

RICHARD III (Folger edition)

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

LIVING LITERATURE SERIES

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TEACHER'S GUIDE GUIDE WRITTEN BY MARY ELLEN SNODGRASS

SYNOPSIS

Following much mayhem during a series of civil wars between the Houses of Lancaster and York, Richard, Duke of Gloucester, a malformed hunchback and self-confessed villain, challenges his handsome eldest brother, Edward IV, for the throne of England. To achieve his goal, he convinces Edward of a prophecy that his throne is menaced by their brother, George, Duke of Clarence, with whom Richard pretends to commiserate. Richard courts Lady Anne, the daughter-in-law of Henry VI and widow of Edward, Prince of Wales, both of whom Richard murdered. She at first scorns, curses, and spits on him, then, easily swayed by Richard's melodramatic offer of a sword with which to kill him, believes that he is truly repentant. She accepts a proffered ring and goes to his Crosby Place residence to await him. After her departure, Richard mocks her gullibility and promises that he will not need her very long.

To tidy up loose ends, Richard, claiming to act out of concern for the throne, explains to Hastings and Buckingham that Queen Elizabeth and her supporters imprisoned Clarence, whom he has had stabbed and tossed into a vat of wine. King Edward, too ill in body and will to counter Richard's malice, regrets the death, which he himself ordered, and longs to restore peace to the realm. Amid much suspicion of Richard's motives, Edward learns of Clarence's death, blames himself for failing to countermand the order and then dies, leaving the way clear for Richard to implicate the Queen, whom he claims was the prime mover in ridding herself of Clarence.

More skullduggery takes place with the arrival from Ludlow of the young Prince of Wales, a precocious lad who prepares to succeed his father. The boy's mother, cognizant of the malevolence that permeates the atmosphere, withdraws, taking with her the Great Seal, which she intends to guard. Buckingham, Richard's minion, joins the plotting, which successfully dispatches Lord Rivers, Lord Grey, and Sir Thomas Vaughan.

Richard imprisons Prince Edward and his nine-year-old brother, the Duke of York, in the Tower under the pretext of protective custody, but discovers opposition from Hastings, who cannot be pushed to murder the guiltless boys. Richard charges Hastings with treason, then executes him, rationalizing his act to the Mayor as a means of squelching a plot against himself. Feigning piety and public-spiritedness, Richard, growing bolder with every monstrous act, "allows" himself to be named lord protector.

Meanwhile, Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond, consolidates with Dorset in Brittany, thus establishing clear opposition to Richard's growing menace. Undeterred,

Richard continues manipulating others and spreading rumors that the royal children are baseborn, owing to the sexual waywardness of the king. Richard, safely married to Anne and crowned King of England, continues looking for a way to dispatch the royal princes, his chief stumbling blocks. The children remain locked in the Tower and are denied visits by Queen Elizabeth and the Duchess of York. Richard, still actively controlling the scene, arranges for Lady Margaret Plantagenet to marry a commoner and tosses her brother into prison. He also isolates Anne and spreads rumors that she is gravely ill.

After Buckingham abandons Richard's ignoble cause, the tide turns against Richard, who resorts to Tyrrel, a hired killer, to execute his dirty deed. Following Anne's death, which Richard may have engineered, he proposes to Elizabeth of York, daughter of Queen Elizabeth, whom Richmond wants to marry, and sends Tyrrel to kill the royal boys. Tyrrel sends Dighton and Forrest, who at first hesitate at sight of the innocent children and their prayer book, but then smother them in their sleep.

The Earl of Richmond, strengthened by the Bishop of Ely, plots a revolt against Richard; likewise, Buckingham, quartered in Wales, is gaining followers. Uprisings in southern England indicate that events are approaching a crisis. A united force marches from Milford toward Richard's stronghold. Richard, thrown off balance by the news, flounders in his response to the challenge. Better news in the form of Buckingham's capture and the dispersal of the Earl of Richmond's fleet during a storm revitalizes his spirits. Buckingham goes to his death, but Richmond, encamped at Tamworth, remains confident that he can defeat his enemy, who is on the march from Leicester.

Clashing at Bosworth Field, Richard faces off against Richmond, whose forces his men outnumber three to one. Apparitions of Richard's eleven victims accost him for his bloodthirstiness and predict his downfall. Simultaneously, Richmond is shored up by propitious dreams of God and angels and a successful dynasty. Richard wakes up fully aware that the day bodes ill for his foul deeds. In the ensuing battle, Richard cries out for a horse to replace his downed steed. In man-to-man combat, Richmond slays Richard. He calls an end to civil war, and claims the throne and Richard's fiancée. The union of Elizabeth with Richmond will unite Lancaster with York and end an unprecedented era of bloodshed. Richmond concludes the play with prayers for peace.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

William Shakespeare (ca. April 23, 1564 - April 23, 1616)

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attended a Latin grammar school in his hometown of Stratford-on-Avon. At eighteen, he married Anne Hathaway of Shottery, eight years his senior, and fathered a daughter, Susanna, and twins, Judith and Hamnet. He moved to London at the age of 23 or 24, joined the Lord Chamberlain's acting company, later known as the King's Men, and remained active in theater until 1611. Much about his early adulthood is a mystery, but it is clear that he obtained a thorough knowledge of his chosen field—acting—and was well-known by 1592.

Shakespeare gained the approval of Elizabeth I and James I, both regular theater-goers. His success as an actor-playwright enabled him to invest in real estate and to purchase a coat of arms for his father, John Shakespeare, a glover and public official in Stratford. Having written and produced thirty-seven plays, a sonnet sequence, and two long poems, Shakespeare retired to a large house in Stratford. As a country gentleman, he lived out his life in gentility and was buried in the chancel of Holy Trinity Church.

