

RICHARD III

RICHARD III
BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
DIRECTED BY ANTONI CIMOLINO

GRADE RECOMMENDATION

Grades 8 and up.

CONTENT ADVISORY

Deals with issues of oppression and misogyny. Contains depiction of violence, including murder.

STUDENT MATINÉE DATES

May 6, 8, 13, 20, 26; June 5, 10, 17, 24; September 9, 22;
October 1, 22.

FUN FACT!

Sir Alec Guinness, who played the role of Obi-Wan Kenobi in the original *Star Wars* trilogy (1977 to 1983), also played Richard III for the Stratford Festival's inaugural season in 1953.

SYNOPSIS

As the health of King Edward IV fails, his youngest brother, Richard, Duke of Gloucester, plots to neutralize all other heirs to the throne of England.

Contriving to have his other brother, George, Duke of Clarence, imprisoned and then murdered in the Tower of London, he also uses his seductive powers of persuasion to woo and marry his enemy Lady Anne, daughter-in-law of the former king, Henry VI.

When Edward dies, Richard removes the late king's young sons to the Tower, ostensibly for their protection, and executes several of his enemies on trumped-up charges of treason. After a campaign orchestrated by the Duke of Buckingham convinces the populace of the imprisoned princes' illegitimacy, Richard is offered the crown instead, accepting it with a great show of reluctance.

But even as Richard works to consolidate his power, it begins to slip away from him. Buckingham, balking at a commission to murder the princes in the tower, falls out of favour and defects to a rebellion led by Henry, Earl of Richmond.

Confronting Richmond's forces at Bosworth Field, Richard is killed, whereupon Richmond is crowned as Henry VII, the first of England's Tudor kings.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

GLOBAL COMPETENCIES:

- Creativity
- Learning to Learn/Self-Awareness
- Communication
- Collaboration
- Critical Thinking
- Global Citizenship



GRADE 8:

- The Arts (Dance, Drama, Music, Visual Arts, Media Arts and Multimedia Technology).
- Language/English (Oral Communication, Reading, Writing, Media Literacy).
- Health and Physical Education (Understanding Healthy Concepts, Making Healthy Choices, Making Connections for Healthy Living).

GRADES 9–12:

- The Arts (Dance, Drama, Music, Integrated Arts, Media Arts, Visual Arts).
- Language/English (Oral Communication, Reading and Literature Studies, Writing, Media Studies).
- Health and Physical Education (Understanding Healthy Concepts, Making Healthy Choices, Making Connections for Healthy Living).

GRADES 10–12:

- Canadian and World Studies (Civics, History).

GRADES 11–12:

- Social Sciences and Humanities (Equity Studies, General Social Sciences).

THEMES

- Evil and temptation
- Justice
- Power and responsibility/ruler and state
- War
- Jealousy, deceit and betrayal
- Manipulation, and desire
- Birth of the Tudor dynasty
- Fate and free will
- Family
- Gender
- Man and natural order
- Art and culture
- Time

THREE KEY FIGURES TO LOOK FOR IN

RICHARD III

| | | | |
|------------|-------------|--------------------|-----------|
| CHARACTERS | Richard III | Duke of Buckingham | Lady Anne |
| ADJECTIVES | Deceptive | Greedy | Gullible |

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY: WHO IS RICHARD?

1 class (approx. 45 minutes)

OBJECTIVE: Through dramatic exploration of the text, students will construct meaning and understanding of Richard III's character.

INSTRUCTIONS: This activity is best done before reading or seeing the play. Teachers will need to make copies of the quotations listed below and distribute copies to each group who will work on devising an image (tableau) that encapsulates the essence of the text.

RESOURCES: Handout copies of the quotations listed below, chart paper, markers.

1. Divide the class into six groups. Each group will be assigned one quotation and create a tableau (pose or image that captures the essence of their lines). While striking their pose, each team will designate one member of their group to read their quotation out loud.

- I am determined to prove a villain. And hate the idle pleasures of these days. (Richard – Act 1, scene 1)
- Why, this it is when men are ruled by women. (Richard – Act 1, scene 1)
- He cannot live, I hope, and must not die. Till George be packed with post-horse up to heaven. (Richard – Act 1, scene 1)
- I'll have her, but I will not keep her long. (Richard – Act 1, scene 2)
- O Buckingham, take heed of yonder dog: Look when he fawns, he bites; and when he bites, His venom tooth will rankle to the death. (Margaret – Act 1, scene 3)
- I do the wrong, and first begin to brawl. (Richard – Act 1, scene 3)

2. After a short period of rehearsal time (approx. 5 to 10 minutes), have the groups come together and present their tableaux to one another.

3. Afterwards, discuss with the class what they think of Richard so far. What words stood out for them and why? What do they think the play is about?

POSSIBLE ESSAY QUESTIONS, REFLECTIONS OR CLASS DISCUSSION

Watch various YouTube versions of Richard III's opening speech, "Now is the winter of our discontent":

Royal Shakespeare Company (2012)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K9wzWYtYGBI>

Laurence Olivier's film
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cDxnXgYPnKg>

Ian McKellen's film
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pjJEXkbeL-o>

What is your impression of Richard so far? What aspects of the speech resonated or stood out for you? Why? Through this soliloquy, Richard makes clear his secret thoughts and intentions. Were there moments that appealed to you and other moments that did not? Why?

EDUCATION ENRICHMENT

Study Guide available at stratfordfestival.ca/studyguides

Prologues (interactive presentations on stage) are available at 11:00 a.m. on: May 8, 13, 20; June 5, 10, 17; September 22.

Workshops and post-show chats may be arranged by calling the Education Department at 519.271.4040, ext. 2354.

Festival Theatre, Costume and Props Warehouse, Archives and Set Changeover tours may be arranged by calling the Box Office at 1.800.567.1600.

THEATRE ETIQUETTE AND THE ROLE OF THE AUDIENCE

Live theatre is a magical experience shared and respected by all: both by audience members and performers. The actors feed off your energy and your response to their work on stage.

Here are a few things to help everyone maximize their enjoyment of the performance:

- If you leave the auditorium, you will be re-seated at an appropriate time during the performance.
- Please turn off all cell phones and other electronic devices during the performance.
- Please refrain from talking or eating during the performance.
- Please do respond to the performance through laughter, tears or captivated smiles.

Here's some more information on [theatre etiquette](#).

BOOKING INFORMATION

Online: www.stratfordfestival.ca/schools

Email: groups@stratfordfestival.ca

Phone: 1.800.567.1600 or 519.273.1600

Mail:
Stratford Festival
Attn: Groups and Schools
P.O. Box 520
Stratford, ON N5A 6V2

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The Tools for Teachers program includes Prologues, Study Guides and Stratford Shorts

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