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Advanced Placement in
English Literature and Composition

Teaching Unit
Individual Learning Packet

Richard III

by William Shakespeare

Written by Elizabeth Osborne

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Richard III

Objectives

By the end of this Unit, students will be able to:

1. understand some of the history behind *Richard III*, including
 - the main parties in the Wars of the Roses
 - why the Wars were fought
2. evaluate the historical circumstances in which *Richard III* was written, including
 - major events in 1590s England
 - Elizabeth I's connection to the Wars of the Roses
3. recognize the difference between the historical Richard III and the figure presented in Shakespeare's play.
4. discuss some of Shakespeare's reasons for portraying Richard and other characters the way he does and relate these portrayals to propaganda of the Elizabethan period. Which characters are sympathetic, and how does the playwright make them so?
5. interpret some of Shakespeare's views on the relationship between a ruler and the state. What makes a good monarch?
6. explain the role that the Earl of Richmond plays in *Richard III* and tell what historical moral Shakespeare was delivering through this character's triumph.
7. analyze the process of turning history into drama. Discuss Shakespeare's choices in structuring the play, and why he may have drawn out some historical events, while minimizing others.
8. recognize rhetorical and dramatic devices used in the play.
9. respond to multiple-choice questions similar to those that will appear on the Advanced Placement in English Literature and Composition exam.
10. Respond to free response questions similar to those that will appear on the Advanced Placement in English Literature and Composition Exam.

Richard III

Background Lecture

I. The Wars of the Roses

In order to appreciate *Richard III*, it is important to understand some basic history about the Wars of the Roses and the lineage of Shakespeare's most important patron, the very powerful Queen Elizabeth I.

The Wars of the Roses were a series of battles fought to determine who would control England. There were two factions: the Yorks, represented by a white rose, and the Lancasters, represented by a red rose. The struggle was extremely complicated and long-running. In the end, the winner was neither a York nor a Lancaster, but the founder of the new Tudor dynasty, Henry VII—grandfather of Queen Elizabeth I. In this play, he is still the Earl of Richmond.

Readers of *Richard III* should know the following about the Wars of the Roses:

- Richard, Duke of Gloucester, fought on the side of the Yorks.
- At the Battle of Tewkesbury, Queen Margaret (wife of King Henry VI) and her son Edward, Prince of Wales, fought against Yorkist forces led by Richard and his brother Edward (later King Edward IV). The Lancastrians were defeated; Prince Edward was killed, and King Henry was murdered in the Tower of London shortly thereafter. As the play begins, this battle has just ended; Richard's brother Edward is king, everyone is celebrating, and the corpse of King Henry is being carried to his grave.
- Richard and Edward's brother George, Duke of Clarence, was married to Isabel Neville, the daughter of Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick (called "the Kingmaker"). Warwick expected Clarence to support him in a battle that took place shortly before Tewkesbury, but Clarence instead supported Edward. Warwick was killed in the battle.
- Warwick's other daughter, Lady Anne Neville, was betrothed to the Prince Edward who was killed at Tewkesbury. After Prince Edward's death, Richard pursued and married Anne.
- At the Battle of Wakefield, in 1460, Margaret and her forces were responsible for the death of Richard Plantagenet, 3rd Duke of York, who was the father of Richard, Edward, and Clarence. After the senior Duke's death, his head was supposedly placed on a pike and given a paper crown. Richard mentions this when he speaks to Margaret in Act I, scene iii. He also refers to "pretty Rutland"—this was his youngest brother Edmund, Earl of Rutland, supposedly killed by Margaret's forces.

II. Shakespeare in the 1590s

Richard III is one of Shakespeare's early plays. Born in 1564, Shakespeare was probably not even thirty years old when it was written. The son of a glove maker who was prominent in local affairs, he had moved to London from the country village of Stratford-upon-Avon. He was married to Anne Hathaway in 1582, and the couple had three children. After moving to London, Shakespeare became part of an acting company called the Lord Chamberlain's men. He was both an actor and a playwright for this company. The Lord Chamberlain's Men built their own theatre, called the Globe, in 1599. Shakespeare died in 1616, having written over thirty plays.

III. The "Real" Richard III?

Shakespeare presents Richard III as a pure villain—someone who enjoys causing trouble. Many people have objected to this portrayal of the king, however. They point out that since Richard was an enemy of Henry VII Tudor (Queen Elizabeth's grandfather), much of the portrayal of him in the play is simply negative propaganda. For instance, the feature of Richard that most people remember from the play is his hunchback, but this is an inaccurate detail—historians of the period portrayed him this way because physical deformity was often used to illustrate inner evil. And during his short rule, Richard III did bring about a positive change in England: he started the Council of the North, which improved the economy in the northern part of the country.

In modern times, a society has been established, with branches in England and the United States, dedicated to putting forth an accurate portrayal of Richard III.

As you read the play, try to spot the places where Richard is probably portrayed as more villainous than he really was. How exaggerated do you think the portrayal is? What effect would it have on audiences?

IV. Making History into Drama

Consult the timeline below as you read the play. Watch out for hints in characters' dialogues and gestures that indicate what has recently happened, and compare the pace of events to the timeline. What periods of time has Shakespeare compressed? What scenes does he draw out so that they seem to last a long time?

Some Major Events in the Wars of the Roses:

Battle of Wakefield (Edmund, Earl of Rutland, killed): 1460

Battle of Tewkesbury (deaths of Henry VI and Prince Edward): 1471

Marriage of Anne and Richard: 1472

Death of George, Duke of Clarence: 1478

Death of King Edward IV: 1483

Imprisonment of Princes: 1483

Battle of Bosworth Field (death of Richard, ascendance of Henry VII): 1485

V. Other things to know

Although the play begins in a time of apparent peace, following years of violence and bloodshed, all is not well. King Edward IV's wife, Elizabeth, along with a group of family members and supporters, is fighting with another faction that includes Lord Hastings and Lord Buckingham. There are many rumors circulating about the Queen's abusing her position to bring her supporters to power. As you will see, in the play, Richard takes ample advantage of this.

King Edward the IV and Queen Elizabeth have two sons, Prince Edward and Richard, Duke of York. Upon the death of King Edward, Prince Edward will become king, although he cannot actually rule until he is an adult. Therefore, his uncle Richard (our Richard) is slated to be named Lord Protector; in this position, he must advise and care for the young prince.

The Wars of the Roses were ended by Henry, Earl of Richmond (later Henry Tudor), who defeated Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth Field (1485). Henry became King Henry VII and started the Tudor dynasty, which would have an enormous impact on England and the world. Henry's son, Henry VIII, would be responsible for the English split with the Catholic Church. Later, Henry VIII's daughter, Queen Elizabeth I, would be one of the most important monarchs in English history. Under her power, England would defeat the Spanish Armada in 1588; the 1590s, therefore, saw a rise in English nationalism. Shakespeare's early histories were written during this period of national pride.

Features of Language in *Richard III*

As you read *Richard III*, remember that it is one of Shakespeare's early plays—he is a young writer experimenting with language and trying to impress his audience with his verbal skill.

I. Rhetoric

One of the main goals of the play is to convince the audience of the merit of England's current, Tudor dynasty. But the play's villain also has convincing to do, and he is a rhetorically powerful figure. He skillfully uses rumor and propaganda to undermine his enemies (that is, just about everyone), and no tactic is too low for him: whether he needs to accuse someone of witchcraft, adultery, bigamy, or illegitimacy, he is up to the task—and the person he accuses can be his own brother.

What techniques do you notice Richard using to make his points?

II. Puns

The characters in *Richard III*, along with Shakespeare himself, are fond of wordplay. Notice how often words get twisted so that their meaning is entirely changed. For example, in Act I, Scene ii, Richard and Anne have a lengthy argument in which they play on one another's words and steal one another's phrasing.

III. Figures of Speech

Notice the following figures of speech used by characters in *Richard III*, especially for dramatic impact:

- a. *metonymy*—the representation of something by another thing with which it is closely associated. A common example in English is the use of “White House” to mean the President of the United States.

In the example from *Richard III* below, hats become symbols of authority:
They, for their truth, might better wear their heads
Then some that have accused them wear their hats.

- b. *apostrophe*—an address to someone or something—like an inanimate object or a dead person—that cannot respond. When Lady Anne curses Richard, she says,

O earth, which this blood drink'st, revenge his death!

- c. *personification*—the assignment of human qualities to things that are not human. When Queen Elizabeth laments that words have no power, for instance, she does so by calling them “Poor breathing orators of miseries.”
- d. *oxymoron*—the coupling of two opposite ideas in one phrase. The Duchess of York uses oxymoron when she speaks of “[d]ead life, blind sight,” and a “poor mortal living ghost” in Act IV, scene iv.

iv. Metaphors and Images

Look for the following metaphors and images found in *Richard III*:

- a. *dangerous animals*—Richard is compared to a poisonous insect or reptile.
- b. *disease and infection*—Notice that the idea of sickness does not stop at Richard, but extends to England as a country. England is thought of as a body; the state of the monarch is a sign of her natural health. This was an idea common in the Elizabethan period.
- c. *mirrors and light*—In his opening monologue, Richard compares Edward to the sun. Look for other mentions of light and darkness. Also, imagine the setting of each scene. If you were directing the play, how would you enhance the themes of light and darkness using props and lighting?
- d. *seasons*—The play opens during a metaphorical “summer” for England—war has ended, at least temporarily. Soon, though, it will be autumn, time for a new harvest. What references can you find to planting seeds and reaping fruit?

In addition to these metaphors, look for mention of Richard as a monster and an unnatural creature. The play portrays him as physically misshapen as a way of indicating his inner evil. Would such a portrayal be acceptable today? How would a modern playwright or movie writer show that a character was evil?

Besides Richard’s shape, there are other signs that all is not right in England. Strange natural phenomena are observed. The idea of the natural world behaving strangely in response to a difficult or violent time is common in Shakespeare—in *Julius Caesar*, for instance, lions walk the streets and owls shriek in the middle of the day; in *Macbeth*, the earth shakes and strange screams are heard. What odd things do people see in *Richard III*?

v. Dramatic Devices

- a. *dramatic irony*—This condition occurs when the audience knows an important fact that a character does not. Which characters in *Richard III* fall prey to this condition? (Don’t forget that Shakespeare’s audience was already familiar with the historical events in the play).
- b. *soliloquy*—*Richard III* has some very famous soliloquies (speeches one character makes alone onstage). The opening monologue is one example. Which character seems to be most fond of soliloquies? How do they contribute to the audience’s perception of this character?