CRITIC'S CORNER

Critics note that the surface theme of the triumph of good over ambition gone awry belies a stronger reason for this play—the coming of the Tudor dynasty, which Shakespeare sought to honor. Part of the mastery of this historical panoply lies in the paired courtship scenes. At the beginning of the play, Richard's evil is strong enough to win him the weak-willed Lady Anne; in his decline in Act IV, he negotiates for Elizabeth, yet succumbs to overwhelming odds before making her his wife.

The general air of forebodings, omens, ghosts, melodrama, and ominous overtones—all Renaissance traits—have proved fulfilling to later audiences, who have kept the play alive as one of Shakespeare's most popular. Since Richard Burbage, for whom the title role was created around 1592, actors have revelled in the mix of Richard's villainous heroism. Colley Cibber in 1700, Max Reinhardt in 1919, Laurence Olivier in 1956, and later television Richards have revived the part with notable success. The text itself, which Shakespeare derived in part from Edward Hall's *The Union of the Two Noble and Illustre Families of Lancaster and York* and Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland*, was heavily influenced by Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* and Christopher Marlowe's dramas. The play, which completes the tetralogy begun with the *Henry VI* plays, was acted at the Globe Theater and was published by Andrew Wise in 1597.

GENERAL OBJECTIVES

1. To experience a history play by Shakespeare
2. To isolate examples of valor, honesty, and loyalty
3. To enumerate examples of historical fact

4. To envision the staging of an Elizabethan play
5. To characterize the genre of the play
6. To analyze attitudes toward kingship and ambition
7. To contrast warring factions in terms of behavior and values
8. To comment on Shakespeare's treatment of women
9. To delineate the importance of prophecy to the play
10. To determine Shakespeare's purpose in writing the play
11. To characterize unexpected turns of plot
12. To note the use of blank verse and other poetic devices
13. To discuss the tone of the conclusion

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To pinpoint the reasons for Richard's villainy
2. To contrast Richard and Richmond
3. To discuss Anne's attitude toward avenging herself on Richard
4. To explain the roles of Buckingham, Tyrrel, Clarence, Queen Elizabeth, and Margaret
5. To characterize the wit of the young Prince of Wales
6. To question Richard's assassination of Hastings
7. To discuss the likelihood that Richard kills Anne
8. To explain the end of the wars and Richmond's prayer for peace
9. To account for Edward IV's weakness of purpose
10. To discuss why Shakespeare stresses loyalty, treachery, courage, and daring as major themes
11. To contrast the dreams of Richard and Richmond

MEANING STUDY

Below are words, phrases, sentences, or thought units that have particular meaning in the play. Explain the meaning of each. Act, scene, and line numbers are given so that you can note the context from which the item is taken.

1. The day will come that thou shalt wish for me
To help thee curse this poisonous bunch-backed toad. (I, iii, 282-283)
(Margaret, who has no illusions about Richard's propensity for evil, curses him roundly, mocking his birth and comparing him to various odious creatures—a "bottled spider," "bunch-backed toad," and vicious dog whose "venom tooth will rankle to the death." When Richard interrupts and

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makes a positive comparison to an eagle she continues her tirade, chastising him for robbing the true eagle's nest. Like a Cassandra of old, Margaret concludes that Richard was born to cause sorrow.)

2. . . . and often did I strive

To yield the ghost; but still the envious flood
Stopped in my soul, and would not let it forth . . .

(I, iv, 38-40)

(Following his wretched dream, which harks back to the dismal history of the Wars of the Roses, George, Duke of Clarence, describes how he escaped from the Tower and, along with his brother Richard, Duke of Gloucester, was crossing over to Burgundy and accepted a challenge to walk on the decks. As Richard stumbled, he bumped Clarence, who fell into the sea and glimpsed the carnage of men and ships at the bottom. The horror of his dream is that he was not able to die. His spirit, seemingly trapped within his dying body, struggled within his drowning form.)

3. I passed, methought, the melancholy flood, with that
sour ferryman which poets write of . . . (I, iv, 47-48)

(In Clarence's dream, he passed Charon, the ferryman who escorts souls across the River Styx into the inner portion of the underworld in Greek mythology, and confronted his father-in-law and an accusing shadow who accosted him for past sins. When Clarence awakens from his nightmare, he believes that he is in hell.)

4. Ah, that deceit should steal such gentle shape

And with a virtuous visor hide deep vice!

(II, ii, 30-32)

(In the beginning of this scene, Clarence's children are confused by their grandmother's behavior. She mourns Clarence's death, yet pretends that she is really concerned about the ill health of King Edward. The boy, misconstruing the situation, concludes that the King has killed Clarence and declares that "God will revenge it, whom I will importune with earnest prayers all to that effect." The Duchess, pushed to the limit of endurance, shushes the children but continues to conceal Richard's role in the execution. The boy, who reports how kindly Richard treated him while lying about the King and Queen's role in the death, concludes that Richard plans to "love me dearly as a child.")

The Duchess, revolted by Richard's audacity, loses control and reveals her despair that her own son is able to hide so vicious a spirit beneath a "virtuous visor." She admits that he is truly her son, but that he did not draw from her breast the treachery that drives him to such foul deeds.)

5. Marry, they say my uncle grew so fast

That he could gnaw a crust at two hours old: . . .

(II, iv, 31-32)

(The nine-year-old Duke of York repeats the nurse's story that Richard was born with teeth. The irony of the image is that Richard does indeed possess prodigious teeth, which will enable him to gobble up the obstacles which stand between him and the throne. As though presaging doom, the scene leads to a crucial scenario in which the Queen learns that Rivers, Grey, and Vaughan are taken prisoner by Richard and Buckingham. The Queen, enlarging on the image of oral aggression, sees Richard as "The tiger [who] now hath seized the gentle hind.")

