

Y8 Autumn 1



Shakespeare's Histories

WEEK 1

Task 1: Read the below information

Shakespeare: Social and Historical Context

Society

During Shakespeare's life, two monarchs reigned in England: Queen Elizabeth I (reigned 1558-1603) and King James I (reigned as James VI in Scotland from 1567, and then as James I in England and Ireland from 1603-1625).

Elizabethan and Jacobean society was very different to how society is structured today. There was a strict hierarchy of importance, with the Church right at the very top. People believed in the divine right of kings – they thought that God had chosen the monarch, and that he (or she) was acting out the will of God. There was no parliament, and people did not get to vote on what they wanted for society – everything was decided by the monarch and their counsellors.

Under the king or queen came the aristocracy (dukes, earls and barons), who owned large swathes of land and would often advise the monarch. These noblemen would attend court and provide accommodation for the king or queen if they were travelling around the country.

Beneath the aristocracy were the more 'ordinary' people. These were farmers, merchants and craftsmen, and were relatively well off. It was into this section of society that William Shakespeare was born in 1564.

Then came labourers or servants, who provided help in households and on farms. They were much poorer, but were protected by law in some ways – they had a set wage and were entitled to a day off every week.

Finally, at the very bottom of the pile were those who could not work, for various reasons. Very often, they were reduced to begging or depending on the church for assistance, although Elizabeth I brought in Poor Laws to give them some protection towards the end of her reign.

This belief in a strict hierarchy was not just confined to humans: Elizabethans believed in the concept of the 'great chain of being' – an order of importance that placed God at the top,



followed by angels, followed by the monarch and humanity, followed by animals. Within the animal kingdom, some animals were considered more important than others – so a lion, for example, was considered vastly superior to a sparrow. Even plants were thought to have an order of importance, with the oak tree being the most impressive plant.

Everything was deemed to have its place in the natural order of the world – if anything broke this order, it was considered disastrous.

In addition to this hierarchy, there was also a strict divide between men and women. Men were seen as superior in everything, and women were expected to obey them. When they were born, women were the property of their fathers, and once they were grown, their fathers could decide whom they married. Marriages were often business arrangements, with the woman being offered with a dowry – money and property – that was payable to her future husband. Once she was married, the woman became the property of her husband. That said, the fact that England had a female monarch meant that women in England were often seen as more free than their European counterparts. Although women were not educated in schools, some noble women still received thorough educations at home.

Task 2: Answer the following questions in full sentences.

1. Who were the two reigning monarchs during Shakespeare's life?
2. What is the 'divine right of kings'?
3. What was the 'great chain of being'?
4. How were women viewed in Shakespearean times?
5. What is a dowry?

Optional Extension: Conduct some more research on the social and historical context during the Shakespearean times:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/z726yrd/articles/zjdybqt>

WEEK 2

Task: Your task is revise the events of the plot of “Richard III”.

- Make sure who feel confident of what happens in each of the 5 acts of the play

To do this you could:

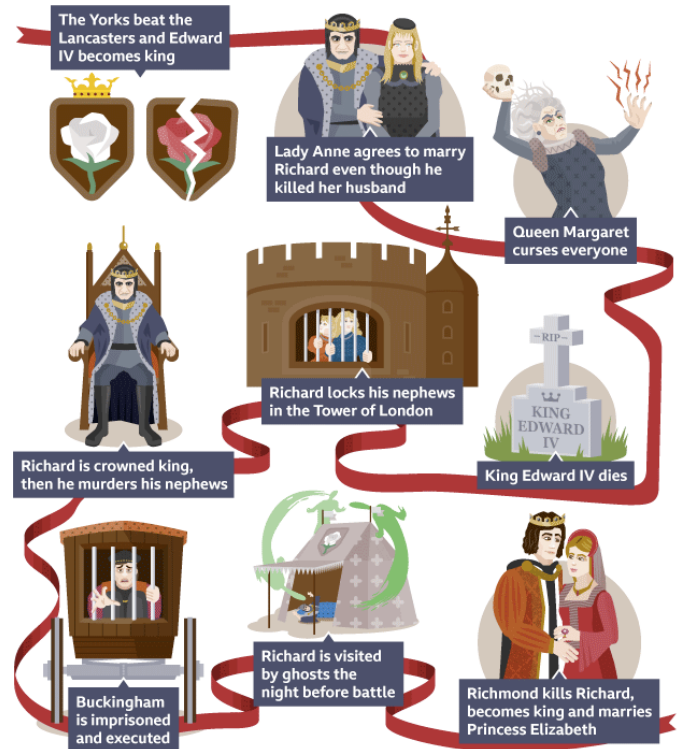
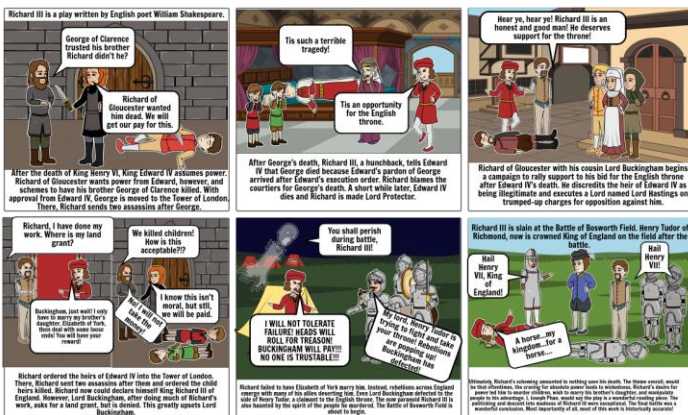
- read and/or watch plot summaries e.g. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tAfeD5x57xM>
- use revision websites: <https://www.shakespeare.org.uk/explore-shakespeare/shakespedia/shakespeares-plays/richard-iii/>

You must:

- Create a timeline or storyboard of the main plot points of the play (see below for some ideas)

Your teacher will:

- Your teacher will want to see your timeline or storyboard.
- Your teacher will ask questions to check understanding of the plot of the play



Optional Extension:

Read this article about why Shakespeare wrote history plays, with a focus on Richard III:

<https://www.britishcouncil.org/voices-magazine/shakespeare-stories-power-do-more-retell-history>

WEEK 3

Your task is to revise the themes of “Richard III”.

- Make sure you feel confident about what the main themes in the play are, and where and how in the play they are shown.

To do this please read the themes section of BBC bitesize and watch the accompanying videos:

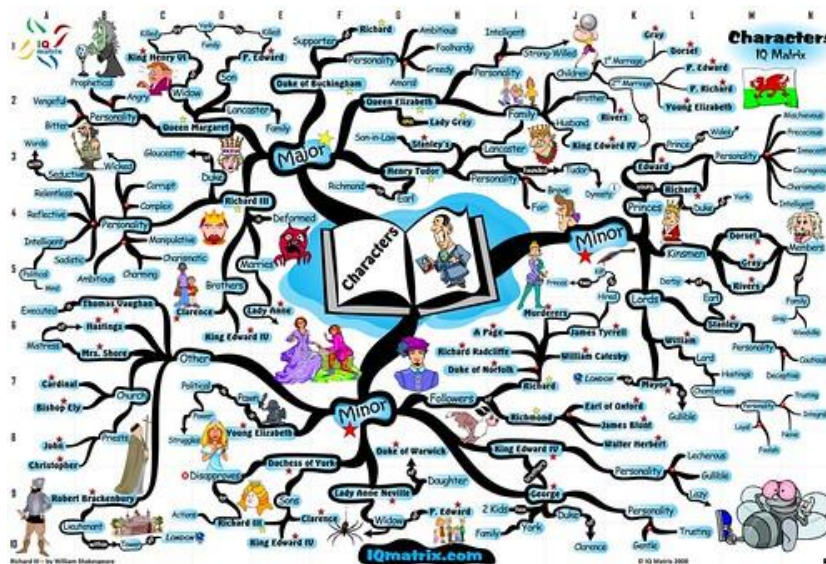
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zmxh34j/articles/zv3mtrd#:~:text=Some%20of%20the%20important%20themes,the%20Wars%20of%20the%20Roses.>

You must:

- Create a set of mind maps for each of the themes (Leadership, Families and Blood Ties and Fate)

Your teacher will want to see:

- Your mind maps
- Your teacher will ask questions to check understanding of the themes.