Richard III

Practice Free-Response Questions

Practice Free-Response Question 1

In the following passage from Act I, scene iv, Brakenbury, the Lieutenant of the Tower of London, finds his prisoner, the Duke of Clarence, asleep. Write a well-organized essay in which you analyze the contrasting ideas that are paired in his speech, and explain how each pair is related to the others.

BRAKENBURY

Sorrow breaks seasons and reposing hours,
Makes the night morning, and the noon-tide night.
Princes have but their titles for their glories,
An outward honor for an inward toil,
And for unfelt imaginations,
They often feel a world of restless cares,
So that between their titles and low name
There's nothing differs but the outward fame.

Practice Free-Response Question 2

In the following passage from Act I, scene i, Richard, Earl of Gloucester, hears news about the king from Hastings, then lays out his plans for marriage and political advancement. In a well-organized essay, analyze Shakespeare's use of the dramatic convention of soliloquy in this passage.

RICHARD

What news abroad?

HASTINGS

No news so bad abroad as this at home:
The King is sickly, weak and melancholy,
And his physicians fear him mightily.

RICHARD

Now, by Saint Paul, that news is bad indeed.
O, he hath kept an evil diet long,
And overmuch consumed his royal person.
'Tis very grievous to be thought upon.
What, is he in his bed?

HASTINGS

He is.

RICHARD

Go you before, and I will follow you.

Exit *HASTINGS*

He cannot live, I hope, and must not die,
Till George be pack'd with post-horse up to heaven.
I'll in, to urge his hatred more to Clarence,
With lies well steel'd with weighty arguments;
And, if I fail not in my deep intent,
Clarence hath not another day to live:
Which done, God take King Edward to his mercy,
And leave the world for me to bustle in!
For then I'll marry Warwick's youngest daughter.
What though I kill'd her husband, and her father?
The readiest way to make the wench amends
Is to become her husband and her father:
The which will I, not all so much for love,
As for another secret close intent,
By marrying her, which I must reach unto.
But yet I run before my horse to market:
Clarence still breathes; Edward still lives and reigns.
When they are gone, then must I count my gains.

Exit.

Practice Free-Response Question 3

In the following passage from Act III, scene iv, Richard condemns Hastings to execution. In a well-organized essay, explain how Shakespeare creates suspense in this scene.

RICHARD

Cousin of Buckingham, a word with you.
Catesby hath sounded Hastings in our business,
And finds the testy gentleman so hot,
That he will lose his head ere give consent
His master's child, as worshipfully he terms it,
Shall lose the royalty of England's throne.

BUCKINGHAM

Withdraw yourself a while. I'll go with you.

Exeunt RICHARD and BUCKINGHAM

STANLEY

We have not yet set down this day of triumph:
Tomorrow, in my judgment, is too sudden,
For I myself am not so well provided,
As else I would be, were the day prolonged.

Enter THE BISHOP OF ELY

ELY

Where is my Lord the Duke of Gloucester?
I have sent for these strawberries.

HASTINGS

His grace looks cheerfully and smooth this morning.
There's some conceit or other likes him well
When that he bids good morrow with such spirit.
I think there's never a man in Christendom
Can lesser hide his love or hate than he,
For by his face straight shall you know his heart.

STANLEY

What of his heart perceive you in his face
By any livelihood he showed today?

HASTINGS

Marry, that with no man here he is offended:
For were he, he had shown it in his looks.

Enter *RICHARD* and *BUCKINGHAM*

RICHARD

I pray you all, tell me what they deserve
That do conspire my death with devilish plots
Of damned witchcraft, and that have prevailed
Upon my body with their hellish charms?

HASTINGS

The tender love I bear your grace, my Lord,
Makes me most forward, in this princely presence,
To doom th' offenders, whosoe'er they be:
I say, my Lord, they have deserved death.

RICHARD

Then be your eyes the witness of their evil.
Look how I am bewitched! Behold, mine arm
Is like a blasted sapling withered up.
And this is Edward's wife, that monstrous witch,
Consorted with that harlot, strumpet Shore,
That by their witchcraft thus have marked me.

HASTINGS

If they have done this deed, my noble lord—

RICHARD

If? Thou protector of this damned strumpet!
Talk'st thou to me of "ifs"? Thou art a traitor!
Off with his head! Now, by Saint Paul, I swear
I will not dine until I see the same.
Lovell and Ratcliff, look that it be done.
The rest that love me, rise, and follow me.

Exeunt all but *HASTINGS*, *LOVELL*, and *RATCLIFF*

HASTINGS

Woe, woe, for England! not a whit for me;
For I, too fond, might have prevented this.
Stanley did dream the boar did raze our helms,
And I did scorn it and disdain to fly.
Three times to-day my foot-cloth horse did stumble,
And started when he look'd upon the Tower,
As loath to bear me to the slaughter-house.
O, now I need the priest that spake to me!
I now repent I told the pursuivant,
As too triumphing, how mine enemies
Today at Pomfret bloodily were butchered,
And I myself secure in grace and favor.
O Margaret, Margaret, now thy heavy curse
Is lighted on poor Hastings' wretched head!

RATCLIFFE

Come, come, dispatch; the Duke would be at dinner.
Make a short shrift; he longs to see your head.

HASTINGS.

O momentary grace of mortal men,
Which we more hunt for than the grace of God!
Who builds his hope in air of your good looks
Lives like a drunken sailor on a mast,
Ready with every nod to tumble down
Into the fatal bowels of the deep.

LOVELL.

Come, come, dispatch; 'tis bootless to exclaim.

HASTINGS.

O bloody Richard! Miserable England!
I prophesy the fearfull'st time to thee
That ever wretched age hath look'd upon.
Come, lead me to the block; bear him my head.
They smile at me who shortly shall be dead.
Exeunt

Practice Free-Response Question 4

In the following passage from Act IV, scene i, Richard's plans for the princes become clear. In a well-organized essay, examine the view of women that is expressed in this scene.

DUCHESS.

Who meets us here? My niece Plantagenet,
Led in the hand of her kind aunt of Gloucester?
Now, for my life, she's wand'ring to the Tower,
On pure heart's love, to greet the tender princes.
Daughter, well met.

ANNE.

God give your Graces both
A happy and a joyful time of day!

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

As much to you, good sister! Whither away?

ANNE.

No farther than the Tower; and, as I guess,
Upon the like devotion as yourselves:
To gratulate the gentle princes there.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Kind sister, thanks; we'll enter all together.

Enter BRAKENBURY

And in good time, here the lieutenant comes.
Master Lieutenant, pray you, by your leave,
How doth the Prince, and my young son of York?

BRAKENBURY.

Right well, dear madam. By your patience,
I may not suffer you to visit them.
The King hath strictly charged the contrary.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

The King! Who's that?

BRAKENBURY.

I mean the Lord Protector.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

The Lord protect him from that kingly title!
Hath he set bounds between their love and me?
I am their mother; who shall bar me from them?

DUCHESS.

I am their father's mother; I will see them.

ANNE.

Their aunt I am in law, in love their mother.
Then bring me to their sights; I'll bear thy blame,
And take thy office from thee on my peril.

BRAKENBURY.

No, madam, no. I may not leave it so;
I am bound by oath, and therefore pardon me.

Exit *BRAKENBURY*

Enter *STANLEY*

STANLEY.

Let me but meet you, ladies, one hour hence,
And I'll salute your Grace of York as mother
And reverend looker-on of two fair queens.
[To ANNE] Come, madam, you must straight to Westminster,
There to be crowned Richard's royal queen.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Ah, cut my lace asunder,
That my pent heart may have some scope to beat,
Or else I swoon with this dead-killing news!

ANNE.

Despiteful tidings! O unpleasing news!

DORSET.

Be of good cheer; mother, how fares your Grace?

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

O Dorset, speak not to me, get thee gone!
Death and destruction dogs thee at thy heels;
Thy mother's name is ominous to children.
If thou wilt outstrip death, go cross the seas,
And live with Richmond, from the reach of hell.
Go, hie thee, hie thee from this slaughterhouse,
Lest thou increase the number of the dead,
And make me die the thrall of Margaret's curse,
Nor mother, wife, nor England's counted queen.

STANLEY.

Full of wise care is this your counsel, madam.
Take all the swift advantage of the hours;
You shall have letters from me to my son
In your behalf, to meet you on the way.
Be not ta'en tardy by unwise delay.

DUCHESS.

O ill-dispersing wind of misery!
O my accursed womb, the bed of death!
A cockatrice hast thou hatch'd to the world,
Whose unavowed eye is murderous.

STANLEY.

Come, madam, come; I in all haste was sent.

ANNE.

And I with all unwillingness will go.
O, would to God that the inclusive verge
Of golden metal that must round my brow
Were red-hot steel, to sear me to the brains!
Anointed let me be with deadly venom,
And die ere men can say 'God save the Queen!'

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Go, go, poor soul; I envy not thy glory.
To feed my humor, wish thyself no harm.

ANNE.

No, why? When he that is my husband now
Came to me, as I follow'd Henry's corse;
When scarce the blood was well wash'd from his hands
Which issued from my other angel husband,
And that dear saint which then I weeping follow'd—
O, when, I say, I looked on Richard's face,
This was my wish: "Be thou' quoth I 'accurs'd
For making me, so young, so old a widow;
And when thou wed'st, let sorrow haunt thy bed;
And be thy wife, if any be so mad,
More miserable by the life of thee
Than thou hast made me by my dear lord's death."
Lo, ere I can repeat this curse again,
Within so small a time, my woman's heart
Grossly grew captive to his honey words
And proved the subject of mine own soul's curse,
Which hitherto hath held my eyes from rest;
For never yet one hour in his bed
Did I enjoy the golden dew of sleep,
But with his timorous dreams was still awaked.
Besides, he hates me for my father Warwick,
And will, no doubt, shortly be rid of me.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Poor heart, adieu! I pity thy complaining.

ANNE.

No more than with my soul I mourn for yours.

DORSET.

Farewell, thou woeful welcomer of glory!

ANNE.

Adieu, poor soul, that tak'st thy leave of it!

DUCHESS.

[To DORSET] Go thou to Richmond, and good fortune guide thee!

[To ANNE] Go thou to Richard, and good angels tend thee!

[To QUEEN ELIZABETH] Go thou to sanctuary, and good thoughts possess thee!

I to my grave, where peace and rest lie with me.

Eighty odd years of sorrow have I seen,

And each hour's joy wrecked with a week of teen.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Stay, yet look back with me unto the Tower.

