

HENRY V

PRIMARY TEACHER PACK

ABOUT THIS PACK

This Primary Teachers' pack supports the RSC's 2015 production of *Henry V*, directed by Gregory Doran, which opened on 12 September 2015 at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon.

This pack is specifically designed to support Primary pupils participating in the broadcast of *Henry V* to UK schools on **Thursday 19 November at 9am**. There are more activities available in the *henry V* Teacher Pack that can be adapted for younger pupils.

For Primary pupils who are used to studying Shakespeare:

- We recommend that you view the whole production. This will start at 9am and is followed by a Q&A session with the actors where they will answer the questions you send in throughout the morning.

For Primary pupils who will be watching Shakespeare for the first time:

- We recommend that you watch –
 - Henry at War – join at approximately 9.25am to watch from Henry's decision to go to war until their victory is declared after Agincourt around 11:47am. This will still include both breaks.

For the above we recommend that you complete Activity 1 before watching as an understanding of the story will really help your pupils.

CONTENTS

Knowing the Story	Page 2
Exploring the Characters	Page 3
Staging War	Page 4
Resource Materials	Page 6

These symbols are used throughout the pack:

READ



Notes from the production, background info or extracts

ACTIVITY



An active classroom or open space activity

WRITE



A discussion or writing activity

LINKS



Useful web addresses and research activities

ABOUT YOUNG SHAKESPEARE NATION



Over six years, the RSC will be stage the 36 plays that make up the First Folio of Shakespeare's work. RSC Education invites you to join us on this inspirational journey in a new initiative called Young Shakespeare Nation continuing with *Henry V*.

Whether you want to teach a new play or teach in a new way, Young Shakespeare Nation can give you the tools and resources you need.

- Find inspiration online with images, video's, more teachers' packs and resources at www.rsc.org.uk/education
- Participate in our schools broadcast series, continuing with *Henry V* on 19 November 2014
- Explore a new text or a new way of teaching through our CPD programme
- Try one of our range of courses for teachers and pupils in Stratford-upon-Avon

Find out more at www.rsc.org.uk/education

KNOWING THE STORY



ACTIVITY 1: THE STORY IN PICTURES

Explain to pupils that the whole story of *Henry V* is about a newly crowned King who is looking to prove himself. The play follows young King Henry V as he leads his army to war in France, and focuses specifically on the famous battle of Agincourt, which the English won against the odds.

The following activity will help pupils to understand what happens to the King, his enemies and his followers both before and after the battle. You will need a copy of 'The Story in Pictures' resource in the Resource Materials.

Organise pupils into groups of four or five.

Provide each group of pupils with one of the images and descriptions from the resource, explaining that this shows one stage in the story.

- You might want to mix these up so that pupils need to find the correct description for the picture they have been given, or the other way around.

Encourage pupils to organise themselves into the correct order for the story, making sure the pictures and descriptions tell the story of the play.

- Ask each group to then go away and re-create the picture they have been given themselves, as a freeze frame.
 - Invite them to develop their freeze frames, animating them so that the characters move. Encourage them to use this an opportunity to tell the story of everything that is going on in their description.
 - Allow pupils to watch each group's animated freeze frame, in the order they have established, while you or a volunteer reads the descriptions.
 - This may be a good time to introduce the idea of the Chorus, who steps in to 'narrate' parts of the play. You could develop this idea with your pupils by asking them to write their own versions of the descriptions. What difference does it make if the images and the action are the same but the narration is different?
- Reflect with pupils on what they think this story is about. Is it about war? Is it about Henry V? Is about the ordinary men fighting the war? Or about the French? Could the Chorus have an effect on this?

EXPLORING THE CHARACTERS

The following activities are designed to help you and your pupils become more familiar with the character of the King. They can be used as preparatory activities in the classroom before pupils watch the play, or they can be used after watching the play to help pupils reflect on what they've seen.

WHO IS HENRY V?

Henry V is a new King at the start of the play and he changes a lot as he leads his country in the war in France.

Ask pupils to think about all they know about the play. How and why do they think Henry, or Harry as he's sometimes called, might change from beginning to end? What different kinds of character traits does he show?

Explain to pupils that Henry is often described in different ways and that they are going to explore some of those descriptions, looking at the kind of character the King is.