6. O preposterous

And frantic outrage, end thy damned spleen,

Or let me die, to look on earth no more! (II, iv, 72-74)

(The Duchess of York, wearied by the "accursed and unquiet wrangling days," wishes that she could withdraw from the misery of civil war, which has deprived her of a husband and kept her sons involved in "domestic broils." The Queen, who concurs that times are difficult, takes the young Duke of York, along with the Great Seal of England, and follows the archbishop to sanctuary.)

7. I do not like the Tower, of any place.

Did Julius Caesar build that place, my lord? (III, i, 78-79)

(The Prince of Wales refers to a legend that Julius Caesar built the Tower of London. Actually, William the Conqueror, who lived eleven centuries after Julius Caesar and sought to shore up his 1066 conquest with a series of stone fortresses, is responsible for assigning the design of the Tower of London to Gundulf, a pious architect famed for building churches and forts. The original square building, forbidding with arrow slits and a coat of whitewash, represented the last word in military fortification.)

8. Ah, cut my lace asunder,

That my pent heart may have some scope to beat,

Or else I swoon with this dead-killing news! (IV, i, 38-40)

(Queen Elizabeth is overcome by the words of the lieutenant; not only has Richard contained the crown prince and his brother in the Tower of London but he has also set his sights on the title of king and plans to crown Anne his queen. Dressed in the constricting laced bodice common to Shakespeare's time [that is, before the invention of elastic], Elizabeth begs to have her laces cut open so that she may accommodate her body's display of emotion. Note that historically accurate costuming was not a facet of Shakespeare's stage.)

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The characters, whatever era they represent, dress in Elizabethan clothing.)

9. The sons of Edward sleep in Abraham's bosom . . . (IV, ii, 42)

(The pictorial image of death as "sleep in Abraham's bosom" is a direct quotation of the words of Christ in the parable of the wise manager, told in Luke 16:33. Abraham, the founder of monotheism in the Western world, was the great patriarch of the Old Testament. The husband of Sarah, he fathered Isaac, whose son Jacob fathered the Twelve Tribes of Israel. Abraham, described in the Bible, Apocrypha, and Koran, figures in the central episodes of the lore of Christians, Jews, and Muslims.)

10. This is All Souls' day, fellow, is it not? (V, i, 12)
(Following Halloween on October 31 and All Saints' Day on November 1, All Souls' Day, celebrated on November 2 or November 3 if November 2 falls on a Sunday, is a day of prayer for sinners lodged in Purgatory and denied the privilege of seeing God. A regular part of the Christian calendar, the day marks the faithful's recognition of imperfections which separate certain of the dead from the blessings of heaven. Buckingham, facing execution for his despicable crimes, realizes that "that high All-Seer" has directed divine retribution his way and that Margaret's curse is coming true.)

COMPREHENSION STUDY

Answer the following questions in your own words. There is not always a right answer. Your judgment is important and you should be ready to defend your answers with quotations from the play.

Questions 1-5 Literal Level

1. Cite examples of archaic or out-of-date words and phrases used in the play, such as *thee* for *you*, *afore* for *before*, and *doth* for *does*. Explain the meaning of each archaic term.

(Throughout Shakespeare's plays and poems are words and expressions that reflect Elizabethan idiom and vocabulary. These terms give authenticity to his work by setting it in a time and place. They include the following:

- want — lack (I, i, 16)*
alack — alas, an outcry of despair (I, i, 50)
belike — probably (I, i, 52)
betwixt — between (I, i, 77)
gossips — godparents or sponsors (I, i, 87)
withal — at the same time (I, i, 111)
perforce — involuntarily (I, i, 126)

- brook'd — tolerated (I, i, 136)*
lo — pay attention (I, ii, 13)
hap — luck or chance (I, ii, 18)
avaunt — go away (I, ii, 48)
curst — foul-tempered (I, ii, 51)
vouchsafe — promise or guarantee (I, ii, 78)
holp — helped (I, ii, 119)
betide — happen to (I, iii, 7)
forsooth — indeed (I, iii, 54)
Jack — rascal or scamp (I, iii, 83)
iwis — certainly (I, iii, 117)
oft — often (I, iii, 122)
avouch't — promise it (I, iii, 133)
ay — yes (I, iii, 140)
forswore — renounced (I, iii, 159)
marry — indeed (I, iii, 302)
methought — I thought (I, iv, 24)
prithce — beg, request (I, iv, 75)
fain — gladly (I, iv, 76)
boon — kindness (II, i, 103)
grandam — grandmother (II, ii, 13)
meseemeth — it seems to me (II, ii, 132)
wot — know (II, iii, 25)
quoth — said (II, iv, 13)
sup — dine (III, i, 226)
betimes — soon (III, i, 226)
zounds — God's wounds (III, vii, 229)
albeit — even though (III, vii, 237)
ta'en — taken (IV, i, 57)
corse — corpse (IV, i, 72)
hitherto — ever since (IV, i, 88)
hoyday — hey (IV, iv, 524)
runagate — renegade (IV, iv, 530)
mo — more (IV, iv, 575)
hie — hurry (IV, v, 19)

2. Cite examples of poetic and rhetorical devices used in the play. Identify each.

(Shakespeare uses poetic and rhetorical devices with skill throughout his plays, often pointing up themes and details by means of clever and expressive arrangement of words and rhythms. For example:

1. *My kingdom stands on brittle glass.* (IV, ii, 66)
[hyperbole]
2. *I had an Edward, till a Richard killed him;
I had a Harry, till a Richard killed him.*
(IV, iv, 49-50) [parallelism]