Pity, you ancient stones, those tender babes

Whom envy hath immured within your walls,

Rough cradle for such little pretty ones.

Rude ragged nurse, old sullen playfellow

For tender princes, use my babies well.

So foolish sorrows bids your stones farewell. Exeunt

Practice Free-Response Question 5

Many literary works include villains who are malicious, but misunderstood. Although Richard is presented as a traditional villain in this play, can you make the argument that he is really only part of a larger pattern of violence? In a well-organized essay, analyze Richard's level of responsibility for his seemingly villainous behavior.

Practice Free-Response Question 6

In addition to functioning on a literal level, the seasons of the year have an important symbolic function in literature. In a well-organized essay, explain the use of seasonal imagery in *Richard III*, and how this imagery adds meaning to the play.

Practice Free-Response Question 7

In writing theatrical works, a playwright is faced with the challenge of provoking emotions in an audience that will keep them entertained. In a well-organized essay, discuss how Shakespeare uses dramatic devices in *Richard III* to engage his audience's emotions and add meaning to the play.

Practice Free-Response Question 8

In many works of literature, characters experience internal conflicts between honorable and ignoble motivations. In a well-organized essay, examine material gain as a motivating force in *Richard III*. What seems to counteract the appeal of wealth? Provide examples from the play to reinforce your argument.

Richard III

Questions for Research and Discussion

1. What is Richard's ultimate motivation in the play, and how is it related to his appearance? Does his physical deformity explain or excuse his actions? Give examples of different viewpoints on this subject that are expressed in the play.
2. How is Anne portrayed in the play? In particular, is she characterized as intelligent? Why does she agree to marry Richard?
3. Some people see *Richard III* as pro-Tudor propaganda, while others point out that Richmond, the savior of England in the play, is a much less interesting character than Richard. Why might Shakespeare have drawn the characters this way?
4. How much power does Queen Elizabeth have in *Richard III*? What choices does she make? Does she rise or fall in the play?
5. Revenge seems to be important to many of the characters in *Richard III*. How important is the fulfillment of revenge to the conclusion of the play?
6. What conclusions can be drawn from *Richard III* regarding high and low birth? Does noble birth guarantee that a person will be good or successful? Why might Shakespeare have chosen to include ideas on this topic?
7. Infer some of Shakespeare's ideas on government and power from the underlying assumptions in *Richard III*. What makes a good ruler? Compare these ideas to those at the foundation of modern democracy.
8. What is the role of religion in *Richard III*? What religious beliefs do the characters seem to espouse? Where do they mention God, destiny, and fate?

Richard III

Multiple Choice Questions

Practice Multiple Choice Questions 1-5

In the passage below from Act I, Scene IV, George, the Duke of Clarence, who is imprisoned in the Tower of London, describes his nightmare to his jailer. Read the passage carefully before choosing your answers.

Methoughts that I had broken from the Tower
And was embark'd to cross to Burgundy;
And in my company my brother Gloucester,
Who from my cabin tempted me to walk
Upon the hatches. Thence we look'd toward England, 5
And cited up a thousand heavy times,
During the wars of York and Lancaster,
That had befall'n us. As we paced along
Upon the giddy footing of the hatches,
Methought that Gloucester stumbled, and in falling 10
Struck me, that thought to stay him, overboard
Into the tumbling billows of the main.
O Lord, methought what pain it was to drown,
What dreadful noise of waters in my ears,
What sights of ugly death within my eyes. 15
Methoughts I saw a thousand fearful wracks,
A thousand men that fishes gnawed upon,
Wedges of gold, great anchors, heaps of pearl,
Inestimable stones, unvalued jewels,
All scattered in the bottom of the sea. 20
Some lay in dead men's skulls, and in the holes
Where eyes did once inhabit, there were crept—
As 'twere in scorn of eyes—reflecting gems,
That wooed the slimy bottom of the deep
And mocked the dead bones that lay scattered by. 25

1. The word “wracks” in the sixteenth line of the passage most likely means
 - (A.) shipwrecks.
 - (B.) tortures.
 - (C.) hangers.
 - (D.) spirits.
 - (E.) islands.
2. Which device increases the dramatic impact of Clarence’s speech?
 - (A.) understatement
 - (B.) parallelism
 - (C.) onomatopoeia
 - (D.) apostrophe
 - (E.) soliloquy
3. Through his dream, Clarence realizes that
 - (A.) everyone, even his own brother, makes mistakes sometimes.
 - (B.) all of life is only an illusion.
 - (C.) the wealth that men value so much in life is actually unimportant.
 - (D.) not even he can escape death.
 - (E.) death is part of the natural order of things.
4. The gems _____ the eyes of the dead men.
 - (A.) reveal
 - (B.) symbolize
 - (C.) develop
 - (D.) complement
 - (E.) parody
5. In the dream, Clarence is knocked overboard because he
 - (A.) tries to stop his brother from falling.
 - (B.) gets too close to the edge of the ship.
 - (C.) reveals his great wealth to his brother.
 - (D.) becomes dizzy from the ship’s motion.
 - (E.) brings up sad memories about the Yorks and Lancasters.

Practice Multiple Choice Questions 6-10

In the scene below from Act III, scene vii, Buckingham pleads with Richard to accept the crown of England. Read the passage carefully before choosing your answers.

BUCKINGHAM

Then know, it is your fault that you resign The supreme seat, the throne majestic, The scepter'd office of your ancestors, Your state of fortune and your due of birth, The lineal glory of your royal house,	5
To the corruption of a blemished stock: Whilst, in the mildness of your sleepy thoughts, Which here we waken to our country's good, This noble isle doth want her proper limbs; Her face defaced with scars of infamy,	10
Her royal stock graft with ignoble plants, And almost shoulder'd in the swallowing gulf Of blind forgetfulness and dark oblivion. Which to recure, we heartily solicit Your gracious self to take on you the charge	15
And kingly government of this your land, Not as protector, steward, substitute, Or lowly factor for another's gain; But as successively from blood to blood, Your right of birth, your empery, your own.	20
For this, consorted with the citizens, Your very worshipful and loving friends, And by their vehement instigation, In this just suit come I to move your grace.	

6. When Buckingham talks about “stock,” he is discussing
(A.) wealth.
(B.) history.
(C.) intelligence.
(D.) lineage.
(E.) animal breeding.
7. What situation does Buckingham want to “recure,” in line 14?
(A.) the erasure of Richard in the public memory
(B.) the plague that is killing England’s people
(C.) the citizens’ hatred of Richard
(D.) the loss of the English throne to inferior people
(E.) Richard’s takeover of the throne
8. One possibility that Buckingham dismisses is that Richard
(A.) serve as Protector until the current prince comes of age.
(B.) become the chief military general.
(C.) choose a substitute for himself as king.
(D.) take charge of the government.
(E.) go into the priesthood.
9. This passage is best described as a
(A.) petition.
(B.) indictment.
(C.) grievance.
(D.) rumination.
(E.) deliberation.
10. According to Buckingham, _____ are insisting that Richard become king.
(A.) Richard’s ancestors
(B.) divine forces
(C.) the Princes
(D.) some of his friends
(E.) the common people

Practice Multiple Choice Questions 11-15

In the following passage from Act I, scene ii, Richard accosts Lady Anne Neville as she accompanies the corpse of King Henry VI to burial. Read the passage carefully before giving your answers.

GLOUCESTER

Sweet saint, for charity, be not so curst.

LADY ANNE

Foul devil, for God's sake, hence, and trouble us not;
For thou hast made the happy earth thy hell,
Fill'd it with cursing cries and deep exclaims.
If thou delight to view thy heinous deeds,
Behold this pattern of thy butcheries.
O, gentlemen, see, see! dead Henry's wounds
Open their congeal'd mouths and bleed afresh!
Blush, Blush, thou lump of foul deformity;
For 'tis thy presence that exhales this blood
From cold and empty veins, where no blood dwells;
Thy deed, inhuman and unnatural,
Provokes this deluge most unnatural.
O God, which this blood madest, revenge his death!
O earth, which this blood drink'st, revenge his death!
Either heaven with lightning strike the murderer dead,
Or earth, gape open wide and eat him quick,
As thou dost swallow up this good king's blood
Which his hell-govern'd arm hath butchered!

GLOUCESTER

Lady, you know no rules of charity,
Which renders good for bad, blessings for curses.

LADY ANNE

Villain, thou know'st no law of God nor man:
No beast so fierce but knows some touch of pity.

GLOUCESTER

But I know none, and therefore am no beast.

LADY ANNE

O wonderful, when devils tell the truth!

11. Which of the following does not occur in Lady's Anne's speech?
- (A.) alliteration
 - (B.) understatement
 - (C.) parallelism
 - (D.) personification
 - (E.) apostrophe
12. What happens as Lady Anne is denouncing Richard?
- (A.) The corpse of King Henry blushes.
 - (B.) Lightning strikes.
 - (C.) She sees King Henry's mouth open.
 - (D.) Rain begins to fall.
 - (E.) The dead body begins to bleed.
13. The tone of the word "wonderful" in this passage could best be described as
- (A.) amazed.
 - (B.) sarcastic.
 - (C.) doubtful.
 - (D.) angry.
 - (E.) amused.
14. Richard says that Anne is violating "the rules of charity." What does Anne say Richard is violating?
- (A.) good manners
 - (B.) divine law
 - (C.) his duty to the dead king
 - (D.) the traditions of England
 - (E.) her freedom
15. The word "curst" here most likely means
- (A.) upset.
 - (B.) ignorant.
 - (C.) evil.
 - (D.) unkind.
 - (E.) loud.

Practice Multiple Choice Questions 16-20

Richard delivers the following soliloquy in Act I, scene ii, after he has successfully wooed Lady Anne. The corpse of Anne's father-in-law, King Henry VI, is in a coffin nearby. Read the passage carefully before giving your answers.

My dukedom to a beggarly denier,
I do mistake my person all this while:
Upon my life, she finds, although I cannot,
Myself to be a marvellous proper man.
I'll be at charges for a looking-glass,
And entertain some score or two of tailors,
To study fashions to adorn my body:
Since I am crept in favor with myself,
I will maintain it with some little cost.
But first I'll turn yon fellow in his grave;
And then return lamenting to my love.
Shine out, fair sun, till I have bought a glass,
That I may see my shadow as I pass.

