

# HENRY

by William Shakespeare

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# if the cause be not good hath a heavy reckoning

Director Jonathan Munby describes HENRY V as, “a series of conflicts, conflicts on every level – between two countries, between the different nations which make up a United Kingdom, between individuals and within individuals themselves.” The play tells the story of the rise of the young King Henry V. Alongside Henry’s personal journey, the war which he led between England and France is dramatised. The play is part of a series of plays which Shakespeare wrote chronicling England’s history.

## Lost The Plot?

The play opens with the Chorus addressing the audience and inviting them to use their imagination as they are told Henry’s story. The Chorus reappears throughout the play to introduce the action.

The action of the play takes place in England in the fifteenth century. The Archbishops of Ely and Canterbury are discussing their new King, Henry V. They describe his transformation from a wild adolescent to a model Monarch. When Henry enters, the Archbishop urges him to lay claim to France and promises that the Church will help fund a war. The French Prince (the Dauphin) responds to Henry’s claims by sending a mocking message. Henry declares war.

The English prepare for war. Among them are three former friends from Henry’s youth: Bardolph, Pistol and Nym, who hope to make a profit from the war. Henry learns of a conspiracy against his life – three nobles, including an old friend, have been paid to kill him. Despite their appeals for mercy, Henry orders that they are executed. Falstaff, a drunken knight, once Henry’s closest friend, dies offstage. Henry arrives in France. He sends a message to the French King demanding he give up his title and threatening a destructive war if these demands are not met.

Outside the French town of Harfleur, Henry gives an impassioned speech to motivate his soldiers. Pistol, Nym, Bardolph and the Boy hang back, wishing they were in a pub instead! During the battle, Henry’s officers, who are from all parts of Britain, discuss the progress of the war. This part of the scene examines the tensions between the four nations. The French town is conquered.

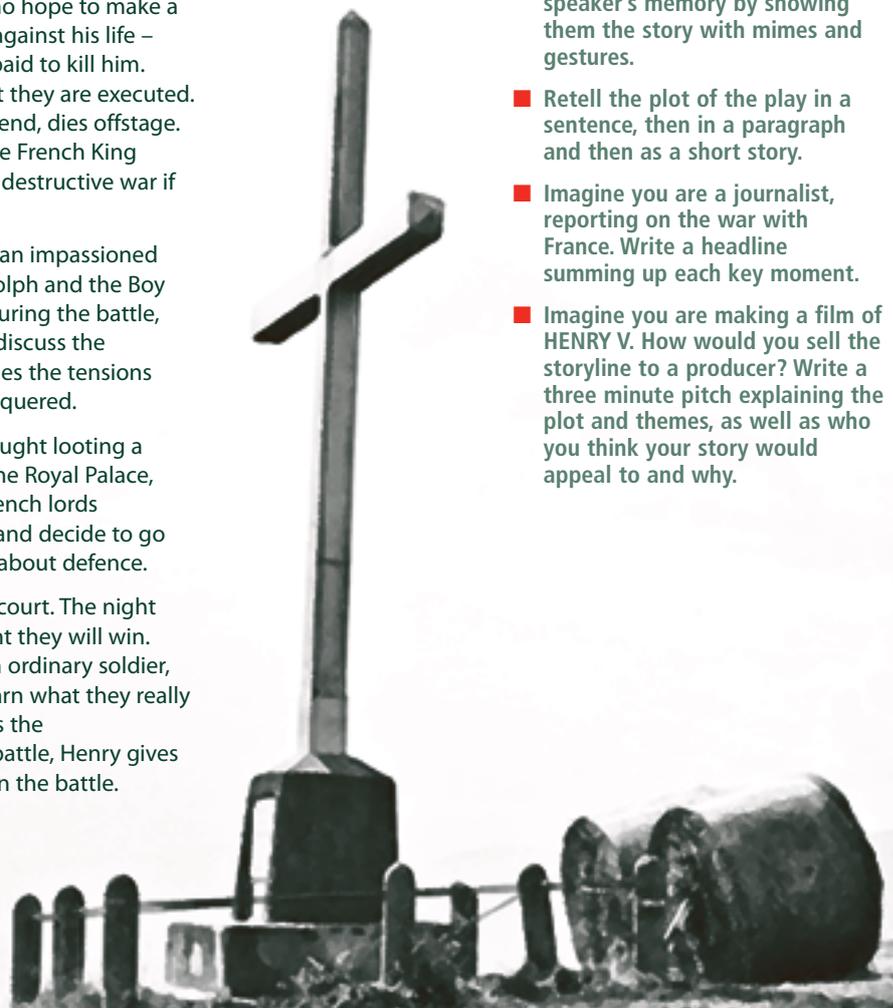
As the English advance, Nym and Bardolph are caught looting a church and are hanged at Henry’s command. In the Royal Palace, Princess Katharine begins to learn English. The French lords underestimate the strength of the English forces and decide to go on the offensive, having previously thought only about defence.