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3. I pray,
That I may live and say, "The dog is dead."
(IV, iv, 86-87) [alliteration]
4. That bottled spider, that foul bunch-backed
toad. (IV, iv, 91) [metaphor]
5. A sign of dignity, a breath, a bubble. (IV, iv, 101)
[caesura]
6. And she shall be sole victress, Caesar's
Caesar. (IV, iv, 374) [allusion]
7. Quiet untroubled soul, awake, awake!
Arm, fight, and conquer, for fair England's
sake! (V, iii, 169-171) [end rhyme]
8. Sleep, Richmond, sleep in peace... (V, iii, 177)
[sibilance]
9. What do I fear? Myself? There's none else by.
(V, iii, 209) [rhetorical question]
10. End thy damned spleen . . . (II, iv, 73)
[metonymy]
11. Naught to do with Mistress Shore? (I, i, 103)
[pun; double entendre]
12. Cursed the blood that let this blood from
hence! (I, ii, 17) [repetition]
13. As all the world is cheered by the sun,
So I by that. (I, ii, 147-148) [simile]
14. O Buckingham, take heed of yonder dog! . . .
attend on him. (I, iii, 332-337)
[extended metaphor]
15. . . . he delivers you
From this earth's thralldom to the joys of
heaven. (I, iv, 259-260) [verbal irony]

3. Describe how Shakespeare varies the standard iambic pentameter. Explain reasons for the variance.

(Shakespeare, who stabilizes and unifies the language of both his plays and poems with iambic pentameter, emphasizes the five-beat line, which is the basis of English speech. This line reads "iambic pentameter." For example, consider the pattern of stresses in "Methoughts that I had broken from the Tower." The natural pronunciation of the words falls into the rhythmic arrangement of iambic pentameter.

However, Shakespeare does not allow the rhythm of the standard line to dictate to every phrase. Where he needs to, he varies lines to add emphasis. For example, in Act I, Scene i, Clarence, awakening from a bad dream, recounts the terror of walking on the deck of a storm-tossed sea with his brother, Richard. After colliding with Richard, he falls into the water and sinks to the bottom. The horror of wreckage and skeletons on the ocean floor fill him with despair that he, too, is drowning, yet he cannot die.

Contrasting this touchingly prophetic scene are the prosaic words of the murderers, who dismiss Brakenbury, the Tower turnkey, then debate the killing they are about to commit. In

mundane language, the second murderer says, "Nay, prithce stay a little. I hope this passionate humor of mine will change. It was wont to hold me but while one tells twenty." Even when more poetic lines fill their dialogue, the two executioners, trying to seem nonchalant in their role, continue to speak prose until they encounter Clarence, who realizes that their coarse, ominous presence indicates that his death is near. Ironically, after stabbing Clarence, the first murderer decides to dump the body into a vat of malmsey and finish the job with drowning, just as Clarence had dreamed.)

4. Discuss the appropriateness of the play's settings. (One characteristic of Shakespeare's plays is that they cater to the tastes of Elizabethan playgoers, even the lowly groundlings, who packed the lower portion of the house and sometimes determined whether or not the company made a profit. Proof of Shakespeare's good business sense is his use of varied settings, which appealed to the curiosity of playgoers. The history plays in particular provided a kind of geography lesson by acquainting English playgoers with the history of the countryside.

Richard III, which details an ambitious man's attempts to secure a throne in time of civil war by being more bloodthirsty and more daring than any other character, moves from castle to Tower, a sanctuary which serves as the most horrendous of places of execution. Appropriately, the play opens on a London street where Richard introduces his own play by characterizing his discontent and strivings. Deformed and conniving, he stands forth in daylight and makes no secret of his plan to trick King Edward with a false prophecy that someone whose name begins with G will kill his heirs.

Even in the opening scene, the Tower looms in the distance and presages its importance to this final seamy saga of the Wars of the Roses. When Clarence enters under guard, he is already on his way to doom. Still, the action remains in the public domain as Anne, a mourner in her father-in-law's funeral cortege, enters and belabors Richard for his lawlessness. The challenge proves slight; by the end of the scene, he has won her over with a few flattering words, some razzle-dazzle of twisted logic, and a ring. The consummate villain, he gloats over her gullibility.

By Scene iii, the meat of the conflict begins to take shape at a more likely setting—the royal palace, where Queen Elizabeth worries over the king's malady and fears that Richard, as Lord Protector, may prove harmful to the crown prince after Edward's death. Scene iv, within the dismal

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walls of the tower itself, leaves little doubt that this play will disclose the depths of depravity as one by one, Richard kills off his enemies, beginning with his brother Clarence.

Throughout the first four acts, these three settings—city streets, noble dwellings, including Baynard's Castle and Pomfret Castle, and the Tower—reappear. It is not until Act V that Richard moves out of his bailiwick into the countryside, where Richmond overpowers and kills him. It is ironic that the spirits, which visit Richard's tent at Bosworth Field, desert their haunts nearer the seat of power and pursue the misshapen villain at the scene of his death. Like a Greek hero pursued by the Furies, he valiantly struggles to attain goals that slip farther and farther from his grasp.)

5. Explain the political situation that underlies the play. (A central theme of ambition holds this play together. Fifteenth century England suffered cataclysmic destruction and political chaos as two noble houses, York and Lancaster, fought for control. Beginning with Henry IV's seizure of the throne in 1399, the populace chafed at the Lancaster kings' failures, particularly in the war against France. Conflict did not break out until two generations later at St. Albans between Henry VI and Richard, a Yorkist pretender, in 1455. Killed at Wakefield in 1460, Richard left behind his son, Edward, to carry on the struggle to unseat the Lancaster line.