16. Richard's tone in this passage is
 - (A.) amazed.
 - (B.) cocky.
 - (C.) angry.
 - (D.) relieved.
 - (E.) frightened.
17. Why, according to Richard, can he now hire tailors to make him clothes?
 - (A.) He has effectively exchanged his dukedom for love.
 - (B.) Once married to Anne, he will have the money to buy clothes.
 - (C.) Since he has won Anne, he must be an attractive man after all.
 - (D.) It will not cost him as much as he thought to have clothes made.
 - (E.) He will know what fashions to wear, having studied them.
18. Judging by the tone of this passage, what does Richard really think of physical beauty?
 - (A.) It is temporary, but important.
 - (B.) It is silly.
 - (C.) Happiness depends on it.
 - (D.) It is the most proper thing for a man.
 - (E.) It is too expensive to maintain.

19. The word *proper* here means
- (A.) intelligent.
 - (B.) good.
 - (C.) wealthy.
 - (D.) attractive.
 - (E.) polite.
20. The language Richard uses to describe King Henry is
- (A.) mocking.
 - (B.) respectful.
 - (C.) mournful.
 - (D.) frightened.
 - (E.) loving.

Practice Multiple Choice Questions 21-25

In the following passage from Act IV, scene iv, Queen Margaret describes her reaction to what has happened. Read the passage carefully before giving your answers.

So now prosperity begins to mellow
And drop into the rotten mouth of death.
Here in these confines sily have I lurk'd
To watch the waning of mine enemies.
A dire induction am I witness to,
And will to France, hoping the consequence
Will prove as bitter, black, and tragical.
Withdraw thee, wretched Margaret. Who comes here?

21. In this passage, Margaret speaks of herself as
 - (A.) a soldier in a battle.
 - (B.) the audience of a play.
 - (C.) a prisoner in a jail.
 - (D.) the witness to a crime.
 - (E.) the sun shining on the Earth.
22. The word “induction” refers to
 - (A.) the first part of the unfolding tragedy.
 - (B.) the consequences of Margaret’s actions.
 - (C.) the place where Margaret has “lurk’d.”
 - (D.) Margaret herself.
 - (E.) the “rotten mouth of death.”
23. The last line reveals that this passage is a(n)
 - (A.) dialogue.
 - (B.) satire.
 - (C.) apostrophe.
 - (D.) soliloquy.
 - (E.) invocation.
24. What will Margaret do now?
 - (A.) She will pray for the destruction of her enemies.
 - (B.) She will begin deciding what to leave to her heirs.
 - (C.) She will remain to watch her enemies be destroyed.
 - (D.) She will depart for France.
 - (E.) She will prepare herself for death.
25. The “prosperity” that Margaret mentions in the first line is
 - (A.) her own.
 - (B.) her enemies’.
 - (C.) England’s.
 - (D.) the royal family’s.
 - (E.) her friends’.

Practice Multiple Choice Questions 26-30

In the following exchange from Act IV, scene iv, Richard attempts to persuade Queen Elizabeth to woo her daughter for him. Read the passage carefully before giving your answers.

KING RICHARD.

You speak as if that I had slain my cousins.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Cousins, indeed; and by their uncle cozen'd
Of comfort, kingdom, kindred, freedom, life.
Whose hand soever lanc'd their tender hearts,
Thy head, all indirectly, gave direction:
No doubt the murderous knife was dull and blunt
Till it was whetted on thy stone-hard heart,
To revel in the entrails of my lambs.
But that still use of grief makes wild grief tame,
My tongue should to thy ears not name my boys
Till that my nails were anchor'd in thine eyes;
And I, in such a desperate bay of death,
Like a poor bark, of sails and tackling reft,
Rush all to pieces on thy rocky bosom.

26. The only reason Elizabeth will not madly attack Richard is that
- (A.) she does not know for sure that he killed the boys.
 - (B.) her grief is so constant that it has become dull.
 - (C.) she does not want to think about the boys' deaths.
 - (D.) she is afraid of him.
 - (E.) she is not able to speak the boys' names.
27. The meter of the second line of Elizabeth's response is
- (A.) breathlessly fast.
 - (B.) quick, then slow.
 - (C.) slow and deliberate.
 - (D.) irregular and chaotic.
 - (E.) gently rocking.

28. Elizabeth makes a play on the word “cousins” and “cozen’d,” which most likely means
- (A.) tired.
 - (B.) cheated.
 - (C.) embraced.
 - (D.) killed.
 - (E.) related.
29. Elizabeth says she would attack Richard like
- (A.) a wrestler bringing down an opponent.
 - (B.) an anchor falling to the bottom of the sea.
 - (C.) a dog that can no longer move.
 - (D.) a dangerous ocean wave.
 - (E.) a boat that has lost its sails.
30. The final metaphor Elizabeth uses shows that
- (A.) she knows Richard will never feel pity for her.
 - (B.) she fears she will die soon.
 - (C.) she thinks of Richard as a strong man.
 - (D.) she is getting over the death of her sons.
 - (E.) she believes Richard will act quickly.

Richard III

Answers with Explanations

1. **Choice A.** The word “wracks” here means “wrecks” or “shipwrecks”; it becomes clear as Clarence goes on that he is seeing the futility of wealth in the form of treasure-laden ships that never reached their destinations. Although the word is a homonym for *wracks*, which means “causes pain,” and also sounds like *rack*, an instrument of torture, there is no mention of pain or suffering in the lines that follow, so choice B makes less sense than choice A. *Wracks* also sounds like *racks*, meaning “hangers,” but that makes no sense in context, so choice C can be eliminated. Although Clarence says that the men he saw were dead, they are “gnawed upon” by fish. For that reason, it is unlikely that they are disembodied spirits (choice D). And finally, as the wracks are underwater, it is unlikely that they are islands (choice E).
2. **Choice B.** Understatement (Choice A) is not employed by Clarence in his emotional speech. B, parallelism, is used in this passage to emphasize Clarence’s state of mind. For instance, he reinforces the horror of “what pain it was to drown” by explaining “[w]hat dreadful noise of waters” he heard and “[w]hat sights of ugly death” he saw. And a few lines later, he uses a repetitive structure to describe “[i]nestimable stones, unvalued jewels.” Choice C, onomatopoeia, is not used; neither Clarence nor Shakespeare imitates any sounds, in this passage. Neither apostrophe (choice D) nor soliloquy (Choice E) are appropriate, since Clarence is addressing his jailer throughout the speech.
3. **Choice C.** Clarence’s brother does stumble in the dream, but this is not what Clarence dwells on, so we can assume that choice A does not summarize his realization. Clarence notices the illusory quality of wealth (Choice C), not life (Choice B). He sees the treasure of the ship lying at the bottom of the ocean, mocking the men who devoted their lives to it. His own relationship to death (Choice D) is not really examined here, and while he does note that death is inevitable, he finds it horrible, not reassuring (Choice E).
4. **Choice E.** The gems reveal not eyes (Choice A), but their absence. Choice B is not the best choice because the precious stones are not mere symbols for the missing organs. Choice C makes little sense—the gems do not develop the idea or image of eyes. Nor do they complement (Choice D) eyes. Clarence says that the gems he saw replaced the eyes “as ‘twere in scorn,” and that they “mocked” the bones and “woo’ed” the empty sea bed. Hence, they parody (Choice E) living human eyes.
5. **Choice A.** Clarence says he “thought to stay” Richard. The two brothers were walking along the edge of the ship (Choice B) and discussing previous events (Choice E), but it was Clarence’s attempt to stop Richard that led to his own demise. Although Clarence mentions wealth in the passage (Choice C), it is not his and does not cause his fall. The hatches on which they walk are high and precarious (“giddy”), but they alone do not cause Clarence to fall, so Choice D is not correct.

6. **Choice D.** Buckingham's main argument in his "plea" to Richard is that the princes are not genetically entitled to the throne. Wealth (Choice A) is not part of his reasoning. History (Choice B) does play a part, since Buckingham brings up Richard's ancestors, but the language and images that surround both uses of the word "stock"—the contrast with "lineal glory," the ideas of corruption and blemish, and the comparison to a strong tree grafted with a weaker specimen—make it clear that Buckingham only cares about bloodline (Choice D). Nothing else—not intelligence (Choice C) nor governing ability (Choice E) is even brought up; it is Richard's "right of birth" that trumps everything.
7. **Choice D.** According to Buckingham, the English throne is in danger of falling to people who are not in the proper line of succession. He stresses that these people are "ignoble" and "blemished"—in other words, genetically inferior. This is the situation that he wants to "recure," or remedy. Although Buckingham does mention "blind forgetfulness and dark oblivion," he is not warning that anyone has forgotten Richard (Choice A), but that the country may forget its royal heritage. There is no mention of a plague (Choice B). Buckingham says that the citizens want Richard to become king, not that they hate him (Choice C) or think he is too powerful (Choice E).
8. **Choice A.** Richard could become the Lord Protector instead of the king, but Buckingham brings up this possibility only to dismiss it. Being Lord Protector, he says, is beneath Richard, who should rule because of his natural right. The "charge" Richard should "take on" is not military, but governmental, so Choice B is incorrect. Buckingham does use the word "substitute," but it refers to Richard himself, not some other person he might choose, so Choice C is also wrong. Buckingham *wants* Richard to take control, so he certainly does not dismiss the idea in Choice D. Finally, although Buckingham mentions Richard's "worshipful" supporters, he never brings up the priesthood (Choice E).
9. **Choice A.** A "petition" is a request or appeal. In this passage, Buckingham is petitioning Richard; his primary goal is to convince him to take the throne. While Buckingham does complain that the throne is currently occupied by "blemished stock," his speech is neither an indictment (Choice B) nor a grievance (Choice C) because his primary motivation is not to accuse or to complain. Rather, Buckingham makes accusations against the current monarchs in order to urge Richard to take action. Rumination (Choice D) and deliberation (Choice E) are ruled out by the fact that Buckingham has a very deliberate goal in this speech. He is not merely attempting to decide what should happen; he is attempting to instruct Richard in what he should do.
10. **Choice E.** "[T]he citizens" have urged Buckingham to speak to Richard, says Buckingham. Richard's ancestors (Choice A) held the throne that he, as a person of royal blood, must take, but are not the ones actively urging him to rule. Buckingham implies that it is Richard's destiny to rule, but does not mention God (Choice B). No princes (Choice C) are directly mentioned. When Buckingham does mention Richard's "loving friends" (Choice D), he is using this phrase to describe the citizens.

