The fall of Thomas Wolsey – What caused it?

Failure Of Wolsey's Foreign Policy 1525-1529:

- Diplomatic revolution 1525-1527 was a failure. The alliance with France put England on the losing side in the Hapsburg-Valois struggle.
- Due to the failure of the Amicable Grant there is no war of conquest in France after the Battle of Pavia in 1525.
- Francis I was defeated again in June 1529 and England was stranded on the side-lines in the Peace of Cambrai in August.

Failure to gain Henry VIII's annulment:

- The Sack of Rome in 1527 made it impossible for the Pope to agree to Henry's hope for an annulment. This failure caused Henry to recall Wolsey's failure over the Amicable Grant and the King lost faith in his Chancellor.
- The court held at Blackfriars in the Summer of 1529 failed when Catherine appealed to Rome to hear the case. Campeggio referred the case back to Rome. Therefore ending Wolsey's authority to hear the case in England and therefore not getting Henry the annulment he promised he would.

The role of the reformation parliament:

- The reformation parliament summoned in October 1529 was bitterly anti-cleric and Wolsey was regarded as the greatest example of an immoral cleric.
- A charge of praemunire was imposed on Wolsey then extended to the entire clergy. Letters were found from Wolsey to the Pope demanding that Henry be excommunicated if he did not banish Anne Boleyn from court. He was sent for trial of treason but died of dysentery on his way.

The role of nobility and factional struggle:

- Peter Gwyn said: 'It was Henry who made Wolsey, and it was Henry who destroyed him.'; The factions presented Henry with an opportunity but they could not destroy Wolsey on their own.
- Anne Boleyn had a personal vendetta against Wolsey as he had put a stop to her previous marriage to Henry Percy. Her father, Thomas Boleyn, sought to improve his families position of power at the expense of Wolsey.
- The Duke of Norfolk opposed Wolsey's lowly origins and his predominance at the expense of judicial and anti nobility reforms to the Kings household.
- Wolsey could not take advantage of the Aragonese faction against the rising Boleyn's' as he was working for Henry against the interests of Catherine of Aragon. His judicial reforms, the Eltham ordinances, his personal glorification and immense wealth from corruption meant he had few friends amongst the nobility.