Crowned Edward IV in 1461, the new king faced a tenuous tenancy on England's throne. Driven to Holland, he was replaced by Henry VI, but Henry lost out in 1471. On Edward's return, Henry died in the Tower; the crown prince was killed in battle. Edward finished out his reign and died of natural causes.

On June 26, 1483, when twelve-year-old Edward V succeeded his father, his uncle, Richard, Duke of Gloucester, seized power and had the boy and his brother murdered, although this dark phase of history is obscure. As Richard III, he reigned until 1485, when a Lancastrian, Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond, defeated him at Bosworth Field and established himself as the first of the Tudor line, Henry VII. He married Edward's daughter the following year, thereby consolidating the claims of the warring Lancasters and Yorks.)

Questions 6-8 Interpretive Level

6. What is Anne's role in the play?
(Lady Anne Neville represents a characteristic response toward Richard. As the old king's daughter-in-law and the wife of the former

Prince of Wales, she has good reason to decry Richard's usurpations and murderous ways. Like other English subjects who are outraged and dismayed by his conniving and dissembling, she lashes out in righteous indignation at his wickedness, but lacks the strength to resist his charm.

Shakespeare utilizes Anne's cursings and railings to illustrate an important aspect of Richard's nature. He is not merely vile and dangerous, but wily and mesmerizingly charming. In their opening meeting, Richard demonstrates his deadly venom by threatening to strike down the pallbearer, who challenges Richard and commands him to give place to the procession. He quickly outwits Anne in grim repartee by blaming Queen Margaret's "sland'rous tongue" for bringing about Edward's death.

Twisting logic to his advantage, he has the audacity to take credit for sending the old king to heaven. Fast on this nery claim he adds that Anne's "beauty was the cause" and that it "did haunt me in my sleep to undertake the death of all the world, so I might live one hour in your sweet bosom." Anne does not capitulate immediately to this base flattery and even spits in Richard's face. He stands still for her chastisement and bares his breast for her to strike with his sword.

Weakening somewhat in the face of this melodramatic display, Anne chooses not to assassinate Richard, even though she clings to her right to dispatch him. Still fearing his falseness, she wavers, then opts to accept his ring, though she comments, "To take is not to give." Richard, quick to move while Anne shows signs of weakness, sends her to Crosby House and vows that he will "wed [the king's] grave with my repentant tears." Anne, claiming to be overjoyed to see Richard so repentant, accedes to his wishes.

In his soliloquy, Richard quickly reverts to the slimy villainy of the prologue. He admits that he does not plan a long liaison with Anne. He notes that he has no supporters "but the plain Devil and dissembling looks," his compensation for the malformed body that imprisons him. He acknowledges that Edward, Anne's deceased husband, whom he stabbed at Tewkesbury three months previously, was sweet, lovely, "young, valiant, wise, and, no doubt, right royal." Like a malevolent spirit, Richard calls to the sun, which creates a shadow for him to watch in the mirror. The image suggests that Richard is pleased with the grim, distorted pattern he casts on the ground, as he is with his twisted deeds.)

7. Why does Richard persist in committing murders?
(Richard, committed to his ambition, does not

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quail at the thought of shedding blood to consolidate his efforts. The first murder he commissions is of his brother George, Duke of Clarence, who at first does not suspect the prime cause of his imprisonment in the Tower. Quickly, Richard recruits Buckingham to stop the young Prince of Wales from coming to power. As indicated by the talk in Act II, Scene iii, commoners realize that Richard is capable of killing the child if need be.

By the next scene, it is obvious that Richard, determined to rid himself of the crown prince, has also jeopardized the lives of Rivers, Grey, and Vaughan. To shore up his cruel plot, Richard sounds out Hastings, whom he will require as backup. After Rivers, Grey, and Vaughan go to their deaths in Act III, Scene iii, Hastings, loyal to young Edward, remains confident that he understands Richard. To his amazement, his complete misconception of Richard's motives leads to his arrest for treason and subsequent execution.

Using the Mayor as dupe, Richard allows himself to be maneuvered onto the throne. Then, furthering suspicion that the royal boys are actually illegitimate, he commits his sixth and seventh murders, the most heinous, by sending Tyrrel, a useful tool, to smother the children in their sleep. In bypassing Buckingham, Richard divulges his doubts about his former confidante. Buckingham, wise to Richard's dastardliness, flees while he is able.

In Act IV, Scene iii, an eighth murder is implied when Anne, isolated and reported to be gravely ill, suddenly dies. Her widower, quick to name a successor, makes a show of courting Queen Elizabeth's daughter. Again, Richard scores a triumph over a woman by winning the old queen to his side, but too many associates have turned away from him. By this point, Richard has sunk too low to be redeemable. With George Stanley as hostage and Buckingham in custody, Richard appears to have the upper hand. Buckingham, the ninth victim, is executed, and Richard marches to meet his nemesis. After the hostage's rescue, his father places the crown on Richmond's head.)

8. Discuss circumstances that lead to Richard's defeat. (Richard falls victim to himself. Overcome by ambition and egotism, he fails to control his energetic overreaching. For a time, he masquerades as a pious, dutiful, loyal, and thoughtful courtier, even though his deeds speak volumes about his underlying intent. Then, bit by bit, his strength erodes as the Bishop of Ely and Stanley cross over to Richmond's camp and prepare for the final confrontation.

Part of Richard's power over others is his ability to manipulate their pity for his deformity and to assert strong enough slander and lies about Edward's supposed infidelities and the Queen's witchcraft to convince others that he is really more victim than villain. An overachiever from the prologue, his lightning quick movements outwit the rest of the court, which labors under the burdens of grief, loss, and outrage.