The climax of the war comes at the Battle of Agincourt. The night before, the French are eager to fight and confident they will win. Henry goes into the English camp disguised as an ordinary soldier, so that he can speak to his men as equals, and learn what they really think about the war. When he is alone, he laments the responsibilities of a King. On the morning of the battle, Henry gives an inspiring speech to his soldiers. The English win the battle.

Some time later, peace negotiations are finally worked out: Henry will marry Princess Katharine. Henry’s son will be the King of France, and the marriage will unite the two kingdoms.

## WHY NOT?

- Decide on eight key moments in HENRY V and show them in a series of freeze frames.
- As a group, retell the story of HENRY V. Stand in a circle. One at a time, step into the middle and tell a small part of the story, picking up where the last person left off. Those on the outside of the circle can help to jog the speaker’s memory by showing them the story with mimes and gestures.
- Retell the plot of the play in a sentence, then in a paragraph and then as a short story.
- Imagine you are a journalist, reporting on the war with France. Write a headline summing up each key moment.
- Imagine you are making a film of HENRY V. How would you sell the storyline to a producer? Write a three minute pitch explaining the plot and themes, as well as who you think your story would appeal to and why.



# Good, the king himself going to make...

Williams, Act 4, Scene 1

## Casting HENRY V

The Royal Exchange production will use an ensemble of sixteen actors. This means almost every performer (except for Henry himself) will play at least two different characters. Director Jonathan Munby wanted this doubling to reflect themes and relationships in the play. For example, "Katharine doubles with the unnamed boy from the East Cheap tavern, who we're calling Davy Gum Esq, who is listed in the play as one of the English dead at Agincourt. He dies at around the time Katharine arrives in Henry's life. There is a sense that the boy's death represents the death of Henry's past, while Katharine represents the last step in his journey from boy to man."

To help the Director find the right cast, the Casting Department compile a breakdown briefly describing each part and the qualities an actor would need to play them, for example:

<b>Role:</b>	<b>Katharine/Boy + (Female)</b>
<b>Description:</b>	<b>20s. A singer. An actress who can play both a young woman and a young boy. The boy leaves the Boar's Head with Pistol, Nym and Bardolph only to be embarrassed when they turn out to be cowardly thieves. Princess Katharine enters Henry's life after the Boy is killed in action. She is the daughter of the King of France who marries Henry in order to cement peace between England and France. She speaks very little English. Humour. A challenging double for the right actress.</b>

## WHY NOT?

- In a group, each take on the role of one character from the play. One person is the leader. Walk around the space. When the leader calls, find another character, or group of characters, who you hate. Repeat this, finding someone you like, then someone you love, someone you fear, someone you admire, someone you respect and someone you are jealous of. Use this exercise to think about who the characters are, and how they relate to each other.
- Decide on the doubling for a production of HENRY V. Think about practicalities like who is on stage when, but also about each character's relationship to each other, and the audience.
- Write a casting breakdown for some of the other parts in HENRY V (see list on right). What are the key qualities an actor would need to play each part?
- Using your breakdown to help you, decide which actors from theatre, film or television you would cast in each part. Create your own 'dream cast'!