11. **Choice B.** Lady Anne's speech is very dramatic; understatement is a tool she does not use. She utilizes alliteration ("the happy earth thy hell," "cursing cries"), so Choice A is not correct. She uses parallelism (Choice C) when she repeats the order to "revenge his death." She personifies the earth (Choice D) as something that can eat and drink; she also addresses it in an apostrophe (Choice E).
12. **Choice E.** When Lady Anne says "Blush, blush," she is addressing Richard; this is made clear in the next line. Choice A, therefore, is not correct. Later, she calls for lightning to strike "the murderer" (Richard) dead, but there is no indication that this happens, so Choice B can also be eliminated. The "congealed mouths" (Choice C) and "deluge" (Choice D) refer to the body's wounds and the blood coming from them. The body "exhales this blood," even though Henry has been dead for some time.
13. **Choice B.** Lady Anne may be said to be amazed (Choice A), doubtful (Choice C), and angry (Choice D), but she combines all of these emotions in her sarcastic explanation. The only choice that can be ruled out altogether is Choice E; she is far from amused.
14. **Choice B.** Anne says that Richard, a "foul devil," knows "no law of God nor man." He accuses her of being rudely emotional, but she is in no mood to be scolded for her manners (Choice A). Although she laments the death of King Henry, she says nothing here about Richard's duty to him (Choice C). She dwells on the monstrosity of Richard's actions in the eyes of God and man, not his violation of England's traditions (Choice D) or her own rights (Choice E).
15. **Choice D.** Richard invokes "charity" and "the rules of charity"; he is urging Anne to exercise the Christian virtue of forgiveness. He is not merely pleading with her to calm down (Choice A); rather, he gently rebukes her for straying from her moral code. He says nothing about her ignorance (Choice B). Although he calls Anne "sweet saint," and despite the Christian overtones to his speech, he is not saying she is an evil person (Choice C). And, although she is probably loud (Choice D), what is most important is that his feelings are (supposedly) hurt.
16. **Choice B.** Although Richard does express amazement (Choice A), it is of the sarcastic variety; his main emotion is pride in his own victory, which he attributes to his superior intelligence. He is not angry (Choice C) or afraid (Choice E). He feels triumph, not relief (Choice D).
17. **Choice C.** Choice A is incorrect because Richard's opening statement, "My dukedom to a beggarly denier!" is simply an exclamation of amazement (so Choice A is out). It was not absence of money (Choices B and D) or ignorance of fashion (Choice E) that kept him from the tailor's shop, but a lack of the one thing that would supposedly prove his worth. Richard crows that he can have a whole suit of clothes made, now that he has won a woman's love. His logic proceeds backwards from the successful courtship to his own implied physical attractiveness.

18. **Choice B.** Richard mocks physical beauty in this passage. He pretends that it has been his only concern all along, and now he can finally see himself as handsome. He makes exaggerated plans like the hiring of a “score or two of tailors” which he can keep on at “some little cost.” Since he finds the whole idea of fashion so amusing, we can assume that Choice A is not correct. He does suggest that one must be attractive to be loved (Choice C), but that does not make physical appearance truly meaningful to him. His use of the word “proper” (Choice D) is sarcastic. He acknowledges that fashion is expensive (Choice E), but jeers that it is worth the cost.
19. **Choice D.** Richard says that Anne must find him “a marvellous proper man.” He dwells on both his own newly-discovered attractiveness and his surprise at it. He does not mention intelligence (Choice A). Because he discusses fashion, we must assume that “proper” here means “good-looking,” not merely “good” (Choice B). He brings up wealth (Choice C) only in speaking of how much he will now spend on clothes; it has nothing to do with Anne’s perception of him. And manners (Choice E) are not his central topic either.
20. **Choice A.** Richard does not say that he will depart to bury King Henry; he says he will “turn him in his grave.” He also calls him “yon fellow.” This suggests that Henry is a nobody, not a king. Richard plans to simply dump the body in the grave. As such, he is not being respectful (Choice B) or loving (Choice E). Although he says he will “return lamenting,” he is referring to the show of sorrow he will put on; he is not really mournful (Choice C). And nothing in his speech suggests that he is frightened (Choice D).
21. **Choice B.** Margaret describes herself as someone watching from the wings of a play. The “induction” is the first part of a play. The “consequence,” which she hopes will be “tragical,” is yet to come. Margaret does not use military language (Choice A). She speaks of “confines,” but not those of a prison—she lurks there on purpose. She is a witness (Choice D) to the play, not a crime. Choice E has little relevance to the passage.
22. **Choice A.** We can tell that the “induction” is the first part of something, because Margaret mentions the “consequence,” or second part, directly afterwards. She hopes this consequence “will prove as bitter, black, and tragical” as the induction, so we know they are not the same thing (Choice B). Her wording suggests that an “induction” is something that plays out, not a person, as Choice D says, or a place (Choice C). The “rotten mouth of death” (Choice E) is part of a metaphor Margaret uses to describe the general destruction she is seeing.
23. **Choice D.** Margaret is speaking to herself, so this is a soliloquy. As soon as someone else approaches, she hides, so we know this is not a dialogue (Choice A). She is not mocking anything (Choice B). Because she addresses herself, this is not apostrophe (Choice C), and she does not call upon anyone for help (Choice E).

24. **Choice D.** Margaret says that she has been watching the destruction of her enemies—she does not have to pray for it (so Choice A is out). Now she will leave for France, hoping that the destruction will continue. The verb “will” in this passage means “will go,” so Choice B is not correct. She will not remain (Choice C), and says nothing about preparing herself for death (Choice E).
25. **Choice B.** Margaret expands upon her opening metaphor by noting “the waning of [her] enemies.” She does not make clear exactly who her enemies are—they could be the members of the royal family (Choice D), or she could even be hoping for destruction of the country (Choice B), but neither of these choices is the best, based on the evidence. She does not seem to be celebrating her own demise (Choice A) or that of her friends (Choice E).
26. **Choice B.** Elizabeth says “still use of grief makes wild grief tame.” She has no doubt that Richard is responsible for her children’s death, so Choice A is not right. She seems to be thinking of nothing but the children’s death, so Choice C is not correct. Her language is not restrained, so we can guess that she is not speaking out of fear (Choice D). She says that if she were not numb, she would not name the boys until she had attacked Richard; she does not say she cannot name the boys at all (Choice E).
27. **Choice C.** Elizabeth’s second line contains five separate nouns. All but the last are two syllables long, with stress on the first syllable; we can imagine Elizabeth jabbing her finger at Richard with each word to emphasize it. The last word—“life”—is the most emphatic. She does not rush through this line at any point (Choice A or B). The meter is very deliberate, not chaotic (Choice D). There is nothing gentle (Choice E) about it.
28. **Choice B.** The boys, who are now dead, cannot be said to be tired (Choice A) of life. Replacing “cozen’d” with “embraced” (Choice C) does not make sense. The entire phrase “cozen’d them...life” is synonymous with “killed” (Choice D); “cozen’d” alone is not a synonym for “killed.” Choice E, “related,” sounds like it might be right because of the sound similarity between “cousins” and “cozen’d,” but it is clear that Elizabeth is talking about the murder of the boys. The items in the second line are things he stole from them.
29. **Choice E.** Nothing in Elizabeth’s language suggests wrestling (Choice A). She uses the word “anchor” (Choice B), but only to describe how she would sink her fingers into Richard’s eyes if she could. It becomes clear that “bark” is a synonym for “boat” when she says “of sails and tackling reft,” so we know it is not a dog or a wave (Choices C and D).
30. **Choice A.** Elizabeth says that if she were not overcome with her grief, she would attack Richard like a boat crashing itself to pieces on a rocky shore. Her comparison of Richard to the rocky shore makes it clear that she has no hope of winning his sympathy or changing him. Although she perceives that such an act would mean her own destruction, she does not seem to fear death (Choice B). She thinks of Richard as a hard man, not a strong one (Choice C). The death of her sons has made her wish that she could attack him and die, so Choice D is not the right one. She, not Richard, is the active one in the metaphor, so Choice E is wrong.

Richard III

Advanced Placement in English Literature and Composition Teaching Unit

Study Guide Teacher's Copy

Act I, Scene i

1. We know that this play takes place during the Wars of the Roses. What has happened just before the play begins? How can you tell?

England has been involved in intense fighting, but is now peaceful. Richard describes the military trappings that have been transformed into signs of peace. This is a time for courting, not fighting. The “son of York,” Richard’s brother Edward, is king.

2. What dramatic technique does Shakespeare use to open the play? What does it tell us about Richard?

The opening speech of the play is a soliloquy by Richard—a speech he delivers while no one else is on stage. It allows the audience to “eavesdrop” on his thoughts, and also establishes him as a secretive, plotting person.

3. What images does Richard use to describe Edward in his opening speech? What images does he use for himself?

He calls Edward “this glorious son,” with a play on “sun,” and speaks of “this glorious summer” that Edward’s rule brings. Edward is associated with light and warmth. Richard, however, must stay away from the “looking glass,” or mirror, another source of light, because he is unattractive. He can only see his own shadow by looking at the sun (Edward). However, we also get clues here that Edward is not the perfect king: “instead of mounting barbed steeds/ To fright the souls of fearful adversaries, / He capers nimbly in a lady’s chamber/ To the lascivious pleasing of a lute.” Edward loves pleasure, and this may not be the best quality for a king.

4. Richard announces his plan to turn the Duke of Clarence and King Edward against one another. Check the timeline in the introduction to this unit. In what year was Clarence actually killed? Why might Shakespeare have put his imprisonment at this point?

The real Duke of Clarence died in 1478, seven years after the Battle of Tewkesbury. Shakespeare characterizes Richard by tying together his hatred of Edward and irritation at Edward’s ascendancy and his plot to eliminate the Duke of Clarence. Thus, Richard becomes a super-villain.

5. What terms does Richard use here that alert us to his idea of himself as stage master, almost like a playwright manipulating the actors around him?

He says "Plots have I laid, inductions dangerous..." There are two meanings to the word "plot" here: as Richard uses it, the word means "a scheme," especially one to break a law or harm someone. A plot is also the thread of what happens in a story. The "plot" he has come up with will also be the plot of the play.

6. Why is the prophecy that lands Clarence in the tower ironic?

King Edward has heard (from Richard) that someone whose first name begins with "G" will harm his children, the princes. However, it is not the Duke of Clarence, whose name is George, but Richard, the Duke of Gloucester, who is Edward's enemy. The prophecy is correct, but Edward has interpreted it incorrectly.

7. What reason does Richard give for the "inductions dangerous" he is about to perform?

Richard says that, because he is deformed, he cannot participate in the general flirtation and partying; therefore, he will "prove a villain."

8. Why, according to Richard, was Hastings sent to the Tower?

Hastings is an enemy of Queen Elizabeth and her brother.