As a melodramatic superpower, Richard, a legendary role since Shakespeare's time, combines the savagery of the heartless blackguard, the wit and cunning of a devil, and the honeyed charm of a romantic lead. Completely candid about his motives and aims, he is able to smirk at his control of weaker-willed characters as his inexorable juggernaut mows down whoever stands in his path. Audiences since the late sixteenth century have marvelled at themselves for admiring his malignant allure.)

Questions 9 and 10 Critical Level

9. How does imagery in this play strengthen its purpose? (Richard, a ravening beast with a strong appetite for blood, is frequently described in foul and bestial terms. In the prologue, he admits that his humped body so dismays others that dogs bark at him. He concludes that he is not fit to be reflected in a mirror. At his first confrontation with Anne, she insists that he is a devil. For good measure, she labels him a hedgehog and toad. Queen Margaret, also repulsed by Richard's evil, repeats Anne's claim that he is a devil and adds her own epithets—murderous villain, dog, rooting hog, and usurping bird. Richard retaliates by calling her a wrinkled witch.

A parallel scene occurs in Act IV, Scene iv, when Richard's reputation runs afoul of his mother and Queen Elizabeth, both of whom challenge his immense capacity for evil. Margaret, who joins their lament, continues the dog imagery by commenting, "From forth the kennel of thy womb hath crept a hellhound that doth hunt us all to death: that dog, that had his teeth before his eyes to worry lambs and lap their gentle blood." This extended metaphor, by linking Richard's rapaciousness with the innocence of the slain princes, sets the three women's outrage in perspective.

Because she thirsts for retribution, Margaret continues the metaphor by stating, "I am hungry for revenge" and looks forward to a time when "the dog is dead." The Duchess of York, regretting giving birth to so unscrupulous a plotter as Richard, chides him for being a toad and for killing his brother Clarence. Richmond rounds out the play in the same metaphorical vein

RICHARD III

as earlier complaints against Richard. In Act V, Scene v, he exults that "the bloody dog is dead.")

10. What is Shakespeare's purpose in emphasizing prophecy?

(Shakespeare's purpose in any of his works can only be determined by surmise, since he left no written commentary about his professional method or literary views. Certainly, as an actor and acting company official, he made a sincere effort to please the audience. Obvious to the people of his time was his desire to depict the disorderly era of civil war from 1398 to 1485. By navigating the murky waters of England's history, he revealed the stuff of which the nation was made, both the deceit and trickery and the finer raw materials, particularly nobility and vision.

By focusing on prophecy, Shakespeare dwells on the fact that even villains must bow to their fate. From the beginning of the play when Queen Margaret refers to herself as a prophetess and commends all to God, the theme is clear: sinners must in due time face retribution. She predicts that more than one death will occur before the blood curse is fulfilled. One by one, Richard's victims restate her ominous prediction. Returning to debate the latest happenings with Queen Elizabeth and the Duchess of York, Margaret delineates the falling action: "But at hand, at hand, ensues his piteous and unpitied end."

Replicated in Richard's dreams, the announcement of Richard's demise is unmistakable. The first speaker, the ghost of Prince Edward, Anne's first husband, promises to "sit heavy on thy soul tomorrow" and calls exultant encouragement to Richmond. The second prognosticator, the spirit of Henry VI, looks forward to Richard's despair and death and reiterates that Richmond should replace Richard on the throne.

The third ghost, Clarence, bids Richmond "Live and flourish." The trio, Rivers, Grey, and Vaughan, repeat the dismal theme and unite in a sideline cheer for Richmond to "win the day." The seventh ghost, Hastings, sounds the same call for justice, followed by eight and nine, the young princes, who look forward to a "happy race of kings" from Richmond's line. Ghost ten, the hapless Anne, takes her revenge on a duplicitous husband by praying for Richmond. The final ghost, Buckingham, notes with irony that he "helped thee to the crown" then fell victim to Richard's tyranny. He predicts that good angels will fight for Richmond and that Richard will fall as far down as once he stood tall with pride.)

Questions 11-17 Creative Level

11. Lead a panel discussion of the many proverbs that

dot the text. For example, consider the significance of:

- a. No beast so fierce but knows some touch of pity. (I, ii, 74)
- b. Talkers are no good doers. (I, iii, 399)
- c. An honest tale speeds best being plainly told. (IV, iv, 402-3)
- d. True hope is swift, and flies with swallow's wings. (V, ii, 27)
- e. My conscience hath a thousand several tongues. (V, iii, 220)
- f. Conscience is but a word that cowards use, Devised at first to keep the strong in awe. (V, iii, 347-8)
- g. Pitchers have ears. (II, iv, 42)
- h. I run before my horse to market. (I, i, 172)

12. Make a list of all the characters who die during the play. Explain the circumstances of each. Compare the ways in which various characters meet their deaths. Compose a theme on the subject of courage in the face of the inevitable.
13. Discuss why Shakespeare associates Richard's physical deformities with his malevolent spirit. Explain why this relationship would be inappropriate in a modern movie or television portrayal.
14. Analyze the opening lines of the play. Discuss how they set the tone for all five acts of the tragedy.
15. Explain how *Richard III* fits the classical definition of tragedy.
16. Compose a brief history or timeline of the Tower of London.
17. Make a list of crucial scenes which contain animal images. Join a group in acting out what these images imply.