## SOME OF THE OTHER CHARACTERS IN HENRY V

**King Henry V** – The young, recently crowned King of England.

**Chorus** – A single character who introduces the action.

**The Dukes of Exeter and Westmorland** – Trusted advisors to King Henry and the leaders of his military.

**The Dukes of Clarence and Gloucester** – two of Henry's younger brothers, noblemen and fighters.

**The Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Ely** – Wealthy and powerful English clergymen.

**Cambridge, Scroop and Grey** – Three conspirators who are bribed by French agents to kill Henry before he sets sail for France.

**The King of France** Charles VI.

**The Dauphin** – The son of the King of France and heir to the throne (until Henry takes this privilege from him).

**The Constable of France, Orleans and the Governor of Harfleur** – French noblemen and military leaders.

**Sir Thomas Erpingham** – A wise, aged veteran of many wars who serves with Henry's campaign.

**Captain Gower** – An army captain and a capable fighter who serves with Henry's campaign.

**Captain Llewellyn, Captain MacMorris and Captain Jamy** – The captains of King Henry's troops from Wales, Ireland and Scotland, respectively.

**Pistol, Nym and Bardolph** – Friends from Henry's past, petty criminals, who go to France to fight.

**Michael Williams, John Bates and Alexander Court** – Common soldiers with whom King Henry, disguised, argues with the night before the Battle of Agincourt.

**Hostess** – The keeper of the Boar's Head Tavern, married to Pistol. Also known as Mistress Quickly.

**Alice** – Princess Katharine's maid. Alice has spent time in England and teaches Katharine some English.

**Montjoy** – The French herald, or messenger.

**Monsieur le Fer** – A French soldier who is captured by Pistol at the Battle of Agincourt.

...can this cockpit hold  
The vasty fields of France  
Or may we cram  
Within this wooden O the  
That did affright the air

## Staging the Play

HENRY V opens with the Chorus recruiting the audience to use their imagination, to imagine they are in battlefields, or watching Kings and Queens. Director Jonathan Munby explains, “the play is a celebration of theatre, and theatricality. It is about the power of language and the spoken word to create images.” For the creative team this was the ideal starting point for their production.

### THIS WOODEN O...

Jonathan Munby feels the Royal Exchange Theatre is the ideal space for Shakespeare’s plays, “it places what is important – the spoken word and the actor – centre stage. It creates an intimacy and a personal journey for the audience.” In this way, the Royal Exchange takes us close to the experience of the Globe, the theatre for which Shakespeare was writing.

HENRY V is, according to Jonathan Munby, “a play that asks you to do little in terms of design, a play that really puts the actor and the word in the space and says let’s use our imagination.” Again, this is ideal for the Exchange space. The audience are seated in the round, so there is a danger of blocking sight-lines with elaborately built sets. In HENRY V, the world of the play is created by language, not by scenery.



COSTUME SKETCH FOR ALICE

### ADMIT ME CHORUS TO THIS HISTORY

In this production, the actor playing the Chorus (who introduces each act) also plays a part within the story – Henry’s Uncle and advisor, Exeter. Exeter’s language is nationalistic, patriotic, and at times aggressive in its rhetoric. Jonathan Munby felt that this matched the language of the Chorus. “It struck me that if the Chorus were to cast itself, Exeter was the part it would choose.” The Chorus also playing a character adds to the sense that we are seeing actors putting on a play. We see the transition from performers into characters – at the start of the play two actors walk on stage and are crowned, they become Kings in front of us.

There is a sense that it is the Chorus who has initiated this theatrical event. However, as Jonathan Munby explains, “there’s a point at which the play itself takes on a momentum of its own, and you feel that the Chorus is losing grip on something that it started.” At that point the production will also start to take over, using more expressive theatrical solutions in the staging. The space will begin to move beyond the audience’s imagination and there will be a sense of atmosphere and location being created for us.

### WHY NOT?

- Ask volunteers to perform a short scene for the group. Each time they perform, ask the group to sit in a different formation – in a circle, facing end on, in two parallel lines facing each other (known as traverse staging). Use this to discuss how an audience’s experience changes according to how the space is arranged.
- Look closely at the text and try to find examples of how the world of the play (e.g. location, time of day) is conveyed through the language which Shakespeare uses.
- Consider the location and atmosphere of each scene. Using a public space you are familiar with – an art gallery or museum, a local park, a housing estate – plan a promenade production (where the audience moves round from scene to scene) to capture the atmospheres of the various locations in HENRY V.
- Then, think about how you could recreate these various locations in just one space. How could you use lighting or sound to change the atmosphere?