- Ask pupils to move around the room, stopping whenever a new description is called out. Each time a description of the King is given, they should stop and create a statue of that kind of person. Descriptions could include:
 - Clever Politician
 - Great Public Speaker
 - Strategist and Planner
 - A Leader who understands his people
 - Lover
- Organise pupils into groups of four or five and give them one of the sets of lines in the Resource materials. Ask them to look at the lines and decide which description of Henry best fits the lines.
- Reflect with pupils on what kind of person Henry is, if he can be described in all of these ways. Would he make a good leader?
- Invite pupils to work, in their groups, to create a single freeze frame or image showing the King. In their frame they should try to show all the different facets of the King that they have learnt about.
 - You may also want to use some of the lines they have already looked at and encourage them to animate their image, or bring it to life, with one or two of the lines.
- Allow each group to share their images with the rest of the class, asking them to explain their choices and what they show. Does everything they know about the King come across? Is it difficult or easy to show these things? What might be the challenges of playing this man?

STAGING WAR

Having looked at the character of Henry V, introduce the idea of War as a backdrop for the whole of this play. Focusing on the events before and after the battle of Agincourt the play looks at two conflicts in the hundred years war:

- The siege of Harfleur
- The battle of Agincourt



ACTIVITY 2: A BAND OF BROTHERS

The following activity will allow pupils to think about the ordinary men and soldiers that they will meet in the play and encourage them to begin considering how war might be staged.

- Ask pupils to stand in a circle and explain that they are going to play soldiers getting ready for war.
- Read the following instructions from the play to pupils, asking them to follow each of the steps for getting ready for war:
 - Stand on your own
 - Stiffen the sinews, conjure up the blood
 - Now set the teeth and stretch the nostrils wide
 - Hold hard the breath and bend up every spirit
- Introduce some of the verbs used in the play and ask pupils to create an action for each one:
 - Stand
 - Weep
 - Strike
 - Defend
 - Slaughter
 - Pity
- Repeat the list of verbs until the pupils have developed a routine which moves from one to the next, almost like a military drill.
- Invite pupils to work in pairs, asking each pair to identify six points in the room.
- Encourage the pairs to think about how they might move from one point in the room to the next, if they were on a military training exercise.
 - For example, they might march, then run, then crawl. Ask pupils to think about pace, heights and emotions.
- Allow pupils to practice, moving from one point to the next around the room in the ways they have decided as you call out numbers 1-6.
- Challenge pupils further, by then asking them to complete the actions for each of the verbs they practiced when they reach their six points.
- Invite pupils to go through this routine several times until it becomes established.
- Reflect with pupils on how it feels to keep completing the routine. How would you feel as a soldier who does this every day?

- Develop this activity by reading the below text from Henry's speech to the men at the siege of Harfleur, urging them on, as they complete their training routine.
- Ask pupils to think about what they have done and what they heard in the speech as they worked. What does it feel like to be a soldier in the game? Where were the challenges? Did the words from their leader make any difference? Which words in the speech jumped out at them? Were there any particular words or phrases that made a difference?



ACTIVITY 3: ST CRISPIAN'S DAY

Like all leaders in war, or in a battle, Henry V has to try and encourage his men to fight and to make them really passionate about winning against France.

Ask pupils to think about any war leaders they know about. How might they persuade soldiers to follow them, even to their deaths?

- You may want to look at examples with them, such as Winston Churchill's speech and start to pick out one or two techniques that leaders use to persuade, such as:
 - Questions
 - Repetition

- Ask pupils to walk around the space at a 'normal' pace. As they walk, read them Henry V's speech from Act 4 Scene 1 and instruct them to stop walking and call out 'Stop' every time they think he finishes a thought.
 - At each stopping point ask pupils to think about meaning and to translate each thought. This way they will build a translation of the speech together as a group.

- Invite one volunteer to read the speech aloud, with half the remaining pupils echoing or repeating any words they hear which are about the human body and the other half echoing or repeating any words that are about God or religion.

- Reflect with pupils on what kind of language is used in this speech. What strategies is Henry using to try and persuade his men to fight? Why might they be effective?

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The Royal Shakespeare Company
3, Chapel Lane
Stratford on Avon
Warwickshire
CV37 6BE
www.rsc.org.uk

RESOURCES

Henry V Lines

'You have witchcraft in your lips, Kate.' (5.2 – l. 223)

'Our children and our sins lay on the King!