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

1. Draw a genealogical chart to express the interrelations of Shakespeare's characters. Carry the royal line back to the beginning of the Wars of the Roses. In a smaller chart, cover the entire Plantagenet dynasty. Indicate the beginning of the Tudor line, particularly the reign of Elizabeth I. Contrast this chart with historical facts.
2. Make a map delineating settings mentioned in the play. Include an inset map of London. Cover the following place names: Tower of London, Chertsey, Tewkesbury, Saint Alban's Burgundy, Paris, Northampton, Stratford, Pomfret Castle, Crosby House, Holborn, Baynard's Castle, Salisbury, Devonshire, Brittany, Tamworth, Leicester, and Bosworth Field. For added information, consult a literary atlas.

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TEACHING NOTES

3. Compose a poem or song to commemorate the scene that concludes the play. Give special attention to Richard's boldness as well as Richmond's sincere wish for peace in England. Stress the great losses which mark this final battle in the Wars of the Roses.
4. Compose a theme about the nature of ambition and its corruption. Use examples from *Richard III*.
5. Create a handbill which will catch the eye of prospective playgoers. Use an illustration and appropriate lines which will intrigue the reader to come to the play.
6. Listen to recordings of Richard's famous oration to his army, which begins in Act V, Scene iii, line 353. Record your own reading, with appropriate emphasis on alliteration, meter, internal rhyme, parallel structure, tone, and themes.
7. Compare Richard with the villains in other Renaissance works, such as Iago and Macbeth from Shakespeare's *Othello* and *Macbeth*, Mephistopheles from Christopher Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus*, and Satan from John Milton's *Paradise Lost*.
8. Interview Shakespeare concerning his view of honor, valor, ambition, destiny, and kingship. Compare the Elizabethan attitude toward courage and leadership with that expressed in modern television, movies, fiction, and newspapers.
9. Write an extended definition of manipulation. Use examples from the play to illustrate your meaning.
10. Join with others to act out the final scenes of *Richard III* and *Macbeth*. Then lead a panel discussion of the courageous deaths of two ignoble characters. Discuss why the playwright allows his most villainous characters some dignity.

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VOCABULARY TEST

Replace the underlined word in each phrase below with the original word. Select from the list that follows. You will have answers left over when you finish.

- _____ 1. Erroneous servants!
- _____ 2. I every day expect an epistle
- _____ 3. You are too senseless-stubborn
- _____ 4. Which in a set hand fairly is absorbed
- _____ 5. That cannot see this tangible device
- _____ 6. The most restocked sweet work of Nature
- _____ 7. Bruised underneath the yoke of oppression
- _____ 8. Such announcement hath been made
- _____ 9. The plain devil and disguised looks
- _____ 10. Some certain bits of conscience are yet within me
- _____ 11. This would have been a biting witticism
- _____ 12. Dived into the world's trickery
- _____ 13. And 'twere retailed to all descendents
- _____ 14. Accursed and unquiet squabbling days
- _____ 15. How manages our noble brother?

bestial	carping	deceit	dissembling	dregs	embassage
engrossed	fares	infringing	instigation	jest	misconstrue
obstinate	palpable	posterity	proclamation	replenished	sanctuary
strategems	tyranny	unsatiable	untainted	vassals	wrangling

RICHARD III

COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Identification (20 points)

Match each phrase below with a modern interpretation. Select your answer from the lettered list.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| _____ 1. Hardly borne | A. quibbling |
| _____ 2. cross in talk | B. review in order |
| _____ 3. privy order | C. humility |
| _____ 4. poverty of spirit | D. confined |
| _____ 5. decline | E. deeply resented |
| _____ 6. doubtful hollow-hearted | F. of dubious loyalty |
| _____ 7. set abroad | G. that's enough |
| _____ 8. brooked | H. secret arrangement |
| _____ 9. mewed up | I. tolerated |
| _____ 10. go to | J. loose |

Part II: Character Identification (20 points)

Identify each quotation below with a name from the list that follows.

- _____ 1. O, 'tis a perilous boy,
Bold, quick, ingenious, forward, capable:
He is all the mother's, from the top to toe.
- _____ 2. O Buckingham, take heed o' yonder dog!
Look, when he fawns he bites; and when he bites,
His venom tooth will rankle to the death.
- _____ 3. The sweetest sleep, and fairest-boding dreams
That ever ent'red in a drowsy head
Have I since your departure had, my lords.
- _____ 4. O cursed be the hand that made these holes!
Cursed the heart that had the heart to do it!
- _____ 5. O Lord! methought what pain it was to drown!
What dreadful noise of waters in mine ears!
What sights of ugly death within mine eyes!
- _____ 6. My brother killed no man—his fault was thought—
And yet his punishment was bitter death.
- _____ 7. Alas, you three on me, threefold distressed,
Pour all your tears! I am your sorrow's nurse,
And I will pamper it with lamentation.
- _____ 8. I do not like the Tower, of any place.
Did Julius Caesar build that place, my lord?
- _____ 9. I'll have this crown of mine cut from my shoulders
Before I'll see the crown so foul misplaced.
- _____ 10. Ah ha, my lord, this prince is not an Edward!
He is not lulling on a lewd love-bed,
But on his knees at meditation . . .

Anne
Hastings

Buckingham
Prince of Wales

Clarence
Queen Margaret

Duchess of York
Richard

Edward IV
Earl of Richmond

RICHARD III

COMPEHENSION TEST B

Part I: Completion (20 points)

Complete each of the following statements with a word from the list below. You will have answers left over when you finish.