### WHY NOT?

- Look at one of the Chorus’ speeches in detail. Try and draw the visual images that the speech conjures.
- Try reading one of the Chorus’ speeches aloud in as many different ways as you can – happily, angrily, loudly, in a whisper. Try some silly ways too – in the style of a primary school teacher, or a cheesy radio DJ. Use this exercise to ‘free up’ the speech and find a way of reading that feels comfortable.
- Read the speech again, this time walking around the space. Whenever you think the Chorus is conveying a new thought, feeling or idea change direction.
- As you watch HENRY V, try and identify the point at which you think the Chorus begins to lose control of the play, and the production takes over.

# ance?

The language of the play is real. It is not a heightened poetic landscape, but a mix of verse and prose that create a muddy reality. This is key to the contradictions of war, and to the production.

Jonathan Munby

# the very casques r at Agincourt?

Chorus, Act 1, Prologue

## ... 'TIS YOUR THOUGHTS THAT NOW MUST DECK OUR KINGS

Jonathan Munby says, "the play looks at belief and national identity and what it means to die for a cause. It looks at a world six hundred years ago and finds that very little has changed." With this in mind, Jonathan was keen to set the play in a world the audience would recognise, so that they would not be distanced from the modern resonances.

However, to set the play in a literally modern world would be problematic. In the play, the French talk about riding into battle on horseback, the Catholic faith has a wider influence than today, and the Monarch is the main leader of the people – as if our Queen and Prime Minister were rolled into one. The Creative Team decided they needed to create their own world for the play – a kind of parallel universe which seems like the audience's own, but which is complete in itself. This allows freedom in realising some of the difficulties – when you create your own world it has its own rules.

The costumes in the production are inspired by England in the 1980s, during the Falklands war, but they do not try to literally recreate that period. The English will wear modern combat clothes. Henry and his brothers will also wear combats, and in some scenes, civilian suits – alluding to the way we see the modern monarchy. The French will wear something that reflects the dress uniform of the Gendarmes (French police). The Cheapside lot will be costumed in a way we might recognise from skinhead football culture.

Partly inspired by images from the Falklands, flags and insignia will be important throughout the production. This builds links between the world of the play and our own culture – just think how many St. George's crosses were flown during the 2006 World Cup.

## WHY NOT?

- Before you come to see HENRY V pick out four or five key moments which you feel might be problematic to stage in a contemporary world. During the production, watch for how these problems are solved.
- Compile your own designer's sketch book. For each character in the play, gather images, colours or textures that remind you of them. Like the creative team, don't feel too tied to any one particular period.
- Design your own flag. Think about what it means to be part of a nation, and what aspects of your national identity you'd like your flag to show.

## THINK WHEN WE TALK OF HORSES THAT YOU SEE THEM

Sound and music will help to create the world of the play. Jonathan Munby explains, "we want to use music to tap into the heart of the play, to pick out and reflect the conflicts and tensions." There's live percussion in the production and the metal floor of the set has a percussive quality. The aim is to create something very rhythmic, to capture the sense of the drums and rituals of war.

Music will also be used to reflect the power of the Church and the sense of God in the play. Henry's faith is central to his character. To reflect that, the production will use a choral score sung live by the company, both inside the theatre space and out in the hall.

## WHY NOT?

- Listen to Benjamin Britten's "War Requiem". This is a piece of music from which the creative team have drawn inspiration. As you listen, draw or describe the images that come to you, however abstract.
- Read one of Henry's speeches aloud. Try reading the speech over various pieces of music – solemn, uplifting, frenzied. Discuss the effect each piece of music has on the speech.