9. What do we learn about King Edward from Richard's conversation with Clarence?

According to Richard and Clarence, and perhaps general opinion, Edward's Queen, Elizabeth, has too much power over the king. Richard sarcastically comments that soon all men will have to be her slaves if they want to keep on the king's good side. They also mention Jane Shore, the king's mistress.

10. What does Hastings say he will do now that he is out of prison?

He will have revenge on those people (i.e., the Queen and her supporters) who sent him to the Tower.

11. What do Richard and Hastings say about King Edward?

Hastings reports that the king is "sickly, weak, and melancholy," and may die soon. Richard blames this on Edward's gluttony. It is a bad time for England.

12. Why must Clarence die before Edward?

Only Edward can order Clarence's death, so Richard needs Edward to remain alive until Clarence is killed.

Act I, Scene ii

1. In scene i, we learned that a time of fighting had just ended. What further evidence of the date do we get in this scene? Why do you think Shakespeare arranges the timing of the play the way he does?

In scene i, Anne is accompanying the corpse of King Henry VI to burial. King Henry was murdered in the Tower of London right after the Battle of Tewkesbury, so we can assume that the current scene is soon after that battle. Shakespeare merges the death of Henry with the wooing of Anne; he graphically represents Richard's villainy by having him seduce Anne right over the coffin of her father-in-law, whom he murdered.

2. What animals does Anne mention in conjunction with Richard?

She mentions wolves, spiders, toads, and "any creeping thing that lives." These animals evoke ideas of witchcraft and the supernatural.

3. What does Anne wish for Richard's future offspring?

She hopes that Richard's child will be a monster, with "ugly and unnatural aspect," reflecting in its appearance the evil deeds of Richard.

4. What strange thing happens as Anne begins to address Richard?

The corpse of King Henry begins to bleed.

5. What do we learn about Lady Anne's character from her encounter with Richard?

Lady Anne is as intelligent as Richard is; she is able to keep up with him in the argument. However, she seems powerless against his words.

6. How does Richard win Anne over?

He appeals to both her vanity and her sense of morality. He also maximizes the dramatic effect of his pleas by begging Anne to kill him, baring his chest, and handing her the sword.

7. What metaphor from his opening speech in Scene I does Richard echo here?

He urges the sun to shine so that he may see his own shadow; eventually, he will have a mirror in which he can see himself. Perhaps when he says "[buy] a glass," he means persuade someone (like Anne) to bear his child.

8. What is Richard's mood at the end of this scene? What words and phrases show this?

He is triumphant and cocky. He uses casual expressions like "upon my life" and "My dukedom to a beggarly denier," laughs aloud, repeats himself for emphasis, and calls the dead king "yon fellow."

Act I, Scene iii

1. What is the general mood in England, judging by the conversation before Richard comes in?

Everyone seems to be arguing, and rumors are circulating. No one knows what to believe. Queen Elizabeth is fearful about the future.

2. Why, according to Richard, does he “have need of” Elizabeth? What does he suggest she is doing?

He says that the Duke of Clarence is in prison because of Elizabeth. He hints that she is giving power to common people at the expense of the nobility.

3. What curse does Margaret lay on Elizabeth?

Margaret prays that Elizabeth will, as she has, lose her son. She also prays that Elizabeth will see another woman take her place, and that she and her supporters will die before their time.

4. What does Margaret wish for Richard?

She hopes that he will feel her curse in the full ripeness of his sins. She also hopes that he will be unable to sleep and that he will have nightmares.

5. Why does Richard say, in an aside, that it is good to pray for the enemies of Elizabeth and her family?

He realizes that if he had cursed these enemies, he would have cursed himself. He, unlike other characters in the play, understands that language can have a double meaning.

6. What plan does Richard reveal when Elizabeth and her retinue have left?

He is going to tell Lords Buckingham, Hastings, and Derby that Queen Elizabeth and her allies imprisoned Clarence. When they respond in anger, he will advise restraint. Doing so will make him seem Christian and compassionate.

Act I, Scene iv

1. Describe Clarence's dream. What is its significance?

Clarence dreams that he has broken out of the Tower and boarded a boat to France (specifically Burgundy, which is in the center of the country). Richard, who is also there, persuades him to walk along the side of the boat; while they walk, they talk about their experiences during the Wars of the Roses. Richard falls and knocks Clarence overboard; Clarence then experiences his own death by drowning. As he dies, he sees jewels at the bottom of the sea.

The dream does not end with Clarence's death; he is carried across the river of the underworld by Charon, the ferryman of the dead in Greek and Roman mythology. In hell, Clarence meets his father-in-law, the Earl of Warwick, against whom he sided at the Battle of Barnet (resulting in Warwick's death). He also sees Edward, Prince of Wales (the son Margaret referred to earlier) who died at the Battle of Tewkesbury at the age of seventeen. Edward orders the Furies (Greek goddesses of revenge) to torture Clarence.

The dream reveals Clarence's fear of Richard, although he is not conscious of such fear in his waking life. It also shows the guilt he feels at turning against Warwick and murdering Prince Edward.

2. What does Clarence do after he tells the jail keeper about his dream? Why is this significant?

He goes to sleep. Earlier, Margaret cursed Richard by saying that his sins would give him nightmares and keep him from sleeping. Clarence has expressed remorse; he is able to sleep easily.

3. What sign do we get in this scene that people know something sinister is going on?

Brakenbury and the keeper abandon Clarence to the murderers; Brakenbury says that if he does not read the letter, he will not share in the guilt of the act the murderers are about to commit. He obviously knows what is going to happen.

4. What happens to the second murderer just before Clarence wakes?

The second murderer has a pang of guilt, fearing that Clarence will denounce him on Judgment Day. He decides to ignore his conscience when he remembers the reward promised by Richard. Besides, he says, heeding his conscience never did him any good; it made him return some money that he found. He and the first murderer both treat the conscience as a demon that is hounding them, preventing them from achieving their earthly reward.

5. Why, according to Clarence, should the murderers not kill him? What might we infer from this?

Clarence says that he has not been lawfully accused or tried. He says he has a right to know who accuses him and see what evidence is against him. The fact that Shakespeare includes this lets us know that England recognizes the legal rights of its citizens; they must be an important part of English tradition.

6. Why do the murderers finally admit that Richard sent them?

The murderers point out that Clarence broke his vow to fight for Henry VI and killed Henry's son Edward. How can Clarence accuse them of sinning when he himself is guilty of murder?

7. Why, according to Clarence, did he participate in the killing of Henry and Edward?

Clarence points out that it was for his brother Edward's sake that he fought against Henry and killed Prince Edward; King Edward would hardly have him killed for that.

8. What does the second murderer do for Clarence? What does this show?

The second murderer, who showed signs of conscience before, tries to warn Clarence that the other murderer is behind him. Once Clarence is dead, the second murderer repents and says he will not take the money from Richard. He is a good man even though he is not of noble birth.

9. To whom does the second murderer compare himself?

He compares himself to Pontius Pilate. Pontius Pilate was the Roman governor of the province where Jesus was crucified. He tried to set Jesus free, but was convinced by the people to crucify Jesus. He washed his hands to show he was not involved in the matter.

Act II, Scene i

1. What is ironic about what Buckingham says to King Edward?

Buckingham wishes that his truest friend will turn out to be an enemy if he goes against King Edward or any of Elizabeth's supporters. Richard has already sworn to create hatred between Buckingham and these supporters, and will be no friend to Buckingham.

2. What is King Edward trying to do at the beginning of this scene? Does he seem likely to succeed? What does this show about him?

King Edward is trying to force everyone to get along. He probably will not succeed; division in the kingdom is so deep that drastic measures are required. King Edward, although merciful, is not the strong ruler England needs.

Act II, Scene ii

1. How does the Duchess of York describe her son Richard? What lines from earlier in the play does this image echo?

She calls him a "false glass." Earlier, Richard said that he could not view himself in a glass, since he is unattractive; he said he would rely on Edward, the "sun," to show him his own shadow.

2. When the Duke of Buckingham urges Elizabeth and the others to be of good cheer, what language does he use that echoes Richard's opening speech?

He says that the "harvest" of King Edward is used up, but that they will "reap the harvest of his son." Richard said bitterly that winter was over for England when King Edward took the throne, and compared King Edward to the sun. The "summer" he mentioned has now become fall.

3. What does Richard call himself in the last lines of this scene? Relate this language to the words he used earlier when speaking to Elizabeth and her supporters.

Richard says that he will follow Buckingham "as a child." Earlier, he called himself "too childish-foolish for this world" (I.iii). Ironically, in this scene, his own mother has rejected him.

Act II, scene iii

1. What do the citizens seem to think of the political situation in England?

They see both parties in the ongoing strife as being at fault; Richard is “full of danger,” but the Queen’s brothers are “haught and proud.” They call the land “sickly”; it needs someone to heal it.

Act II, scene iv

1. Who can we infer told the young Duke of York about Richard as a baby? Why does she angrily hush him?

It may have been something he overheard from Queen Elizabeth. Queen Elizabeth does not want the prince repeating anything bad he hears; it could bring harm to him or to the family. This scene reveals the increasing paranoia in the court.

Act III, scene i

1. Why, according to Buckingham, should the Duke of York be taken from sanctuary?

Buckingham says that the boy did not ask for sanctuary; he is not old enough. A person who does not want sanctuary cannot have it taken away from him. Like Richard, Buckingham is manipulating logic for his own purposes.

2. What does Prince Edward say about Julius Caesar's building the Tower?

He says that even though it is a matter of recorded history, if it were an oral tradition, it would still live on. Perhaps this is a remark on history itself; the troubling story that leads up to the reign of Queen Elizabeth will never be forgotten.

3. To what stage figure does Richard compare himself?

He says that he is "like the formal Vice, Iniquity." This is an allusion to a dramatic convention of Shakespeare's time. The character "Iniquity" spoke ambiguously, and Richard also engages in double-talk.

4. What kind of king does Prince Edward want to be?

Edward wants to be a good military leader. He says that if he lives to be a man, he will take back the lands that England lost in France.

5. Buckingham asks what he and Richard will do if Hastings refuses to join them. What can we gather from Richard's reply?

Richard begins, "Chop off his head..." but then, perhaps realizing that this is too forward, he modifies his statement by saying, "something we will determine." Maybe this is evidence that his "plots and inductions" are beginning to fall apart.

Act III, scene ii

1. How does Lord Stanley urge Lord Hastings to flee?

He sends a messenger who uses coded language. “The boar” is Richard, whose crest featured a boar.