1. Dighton and _____, who I did suborn
To do this piece of ruthless butchery,
Albeit they were fleshed villains, bloody dogs,
Melted with tenderness and mild compassion . . .
2. The chaplain of the _____ hath buried them
But where, to say the truth, I do not know.
3. Come to me, _____, soon at after-supper.
When thou shalt tell the process of their death.
4. The son of _____ have I pent up close,
His daughter meanly have I matched in marriage . . .
5. . . . the sons of Edward sleep in Abraham's bosom,
And _____ my wife hath bid the world good night.
6. _____ with Richmond troubles me more near
Than Buckingham and his rash-levied strength.
7. Thou hadst an Edward, till a _____ killed him . . .
8. So may [Elizabeth] live unscarred of bleeding slaughter,
I will confess she was not _____'s daughter.
9. Go then and muster men. But leave behind your son, _____.
10. My liege, the Duke of _____ is taken.
That is the best news.

Anne	Buckingham	Clarence
Edward	Ely	Forrest
George Stanley	Margaret	palace
Prince of Wales	Richard	Richmond
Tower	Tyrrel	York

RICHARD III

Part II: Matching (20 points)

Match the following beginnings of sentences with their conclusions.

- _____ 1. Now is the winter of our discontent
- _____ 2. Plots have I laid, inductions dangerous,
By drunken prophecies, libels, and dreams,
- _____ 3. This day should Clarence closely be mew'd up
About a prophecy which says
- _____ 4. But I, that am not shaped for sportive tricks
Nor made to court an amorous looking glass . . .
- _____ 5. . . . Since I cannot prove a lover
To entertain these fair well-spoken days,
- _____ 6. Let me sit heavy on thy soul tomorrow!
- _____ 7. Harry, that prophesied thou shouldst be King,
- _____ 8. Bloody and guilty, guiltily awake
- _____ 9. Quiet untroubled soul, awake, awake!
- _____ 10. Dream on thy cousins smothered in the Tower.
- A. To set my brother Clarence and the King
In deadly hate the one against the other . . .
- B. I am determined to prove a villain
And hate the idle pleasure of these days.
- C. Doth comfort thee in thy sleep: live, and flourish!
- D. Arm, fight, and conquer, for fair England's sake!
- E. Cheated of feature by dissembling Nature,
Deformed, unfinished, sent before my time
Into this breathing world, scarce half made up . . .
- F. made glorious summer by this sun of York . . .
- G. Think how thou stab'dst me in my prime of youth
At Tewkesbury: despair therefore, and die!
- H. And in a bloody battle end thy days!
- I. that G
Of Edward's heirs the murderer shall be.
- J. Let us be lead within thy bosom, Richard,
And weigh thee down to ruin, shame and death!

RICHARD III

Part III: Short Answer (30 points)

Supply a word in answer to the following questions.

- _____ 1. Which character wonders if Julius Caesar built the tower?
- _____ 2. Whom does Richmond hope will give royal grandchildren to Queen Elizabeth?
- _____ 3. What does Richard give Anne in token of his affection?
- _____ 4. Which character blames witchcraft for withering his arm?
- _____ 5. Who is King Edward's mistress?
- _____ 6. What first name bodes ill to King Edward?
- _____ 7. On what charge is Clarence imprisoned?
- _____ 8. Whom is Anne mourning when she first appears in the play?
- _____ 9. Who acts as Richard's accomplice in crime in separating the crown prince from the queen's family?
- _____ 10. Which character is accused of having fathered illegitimate children?
- _____ 11. Where does the final battle take place?
- _____ 12. Who spreads rumors that Anne is ill?
- _____ 13. Whom does Richard hire to kill the two princes?
- _____ 14. Who has a fearful dream about drowning?
- _____ 15. On what holiday is Clarence murdered?

Part IV: Essay Questions (30 points)

1. Explain how Richard plans to maneuver himself onto the throne.

2. How does Richard charm Anne into marrying him?

3. Discuss the visions that plague Richard's dream.

RICHARD III

ANSWER KEYS

VOCABULARY TEST

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| 1. vassals | 9. dissembling |
| 2. embassy | 10. dregs |
| 3. obstinate | 11. jest |
| 4. engrossed | 12. deceit |
| 5. palpable | 13. posterity |
| 6. replenished | 14. wrangling |
| 7. tyranny | 15. fares |
| 8. proclamation | |

COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Identification (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. E | 6. F |
| 2. A | 7. J |
| 3. H | 8. I |
| 4. C | 9. D |
| 5. B | 10. G |

Part II: Character Identification (20 points)

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Richard | 6. Edward IV |
| 2. Queen Margaret | 7. Duchess of York |
| 3. Richmond | 8. Prince of Wales |
| 4. Anne | 9. Hastings |
| 5. Clarence | 10. Buckingham |

Part III: True/False (30 points)

- | | | |
|------|-------|-------|
| 1. T | 6. T | 11. T |
| 2. T | 7. F | 12. T |
| 3. F | 8. T | 13. T |
| 4. T | 9. F | 14. F |
| 5. F | 10. F | 15. F |

Part IV: Essay Questions (30 points)

Answers will vary.

COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Completion (20 points)

- | | |
|-------------|-------------------|
| 1. Forrest | 6. Ely |
| 2. Tower | 7. Richard |
| 3. Tyrrel | 8. Edward |
| 4. Clarence | 9. George Stanley |
| 5. Anne | 10. Buckingham |

Part II: Matching (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. F | 6. G |
| 2. A | 7. C |
| 3. I | 8. H |
| 4. E | 9. D |
| 5. B | 10. J |

Part III: Short Answers (30 points)

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Prince of Wales | 9. Buckingham |
| 2. Elizabeth | 10. Edward IV |
| 3. ring | 11. Bosworth Field |
| 4. Richard | 12. Richard |
| 5. Jane Shore | 13. Tyrrel |
| 6. George | 14. Clarence |
| 7. treason | 15. All Soul's Day |
| 8. Henry VI | |

Part IV: Essay Questions (30 points)

Answers will vary.



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