Optional

Extension: Write an analytical ‘what, how, why’ paragraph on one chosen theme.

-what is the theme?

-how is it presented (pick a key moment from the play)

-why is it presented in this way? What is Shakespeare trying to convey?

WEEK 4

Your task is to revise the characters of 'Richard III'.

To do this please read this page:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zytbg7h/articles/zrpsvwx>

You must:

- Create the following for each character (include: Richard III, Margaret, Queen Elizabeth, and two other characters of your choice).
 - 2 adjectives to describe their character
 - 2 pieces of information about the character
 - A description on how their character changes



2 adjectives:

-cunning

-immoral

2 pieces of information:

Richard is jealous of his brother's happiness

He feels ugly and unloved

How does he change?

Richard starts out bad and ends up bad. However, throughout the play he does start to lose control.

Your teacher will want to see:

- Your character profiles
- Your teacher will ask questions to check understanding of the characters.

Optional Extension: Write an analytical paragraph about one of the characters exploring how they are presented.

WEEK 5

Your task is to revise some key vocabulary.

Make sure you feel confident about the words on the page below, their spellings and their meanings.

You must:

- Create a Blooket or a Kahoot.
- **Test yourself or work with a friend or family member.** This could include making flashcards of the words with which you are less confident.

Your teacher will:

- Do a quick-fire key word quiz.

EXTENSION: Use the words in a sentence linking it to 'Richard III.'

	Word	Definition/In a Sentence
	civil war	A civil war is a war between citizens of the same country.
	dramatic irony	Dramatic irony is when the audience know something and the characters on stage do not.
	envious	Envious means jealous.
	illegitimate	If something or someone is illegitimate, this means that they are not recognised by law. In the past, a child who was born to unmarried parents would be called illegitimate.
	manipulate	To manipulate someone means to control them and make them do what you want in a sneaky and unkind way.
	monarch	A monarch is head of state, like a king or queen. (Monarchs are not elected, they inherit their title and power.)
	reign	Reign means to rule as a monarch or a monarch's time spent as king/queen.
	social commentary	A social commentary is when something (like a TV show, a book or a play) raises awareness of current issues.
	soliloquy	A soliloquy is when a character speaks their thoughts aloud for the audience to hear.
	speculation	Speculation is something that is not based wholly on facts; something that is guess or made up without proof.
	stage directions	Stage directions give instructions for actors to follow when they are performing a role.
	treason	Treason is when someone betrays their country or monarch.
	tyranny	Tyranny is the cruel and unreasonable use of power to control people.
	tyrant	A tyrant is a cruel leader.
	unscrupulous	Unscrupulous means not caring about what is the right thing to do; being selfish, dishonest and unfair.

WEEK 6

Your task is to explode a key quotation from “Richard III” and then write an analytical paragraph.

Your teacher will want to see:

- Your quotation explosion and your paragraph.

Example:

‘determined’ suggests that Richard III will be ruthless – he won’t let anyone get in the way of becoming a villain.

I am determined to prove a villain

And hate the idle pleasures of these days.

‘hate’ and ‘pleasures’ are juxtaposing words suggesting that Richard is determined to be the opposite of things associated with love and joy.

‘prove’ suggests that Richard was already born with an evil nature, and now just needs to ‘prove’ this through his actions.

Your turn

And thus I clothe my naked villany
With old odd ends stolen out of holy writ;
And seem a saint, when most I play the devil.
(1.3)

What is Richard saying here?

Connotations of clothing your villainy?

Why are saint and devil interesting words to put together?

What does it suggest about Richard’s actions?

Richard steals passages from the bible to quote. Why? What does this suggest about his character?

Paragraph Writing:

How is the character of Richard III presented?

Optional sentence starters:

Richard is presented as a ____ character evident when he claims, '_____' Here, Shakespeare uses [technique] to suggest ____ And the word '___' implies _____. This reveals to the audience that Richard is _____.

EXTENSION: Complete some more quotation explosions using quotations from this website:
<https://www.rsc.org.uk/richard-iii/about-the-play/famous-quotes>