2. What does Hastings say about Lord Stanley’s dream? Is he right or wrong?

He says that Stanley was foolish to trust a dream at all. However, as we have seen with the Duke of Clarence, dreams are meaningful and should be heeded.

3. What double language does Hastings use in this scene? What dramatic device does Shakespeare use?

Hastings asks if Richard means to wear the crown, then jokes that his own “crown” (head) will be removed before he lets such a thing happen. This is an instance of dramatic irony; we know that Hastings is in danger, but he does not.

4. What sarcastic aside does Catesby make in response to Hastings?

He says that the Princes “make high account” of Hastings, meaning that they esteem him. Then, he mutters that they will “account” (i.e., note) his head in a high place—posted on the bridge.

5. What other foreshadowing of Hastings’ death occurs in this scene?

Buckingham uses the same kind of asides as Catesby— he says that Hastings will be staying in the Tower for “supper too, although thou know’st it not...”

Act III, scene iii

1. What does Rivers say about Margaret’s curse? What does this tell us about the state of the nation?

He says the curse has been fulfilled, but notes that Richard, Buckingham, and Hastings also fall under it; he hopes that they will also die. Even at the gallows, the members of each faction can think of nothing but the destruction of their enemies. This is the “sickness” of England that must be cured by an able leader.

Act III, scene iv

1. What ironic statement does Hastings make in this scene?

Hastings ironically remarks on Richard's transparency, saying, "I think there's never a man in Christendom/ Can lesser hide his love or hate than he/ For by his face straight shall he know his heart."

2. What trap do Richard and Buckingham lay for Hastings when they find out he will not go along with their plan?

Richard manages to do something to his arm. He shows the arm as evidence of witchcraft, then accuses Queen Elizabeth and Mistress Shore of putting a spell on him. Hastings is amazed; Richard immediately construes his amazement as doubt and orders him killed.

3. Whom does Hastings echo when he says the following?

Who builds his hope in air of your good looks
Lives like a drunken sailor on a mast,
Ready with every nod to tumble down
Into the fatal bowels of the deep.

Here, Hastings sounds like Clarence speaking of his dream. Clarence feared drowning; in his dream, Richard tempted him to walk the hatch of a boat, then stumbled and pulled Clarence overboard. Now Hastings is also about to be pulled under.

Act III, scene v

1. What are Richard and Buckingham talking about as this scene begins? What earlier idea of Richard's does this continue?

As the scene begins, Richard and Buckingham are rejoicing in the scene they have just pulled off. Buckingham says that he can "counterfeit the deep tragedian." Richard described himself as formulating "plots and inductions," like a playwright—an idea expressed earlier in the play.

2. Why, according to Buckingham, would he and Richard have preferred that Hastings' death had not been so sudden?

Buckingham says that he would have had Hastings confess his treason to the Mayor so that the Mayor, in turn, could have assured the citizens of Hastings' guilt. Of course, Hastings would never have made such a confession; this is simply Buckingham's way of telling the Mayor what he should do. The Mayor comprehends his meaning and agrees to address the citizens.

3. What points does Richard urge Buckingham to use in his speech to the citizens?

Buckingham is to say that Edward's children are illegitimate, that Edward was arbitrary and cruel, killing someone for speaking about "The Crown," that Edward was a lecher, and that Edward is illegitimate himself.

Act III, scene vi

1. What time of day is it now? How long ago was the scrivener told to write Hastings' indictment? How long ago was Hastings accused and executed?

It must be mid-morning or early afternoon. The scrivener says that "yesternight," he was told to write out Hastings' indictment, that it has taken him eleven hours, and that it was worked on for at least that amount of time before he got it. Hastings, however, was only accused and executed within the last five hours. The indictment must have been ordered by Richard after Hastings took the boys off to the Tower; he knew what the outcome of Catesby's "sounding" of Hastings would be.

Act III, scene vii

1. What does Buckingham say happened where he tried to rouse the citizens against Edward (and his children), in favor of Richard?

At first, no one responded. He tried again and got a response from his own followers, but nothing more.

2. How did the Mayor respond to the crowd's lack of enthusiasm?

He repeated what the Duke of Buckingham had told him to say, but made it clear that he was not voicing his own opinions.

3. What device do Buckingham and Richard use after the speech to the citizens has failed?

They decide to use the Church. Richard will surround himself with priests and pretend to be so engrossed in worship that he cannot be interrupted.

4. How does this scene provide comic relief?

It is obvious to most of the people in attendance that Richard is not actually a man of faith. The attempts by Buckingham to pry Richard away from his prayers are exaggerated, as are Richard's protests. Richard says "I am not made of stones," and "I must have patience to endure the load," as if the kingship he so ardently desires is a terrible burden.

5. How does Buckingham get around the Duchess of York's objection to the charge of Edward's bastardy?

He says that the now-deceased King Edward IV was engaged to two women before Elizabeth, whom Richard has been insinuating was a commoner (thus the "base declension" of Prince Edward's birth). The King's marriage to Elizabeth, then, was "unlawful bigamy." Note that Henry VIII, father of Queen Elizabeth, was accused of the same crime, and Elizabeth's lineage is comparable to Prince Edward's.

Act IV scene i

1. What detail that Anne reveals shows the fulfillment of Margaret's curse?

Anne says that since she has been married to Richard, she has not slept well because of his nightmares. Margaret cursed Richard by praying that he would sleep uneasily.

2. What rhetorical device does the Duchess of York use when she speaks to the other women?

She uses parallelism. To each person present, she gives a command and a blessing: "Go thou...good angels tend thee...Go thou...good thoughts possess thee." She ends with herself: "I to my grave, where peace and rest lie with me."

3. What device does Elizabeth use in her last speech in this scene?

She uses apostrophe, addressing the Tower as if it were a person. She calls it "[r]ude ragged nurse" and "old sullen playfellow." The contrast between the threatening and rough Tower and the innocent children is emphasized by this device.

Act IV, Scene ii

1. What metaphor does Richard use when he says, "Ah, Buckingham, now do I play the touch,/To try if thou be current gold indeed"? How does he "try" Buckingham?

Richard is comparing Buckingham to a coin; he will test Buckingham's worth just as someone tests a coin to see if it is made of real gold. The trial consists of asking Buckingham to kill the princes.

2. What logic does Richard use to convince himself that he can marry Princess Elizabeth?

He says, "I am in/ So far in blood that sin will pluck on sin." He has committed so many crimes up to this point that it is inevitable he will commit more.

3. What does Richard remember about Richmond? Why does Shakespeare include this information?

He recalls that Henry VI predicted Richmond would be king. He also remembers that an Irish bard said that Richard would die soon after he saw Richmond. Richmond, or Henry Tudor, is destined to become king.

Act IV, scene iii

1. How does Tyrrel's speech contribute to the characterization of Richard?

Tyrrel repents that he was involved in the princes' murder, and says that the men he paid to do the deed are also sorry. These emotional words from a ruthless killer remind the audience what a villain Richard was.

Act IV, scene iv

1. Margaret is pleased that things are going badly for her enemies. What image does she use to describe the events she is witnessing? Relate this image to language used earlier in the play.

Margaret says she has seen "a dire induction" and that she hopes the next events are just as "tragic." This is the language of playwriting and drama. Richard used the word "induction," which means "the introduction to a play," in Act I, scene i, to describe his evil plan. When Elizabeth's brothers were taken away, she claimed to see "as in a map, the end of all"—it was as if she could read the ending of her particular plotline even before it happened. Later, Richard and Buckingham staged a scene that ended in the death of Hastings, and Buckingham said he could "counterfeit the deep tragedian." Now, Margaret is also using an analogy to drama.

2. Elizabeth says that on Richard's forehead, the murder of Clarence should be "branded." To what is this a allusion?

Elizabeth is referring to the mark of Cain. In the Old Testament of the Bible, Cain killed his brother Abel; as punishment, God branded his forehead with a mark.

3. Elizabeth asks what Richard could possibly give her that would make up for the death of the princes. What does he offer?

He says that he will give her grandchildren via her daughter Elizabeth. Grandchildren are almost as good as children, and England will be at peace.

4. Aside from the fact that he killed her sons, why does Queen Elizabeth object to Richard's proposal?

If Richard were to marry Princess Elizabeth, he would be guilty of incest.

5. Compare Richard's attempt to gain Princess Elizabeth with his wooing of Lady Anne in Act I. Why doesn't he succeed?

Richard won Lady Anne by claiming that her beauty had driven him to murder King Henry and Prince Edward. Here, he says that he will give Princess Elizabeth all that she desires: Queen Elizabeth will have grandchildren; Dorset, the queen's son, will gain a position in court; and England will be at peace.

However, Richard underestimates the significance of Elizabeth's loss; as he said earlier, one murder is the same as another to him. He also promises a peace that Elizabeth knows will not come, based on his previous actions. He is not interested in peace for England; he only wants power.

6. What indication do we get in this scene that Richard's mental condition is deteriorating?

Richard seems unable to remember what decisions he has made. For instance, he tells Ratcliffe to go to Salisbury, then forgets he gave the order. Later, a messenger arrives and Richard beats him before even hearing the message.

7. How does Richard get Lord Stanley to remain loyal? How is this different from the way King Edward behaved towards Stanley in Act II, scene i?

Richard holds Stanley's son hostage. Edward, although he was upset about the death of Clarence, pardoned Stanley's servant as a "boon" to Stanley. Richard feels no obligation to those, like Buckingham and Stanley, who have served him; instead, he gets what he wants by using threats and violence.

Act IV, scene v

1. What has happened in the time Richard has been gathering news and planning his attack?

Princess Elizabeth and Richmond have decided to marry. Richmond's forces are sailing towards London.

Act V, scene i

1. What day is it? What significance does Buckingham find in this?

It is All Souls' Day, November 2. This is a Catholic holy day on which the dead are remembered. Buckingham, too, remembers the dead, but not in a positive way; the people whom he wished dead or helped to kill all seem to look down on him in vengeance.

Act V, scene ii

1. What elements of Richard's speech echo language used earlier in the play?

Richmond uses Richard's heraldic symbol, the boar, in a metaphor about the destruction of "summer fields and fruitful vines." Earlier, we saw King Edward linked to summer, and his son was compared to a harvest that could be reaped.

2. What does Richmond say about war and peace?

He encourages his men to "reap the harvest of perpetual peace/ By this one bloody trial of sharp war." Again, we get a sense of the righteous battle—the violent act that is done in the service of the national good, to right the state of the nation.

Act V, scene iii

1. What does Richard do before going to sleep? What does Richmond do? What is Shakespeare implying about Richard's victory?

