that civil war might have broken out again had Henry not died in 1509, such was the harshness of the methods he was employing.
  - As evidenced by the fact that, upon the accession of Henry VIII in 1509, the executions of Epson and Dudley (who implemented the harsh financial policies) were highly popular with the nobility.

That said
- No such rebellion was seen, and therefore, despite the harshness of his sanctions, Henry VII was highly effective in this respect as well
Assess the reasons for the fall of Thomas Wolsey in 1529?

Divorce: long term
- Hard to argue against claim that Wolsey's failure to obtain a divorce was most important factor
  - Divorce had been Henry's primary concern for over 2 years
- Wolsey had promised matter would be easily resolved through his influence on papacy
  - Although the issue became out of Wolsey's control, following the Sack of Rome in 1527 by Charles I, who was Katherine’s nephew, which essentially left the Pope a hostage to the Spanish.
  - ⇒ Henry desperate for a legitimate male heir and by 1529 H infatuated w/ Anne Boleyn, whilst 40 year old Katherine was unlikely to produce another child.
- Strong evidence that this was the decisive factor, as the fact that Wolsey was arrested charged with Praemunire directly following the abandonment of the legatine court at Blackfriars by Campeggio in July 1529 suggests that this final failure to be granted a divorce by the Papacy directly caused Wolsey's fall.

Failure of amicable grant and taxation: long term
- 1523 Parliament, Wolsey demanded a subsidy of 4 shillings in the pound to fund Henry's Wars
  - Caused an outcry and he only eventually brought in £300,000 out of target £800,000
- 1525 he sent commissioners to collect Amicable Grant (non-parliamentary grant)
  - Bad timing as 2 forced loans from 1522-3 to raise £200k was still being collected
  - Led to 10,000 men assembled at Lavenham, East Anglia in opposition and Wolsey was forced to back down and apologise
  - Prestige of the King suffered
- 1509-20 Wolsey didn’t even cover half of the £1.7 million spent by the crown, mostly on war
- However Wolsey's downfall was 4 years later → suggests this wasn’t an issue for Henry as he continued to trust Wolsey as his chief advisor despite failure of Amicable Grant.

Influence of Boleyn faction and lack of noble support: was a trigger from the King's initial displeasure → short term
- Particular dislike of Wolsey from Boleyn faction as a result of failure to get a divorce
  - Henry's infatuation with Anne allowed the Boleyns to exploit Henry's concerns over delays in the divorce proceedings, claiming to Henry that Wolsey was deliberately slowing down the process as he was hostile to the Boleyns.
- In addition Wolsey had many enemies in court, from his attacks on nobility
  - E.g. Sent Earl of Northumberland to Fleet prison for contempt of the council's jurisdiction
- This meant that when Wolsey was under pressure as a result of the failure to gain a divorce, the nobility did little to give support to a minister they had often despised
- However, this factor less important than Wolsey's failure to get a divorce, as without this Henry would not have had serious concerns that the Boleyn faction could exploit, and additionally it is unlikely that they would have despised Wolsey as much as he would have engineered the marriage of Anne to Henry.
How effectively did Henry VIII govern from 1540-47?

Faction
- Generally effective in keeping control over factional balance in government
  - Executed Catherine but recognised that Norfolk had been a loyal servant and allowed him to withdraw from court
  - Similarly Henry recognised Cranmer’s loyalty and lack of evidence against him, but allowed him to be arrested to emphasise the dependency of his ministers on his will
  - Henry wasn’t taken in by Catholic faction’s accusations of heresy against CP and allowed them to come to arrest her before giving them abuse for attempting an act of treason
- That said, the removal of Gardiner and Norfolk in Henry’s final year was a triumph for reformist faction and suggests he had lost control over faction in his last year
  - Gardiner due to refusal to grant some of his land to Henry (small offence)
  - Howards (Earl of Surrey and Norfolk) arrested after they put part of royal coat of arms on their family crest to symbolise their ‘claim’ to the throne

Foreign Policy far less effective
- Scotland
  - Although English force invaded in 1542, defeating Scottish army decisively at Battle of Solway Moss
  - Henry failed to make an effective move against Scotland while they were defenseless and leaderless
  - Instead rushed through treaty of Greenwich instead in 1543
    - Committed marriage of Edward and Mary, but this was repudiated by Scots and renewed all treaties w/ France
  - → wasted huge resources and time achieving nothing but a failed treaty
- Similarly with France:
  - Although the invasion of France (with 40,000 men) managed to capture Boulogne, in the 1546 Peace of Ardres Henry agreed to sell the city back in 8 years, and in the meanwhile it was highly expensive to maintain
- By 1545 no allies, leaving England vulnerable with a serious threat of invasion
  - French cruised blatantly up and down solent
  - Mary Rose sank just outside Portsmouth harbor in 1545 (his flagship pride and joy)

Handling of finances particularly ineffective
- Wars with France and Scotland continue if nothing
  - Henry had to sell off much of the monastic land he had acquired, and to tax at an unprecedentedly high rate, thus weakening both the crown and the English economy
- Also began to debase the coinage from 1542 to help pay for expensive FP
  - Soon the silver coins were almost entirely copper
- Led to rapid inflation - as people lost faith in the value of the currency and hoarded their old silver coins
- Debasement also made foreign goods far more expensive, as traders on the Continent refused to accept worthless copper for their wares.
- The disruptive effects of debasement continued for many years, until Mary began a partial recoinage that was completed by Elizabeth