PRELIMINARY COSTUME SKETCH FOR HENRY, DRESS UNIFORM

# Beshrew my father's arm He was thinking of civil

## Context and History of HENRY V

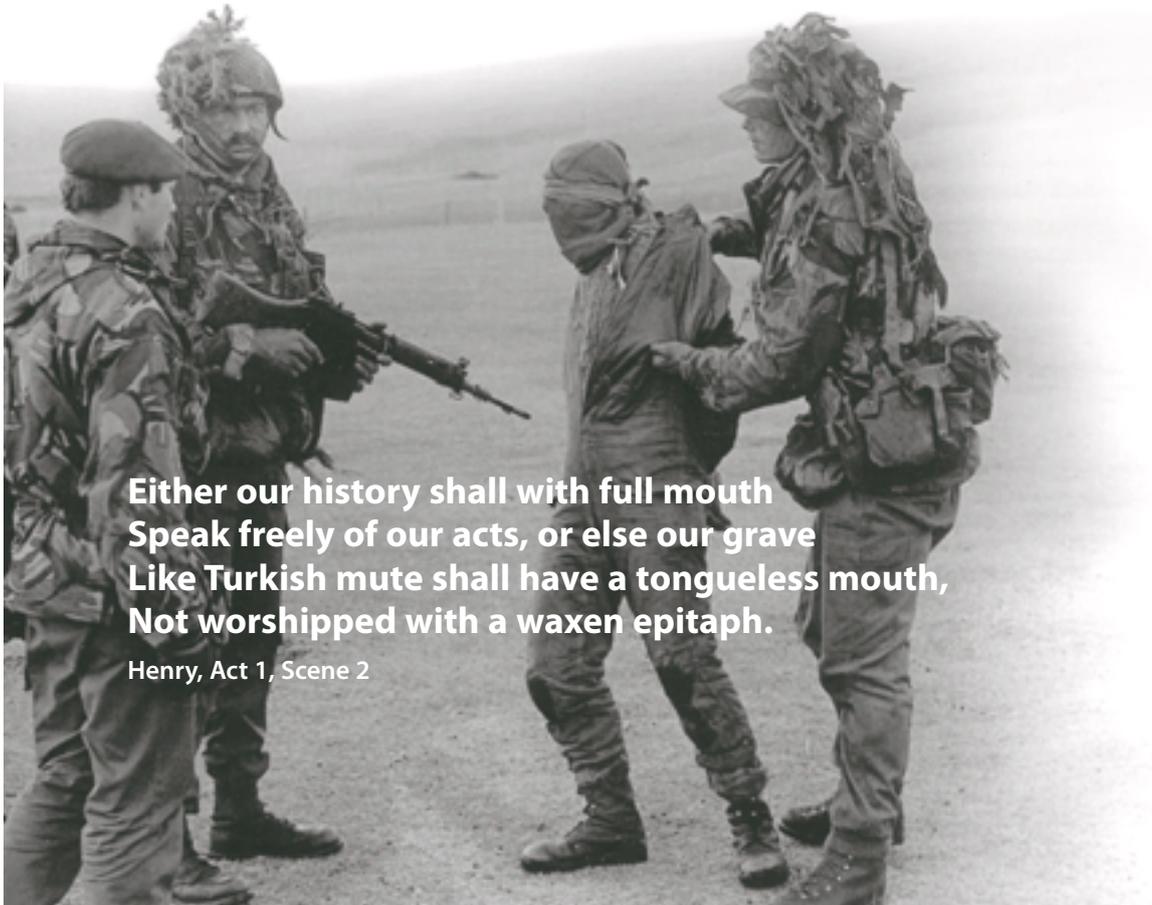
Whatever your age and wherever you're from, you probably have some understanding of 'war'. Perhaps you have elderly relatives who fought in World War Two? Maybe you know someone who has been involved in the recent conflicts in Afghanistan or Iraq? You may even have friends who have fled war zones and who are starting new lives in this country. Whatever your association with 'war' as a word and a concept, you probably have your own ideas about the reasons and justifications for war.

In our modern day understanding of war we hear expressions such as 'fighting for freedom', 'fighting oppression', 'war for oil' and 'fight against terrorism'. In order to examine Henry's battles, we have to understand the history, politics and justifications of a very different age. We also have to look closely at the unusual relationship between England and France. It's a relationship of shared, complex and intertwined histories.

By the time Henry V took the throne in 1413, there had been a war between the two territories, on and off, for 76 years. It would continue for another 40 years and become known as 'The Hundred Year War'.