Richard curtly orders Ratcliffe to wake him at midnight. Richmond, on the other hand, petitions God to help him crush "the usurping helmets of our adversaries." This speech shows Shakespeare's opinion that Richmond and the Tudors are on the side of right and have the support of God, while the Yorkists are doomed to fail.

2. What is the significance of the parade of ghosts that visits Richmond and Richard? Why do the ghosts all support Richmond?

The ghosts tell Richard to despair and Richmond to take heart. Even those who were once on Richard's side, like Clarence and Buckingham, support the ascension of Richmond; Richmond will "conquer for fair England's sake." In other words, he will succeed not only because Richard is bad, but also because Richmond is fated to end the cycle of bloodshed and usher in a new and peaceful age.

3. What does Richard's monologue after he wakes from the ghostly visitation show about his condition? What is the outcome of the situation?

Richard is in a divided and confused state. He seems to speak in at least two voices. But he disregards the struggle in his conscience and gives in to fear for his own life. Instead of showing a transformation in Richard's character, this soliloquy shows his descent into paranoia, as he goes off to spy on his troops to see if any of them will betray him.

Act V, scene iv

1. What statement does Richard make in this scene that demonstrates his diminished state?

Richard now says that he would give his entire kingdom for a horse.

Act V, scene v

1. What does Richmond say his marriage to Elizabeth will accomplish?

It will "unite the white rose and the red." Richmond represents the end of the Wars of the Roses; although his ancestors fought on the side of the Lancasters, he is marrying the daughter of Edward, who was a York. The two warring factions will be settled in their issue (Henry VIII and Elizabeth, among others), and a time of peace will come to England.

Richard III

Advanced Placement in English Literature and Composition Teaching Unit

Study Guide Student Copy

Act I, Scene i

1. We know that this play takes place during the Wars of the Roses. What has happened just before the play begins? How can you tell?
2. What dramatic technique does Shakespeare use to open the play? What does it tell us about Richard?
3. What images does Richard use to describe Edward in his opening speech? What images does he use for himself?
4. Richard announces his plan to turn the Duke of Clarence and King Edward against one another. Check the timeline in the introduction to this unit. In what year was Clarence actually killed? Why might Shakespeare have put his imprisonment at this point?
5. What terms does Richard use here that alert us to his idea of himself as stage master, almost like a playwright manipulating the actors around him?

6. Why is the prophecy that lands Clarence in the tower ironic?
7. What reason does Richard give for the “inductions dangerous” he is about to perform?
8. Why, according to Richard, was Hastings sent to the Tower?
9. What do we learn about King Edward from Richard’s conversation with Clarence?
10. What does Hastings say he will do now that he is out of prison?
11. What do Richard and Hastings say about King Edward?
12. Why must Clarence die before Edward?

Act I, Scene ii

1. In scene i, we learned that a time of fighting had just ended. What further evidence of the date do we get in this scene? Why do you think Shakespeare arranges the timing of the play the way he does?
2. What animals does Anne mention in conjunction with Richard?
3. What does Anne wish for Richard's future offspring?
4. What strange thing happens as Anne begins to address Richard?
5. What do we learn about Lady Anne's character from her encounter with Richard?
6. How does Richard win Anne over?
7. What metaphor from his opening speech in Scene I does Richard echo here?
8. What is Richard's mood at the end of this scene? What words and phrases show this?

Act I, Scene iii

1. What is the general mood in England, judging by the conversation before Richard comes in?
2. Why, according to Richard, does he “have need of” Elizabeth? What does he suggest she is doing?
3. What curse does Margaret lay on Elizabeth?
4. What does Margaret wish for Richard?
5. Why does Richard say, in an aside, that it is good to pray for the enemies of Elizabeth and her family?
6. What plan does Richard reveal when Elizabeth and her retinue have left?

Act I, Scene iv

1. Describe Clarence's dream. What is its significance?
2. What does Clarence do after he tells the jail keeper about his dream? Why is this significant?
3. What sign do we get in this scene that people know something sinister is going on?
4. What happens to the second murderer just before Clarence wakes?

5. Why, according to Clarence, should the murderers not kill him? What might we infer from this?
6. Why do the murderers finally admit that Richard sent them?
7. Why, according to Clarence, did he participate in the killing of Henry and Edward?
8. What does the second murderer do for Clarence? What does this show?
9. To whom does the second murderer compare himself?

Act II, Scene i

1. What is ironic about what Buckingham says to King Edward?
2. What is King Edward trying to do at the beginning of this scene? Does he seem likely to succeed? What does this show about him?

Act II, Scene ii

1. How does the Duchess of York describe her son Richard? What lines from earlier in the play does this image echo?
2. When the Duke of Buckingham urges Elizabeth and the others to be of good cheer, what language does he use that echoes Richard's opening speech?
3. What does Richard call himself in the last lines of this scene? Relate this language to the words he used earlier when speaking to Elizabeth and her supporters.

Act II, scene iii

1. What do the citizens seem to think of the political situation in England?

Act II, scene iv

1. Who can we infer told the young Duke of York about Richard as a baby? Why does she angrily hush him?

Act III, scene i

1. Why, according to Buckingham, should the Duke of York be taken from sanctuary?

2. What does Prince Edward say about Julius Caesar's building the Tower?

3. To what stage figure does Richard compare himself?

4. What kind of king does Prince Edward want to be?

5. Buckingham asks what he and Richard will do if Hastings refuses to join them. What can we gather from Richard's reply?

Act III, scene ii

1. How does Lord Stanley urge Lord Hastings to flee?
2. What does Hastings say about Lord Stanley's dream? Is he right or wrong?
3. What double language does Hastings use in this scene? What dramatic device does Shakespeare use?
4. What sarcastic aside does Catesby make in response to Hastings?
5. What other foreshadowing of Hastings' death occurs in this scene?

Act III, scene iii

1. What does Rivers say about Margaret's curse? What does this tell us about the state of the nation?

Act III, scene iv

1. What ironic statement does Hastings make in this scene?
2. What trap do Richard and Buckingham lay for Hastings when they find out he will not go along with their plan?
3. Whom does Hastings echo when he says the following?

Who builds his hope in air of your good looks
Lives like a drunken sailor on a mast,
Ready with every nod to tumble down
Into the fatal bowels of the deep.

Act III, scene v

1. What are Richard and Buckingham talking about as this scene begins? What earlier idea of Richard's does this continue?
2. Why, according to Buckingham, would he and Richard have preferred that Hastings' death had not been so sudden?
3. What points does Richard urge Buckingham to use in his speech to the citizens?

Act III, scene vi

1. What time of day is it now? How long ago was the scrivener told to write Hastings' indictment? How long ago was Hastings accused and executed?

Act III, scene vii

1. What does Buckingham say happened where he tried to rouse the citizens against Edward (and his children), in favor of Richard?
2. How did the Mayor respond to the crowd's lack of enthusiasm?
3. What device do Buckingham and Richard use after the speech to the citizens has failed?
4. How does this scene provide comic relief?
5. How does Buckingham get around the Duchess of York's objection to the charge of Edward's bastardy?

Act IV scene i

1. What detail that Anne reveals shows the fulfillment of Margaret's curse?
2. What rhetorical device does the Duchess of York use when she speaks to the other women?
3. What device does Elizabeth use in her last speech in this scene?

Act IV, Scene ii

1. What metaphor does Richard use when he says, “Ah, Buckingham, now do I play the touch,/To try if thou be current gold indeed”? How does he “try” Buckingham?
2. What logic does Richard use to convince himself that he can marry Princess Elizabeth?
3. What does Richard remember about Richmond? Why does Shakespeare include this information?

Act IV, scene iii

1. How does Tyrrel’s speech contribute to the characterization of Richard?

Act IV, scene iv

1. Margaret is pleased that things are going badly for her enemies. What image does she use to describe the events she is witnessing? Relate this image to language used earlier in the play.
2. Elizabeth says that on Richard's forehead, the murder of Clarence should be "branded." To what is this a allusion?
3. Elizabeth asks what Richard could possibly give her that would make up for the death of the princes. What does he offer?
4. Aside from the fact that he killed her sons, why does Queen Elizabeth object to Richard's proposal?
5. Compare Richard's attempt to gain Princess Elizabeth with his wooing of Lady Anne in Act I. Why doesn't he succeed?
6. What indication do we get in this scene that Richard's mental condition is deteriorating?
7. How does Richard get Lord Stanley to remain loyal? How is this different from the way King Edward behaved towards Stanley in Act II, scene i?

Act IV, scene v

1. What has happened in the time Richard has been gathering news and planning his attack?

Act V, scene i

1. What day is it? What significance does Buckingham find in this?

Act V, scene ii

1. What elements of Richard's speech echo language used earlier in the play?
2. What does Richmond say about war and peace?

Act V, scene iii

1. What does Richard do before going to sleep? What does Richmond do? What is Shakespeare implying about Richard's victory?
2. What is the significance of the parade of ghosts that visits Richmond and Richard? Why do the ghosts all support Richmond?
3. What does Richard's monologue after he wakes from the ghostly visitation show about his condition? What is the outcome of the situation?

Act V, scene iv

1. What statement does Richard make in this scene that demonstrates his diminished state?

Act V, scene v

1. What does Richmond say his marriage to Elizabeth will accomplish?

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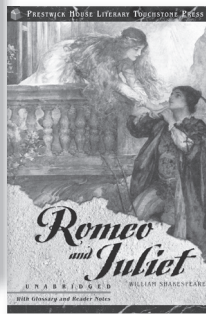
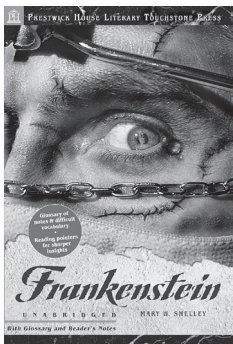
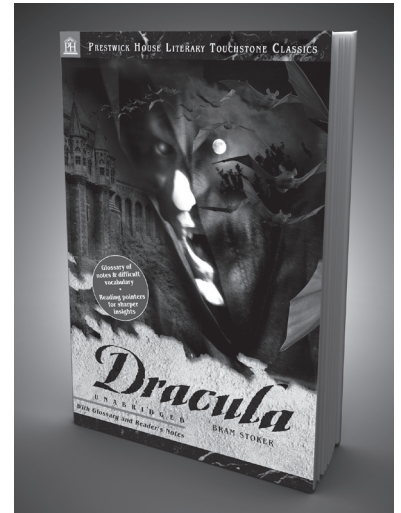
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