

A day in the life of The Queen

The Queen's working day begins like many people's – at her desk.

After scanning the daily British newspapers, The Queen reviews her correspondence.

Every day, 200-300 (and sometimes many more) letters from the public arrive. The Queen chooses a selection to read herself and tells members of her staff how she would like them to be answered.

This enables Her Majesty personally to see a typical cross-section of her daily correspondence. Virtually every letter is answered by staff in her Private Secretary's office or by a lady-in-waiting.

The Queen will then see, separately, two of her Private Secretaries with the daily quota of official papers and documents. This process takes upwards of an hour.

Every day of every year, wherever she is, The Queen receives from government ministers, and from her representatives in the Commonwealth and foreign countries, information in the form of policy papers, Cabinet documents, telegrams, letters and other State papers.

These are sent up to her by the Private Secretaries in the famous 'red boxes'. All of these papers have to be read and, where necessary, approved and signed.

A series of official meetings or 'audiences' will often follow. The Queen will see a number of important people.

These include overseas ambassadors and high commissioners, newly appointed British ambassadors, senior members of the British and Commonwealth Armed Forces on their appointment and retirement, and English bishops and judges on their appointment.

Each meeting usually lasts 10 to 20 minutes, and usually The Queen and her visitor meet alone.

The Queen may also meet a number of people who have won prizes or awards in a variety of fields such as literature or science, to present them individually with their prize.

If there is an Investiture - a ceremony for the presentation of honours and decorations – it begins at 11.00am and lasts just over an hour. The Queen usually meets around 100 people at each Investiture to present Orders, decorations and medals.

The Queen will often lunch privately. Every few months, she and The Duke of Edinburgh will invite a dozen guests from a wide variety of backgrounds to an informal lunch. Occasionally, the guest list may consist of far fewer people, such as a newly appointed or retiring Governor-General and their guest.

If The Queen is spending the morning on engagements away from her desk and other commitments, she will visit up to three venues before lunch, either alone or jointly with The Duke of Edinburgh.

On a regional visit, The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh lunch with a wide variety of people in places ranging from town halls to hospitals.

<http://www.royal.gov.uk/HMTheQueen/DayInTheLife/TheQueensworkingday/Morning.aspx>