The whole thing began in 1328 when the French King died without having produced any heirs to his throne. The King of England at the time was Edward III. He was a descendant of William the Conqueror, the Norman invader who had taken the English throne in 1066. Edward was a French speaker and his mother was the French King's aunt. This important bloodline meant that Edward had a better claim to the French throne than any Frenchman.

Sovereignty and national borders were a lot more fluid than now. For instance, what we now know as modern France was then made up of many smaller provinces and principalities, and indeed the English throne already had rule over parts of France. This included the powerful land the Duchy of Aquitaine in the South East of modern France. By starting this conflict Edward was able to free much land from French dependency and claim dukedom over Aquitaine. Thanks to the Norman invasions all those years ago, much of the English aristocracy either considered themselves French, or regarded France fondly as the 'homeland'. At any rate they spoke French and would have supported an attempted move to bring together these two lands under one rule. This one conflict sparked 116 years of fighting.



**Either our history shall with full mouth  
Speak freely of our acts, or else our grave  
Like Turkish mute shall have a tongueless mouth,  
Not worshipped with a waxen epitaph.**

Henry, Act 1, Scene 2

# ambition! wars when he got me.

## Henry, Act 5, Scene 2

Importantly, in the beginning the fighting was not due to hatred, nor the need for any real strategic position. This war was about reclaiming family land. It became a massive inter-family bust up! At a time when the two countries were finding identities and defining themselves as nations, powerful families wrestled power and control, staking their rightful and not so rightful claims to the family lands. As we're all aware, the trouble with family arguments is that everyone wants to have their say. Cousins, aunts, brothers and sisters waded in to take sides. Royalty was no different.

When Edward III died in 1377, he left five sons. His first son, Edward Prince of Wales, would have taken the throne had he not died a year before, in 1376. So the Prince of Wales' son Richard became King. However, another of Edward III's sons, John of Gaunt, was running the parliament at a time of royal restrictions under the 'Council of England'. And so the problems begin....

**Never King of England  
Had nobles richer and more loyal  
subjects,  
Whose hearts have left their bodies  
here in England  
And lie pavilioned in the fields of  
France.**

### Westmorland, Act 1, Scene 2

Two branches of the same family fought for power. John of Gaunt, now Duke of Lancaster through marriage, tried to quell the new King's rising power. John's son, Henry of Bolingbroke, led a group who tried to imprison five of King Richard II's closest advisors. Richard was furious and rounded up these men. He sentenced three to death and banished the two others from the country. 1-0 to Richard! One of the banished men was John's son, Henry of Bolingbroke. Henry bided his time well, and when King Richard left England to calm the warring Irish Chieftains, he was able to return and claim the throne with the backing of the parliament. He became Henry IV. John of Gaunt's side of the family had regained the throne. It was 1-1. This battle for power between two sides of the same family was the start of what is known as 'The War of the Roses'. Two households, the house of Lancaster and the house of York. Even today Yorkshire and Lancashire are referred to as the white and red rose counties respectively.

So we come to our Henry. The man who would become Henry V. He was the eldest of Henry IV's six children. Just imagine the world that he was born into. There were ongoing battles to secure family titles and land in France. The Welsh were uprising against their English neighbours. There were problems in Ireland, and of course his own family were locked in a power struggle for the throne. As a young boy none of this could have bothered him very much. Being born under the reign of his cousin Richard II he was quite far

removed from ever inheriting the throne. Bolingbroke, his father, was banished abroad and the young Henry was cared for by Richard. However, once his father returned a year later and reclaimed the throne, young Henry was suddenly heir to the kingdom, and only 12. By the age of 16, he was in command of the English forces that fought in the battle of Shrewsbury. It was in this fight that he was almost killed by an arrow in his face. It was only due to his status that he lived. He received the best possible care and had nothing but a scar to show for his ordeal.

Henry was 26 when he took the throne after the death of his father. He was known as an energetic and dynamic young man. He was proven as a leader of men in the battlefield, and a shrewd political operator. He certainly differed from his father on lots of matters of state. Even though the disagreements were purely political, many of young Henry's opponents tried to discredit him. It is believed that these rumours are the source of the stories of Henry's supposed 'riotous youth' that Shakespeare writes of in his 'Henry' plays.

Knowing all this, we can now see the truly daunting task the young King gave himself. How to stop the warring of the Scottish, Welsh and English? Is it possible to bring them together to fight as one? Could he convince the country to fight to reclaim French lands and unite the two crowns of England and France? And would all this power cement his family lineage and keep the house of Lancaster in power? Incredibly, by the time Henry died, he had not only consolidated power as the King of England but had also accomplished what his ancestors had failed to achieve through decades of war. He unified the crowns of England and France in a single person. Unfortunately, he died two months too early for it to be him.

## WHY NOT?

- Find out what happened next? Did Henry VI manage to unify the two crowns?
- Find out what happened when the white rose of York and the red rose of Lancaster came together to create the Tudor rose? Who were the Tudors and how do they link to this story?
- Check out how marriage influenced and affected a King or Queen's claim to different territories? Who did Henry V marry and did this harm or improve his claim over French land?



# AND WHY NOT?

- Check out a film version of HENRY V:  
HENRY V, 1944. dir. Laurence Olivier  
HENRY V, 1989. dir. Kenneth Branagh
- Choose a scene from HENRY V to perform. You will need double the number of performers as there are parts in the scene. One set of performers reads the lines as they are written. After each line, a second performer says what the character is really thinking.
- Choose an image of a current world leader – a politician or Monarch. Look closely at their body language and facial expressions. Write a monologue from the point of view of that individual, explaining their private thoughts and feelings. Think about how these may differ from the public image they present.
- Imagine that at the end of the play Henry and Katharine have been invited to hold a press conference. The rest of the group are journalists. Journalists should think about who they are writing for (e.g. a gossip magazine or a serious political newspaper) and how that might affect the kind of questions they ask.
- Imagine you had to produce a resource like this one for younger students. How would you sum up the themes and story of HENRY V in a way which was accessible for a primary school pupil? What activities could you set to help them explore the play?

Edited and produced by Exchange Education, with contributions from Jonathan Munby. With special thanks to Designer Mike Britton whose design sketches are reproduced with his kind permission.

For further information call the Education department on 0161 615 6721.

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United Co-operatives is delighted to be sponsoring the production and education projects for HENRY V. As Your Community Retailer we place great importance on supporting young people's educational opportunities and we are proud to be working with the Royal Exchange to offer these.

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# HENRY V workshops

## INTRODUCING... HENRY V

Wednesdays 26 September and 3 October,  
10am – 12noon

Pre-show introductory workshop aimed at students and their teachers, but open to all. The session will offer a talk and demonstration-based introduction to the play and the production, and there is plenty of opportunity for participant involvement.

Cost: £4 (students, teachers and concessions) /  
£7 (individual full price); Book via Box Office  
on 0161 833 9833

## SHAKESPEARE ON STAGE: A MASTERCLASS FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS AT KS5 AND ABOVE

Thursday 27 September, 10.30am – 1pm

Led by Royal Exchange Director Jacob Murray and working with a team of professional actors, this session will explore practical, accessible approaches to bringing Shakespeare's text off the page, into rehearsal and performance. Ideal for students aged 17+, undergraduates, drama workers and teachers.

Cost: £4 (students and their teachers) /  
£8 (individual full price); Book via Box Office  
on 0161 833 9833

## APPROACHES TO SHAKESPEARE

Thursday 4 October, 6 – 9pm

With a focus on HENRY V, the session will offer practical, accessible, drama-based approaches to working with Shakespeare with teenagers in English and Theatre Studies at KS4 and KS5. Suitable for teachers of English and Drama and Youth Drama workers.

Cost: £25; Book via Box Office on 0161 833 9833

## EVERY PICTURE TELLS A STORY – SCHOOLS' WORKSHOP

Available on various dates. Please book through Education

This dual location workshop will use the art works at Manchester Art Gallery as a stimulus to unlock the story of HENRY V. Starting at the gallery we will draw inspiration from select artworks to reveal the themes and language of the story. Back at the Royal Exchange, we will explore some of these themes in a lively drama workshop. An adaptable workshop suitable for groups aged 12+. For further details and to book, please contact Education on 0161 615 6721