We must bear all.' (4.1 – l. 186)

'May I with right and conscience make this claim?' (1.2 – l. 98)

'We few, we happy few, we band of brothers' (4.3 – l. 62)

'Your naked infants spitted upon pikes . . . ' (3.3 – l. 38)

'God, for Harry, England, and Saint George!' (3.1 – l. 34)

Henry's Speech at Harfleur (Act 3 Scene 1)

Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more,
Or close the wall up with our English dead.
In peace there's nothing so becomes a man
As modest stillness and humility,
But when the blast of war blows in our ears,
Then imitate the action of the tiger:
Stiffen the sinews, conjure up the blood,
Disguise fair nature with hard-favoured rage,
Then lend the eye a terrible aspect:
Now set the teeth and stretch the nostril wide,
Hold hard the breath and bend up every spirit
To his full height. On, on, you noblest English,
Whose blood is fet from fathers of war-proof,
Fathers that, like so many Alexanders,
Have in these parts from morn till even fought
And sheathed their swords for lack of argument.
Dishonour not your mothers: now attest
That those whom you called fathers did beget you.
Be copy now to men of grosser blood,
And teach them how to war. And you, good yeomen,
Whose limbs were made in England, show us here
The mettle of your pasture: let us swear
That you are worth your breeding, which I doubt not,
For there is none of you so mean and base,
That hath not noble lustre in your eyes.
I see you stand like greyhounds in the slips,
Straining upon the start. The game's afoot:
Follow your spirit, and upon this charge
Cry 'God for Harry, England, and Saint George!'

St Crispian's Day Speech (Act 4 Scene 1)

This day is called the feast of Crispian:
He that outlives this day, and comes safe home,
Will stand a tip-toe when the day is named,
And rouse him at the name of Crispian.
He that shall live this day, and see old age,
Will yearly on the vigil feast his neighbours,
And say 'To-morrow is Saint Crispian:'
Then will he strip his sleeve and show his scars.
And say 'These wounds I had on Crispin's day.'
Old men forget: yet all shall be forgot,
But he'll remember with advantages
What feats he did that day: then shall our names
Familiar in his mouth as household words
Harry the king, Bedford and Exeter,
Warwick and Talbot, Salisbury and Gloucester,
Be in their flowing cups freshly remember'd.
This story shall the good man teach his son;
And Crispin Crispian shall ne'er go by,
From this day to the ending of the world,
But we in it shall be remember'd;
We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;
For he to-day that sheds his blood with me
Shall be my brother; be he ne'er so vile,
That fought with us upon Saint Crispian's day.

The story in Pictures



Newly crowned King Henry needs money. The powerful church bishops tell him he should attack France and take back land once held by the English rather than get the money from the churches. Meanwhile, the Dauphin, son of the French King, sends his ambassador to tell Henry to stay out of France. The ambassador also brings a gift for Henry; tennis balls.



The ordinary men and soldiers of England start to prepare for war. They all have their own reasons for leaving. The French know of Henry's plans because three traitorous English noblemen have sold the information to them. Henry has been warned of this treachery and he summons Richard Earl of Cambridge, Henry Lord Scroop and Sir Thomas Grey, the three traitorous nobles who have been dealing with the French.



Meanwhile, at the court of the King of France, the Dauphin expresses his contempt for Henry and his troops. He and his father, the King, exchange differing views. English ambassadors arrive at the French court to deliver an ultimatum from King Henry.



Henry and his very small army now arrive at the French port of Harfleur and lay siege to the town. Tunnels are dug under the walls, scaling ladders are set up and battering rams assembled. Henry urges his men to fight for the honour of England and ends with a battle cry.



Henry wins at Harfleur. The Dauphin has sent no reinforcements for the French army and the Governor is terrified by Henry's threats. The King of France sends his herald to tell Henry the French have so far they have not fought seriously; from now on they will fight back properly. Henry sends back a sharp reply.



It is night. The French army, healthy and feasting on rich foods from their own country, are settled comfortably round their campfires. The Dauphin and his friends are boasting about who has the best horse and the strongest armour. A messenger rushes in to announce that the English are pitching their camp very near. The French anticipate an easy victory tomorrow.



It is past midnight. Henry disguises himself as an ordinary man and walks alone through the English camp, through the sleeping soldiers. He is challenged by a sentry called Pistol. Later the same night, still in disguise, he meets up with another group of soldiers. One of them, a man called Michael Williams, says the King will have the blood of the dead soldiers on his conscience. When he is alone, Henry cannot help but feel this responsibility.



The English prepare for battle at Agincourt. At the final moment King Henry speaks to his men. He tells them that anyone who does not want to fight can leave now but no one leaves. He then inspires them with his speech and they go to war. Despite being outnumbered five to one the English manage to get the upper hand.



Henry has to urge his soldiers on several times but during the fighting the French round up and kill all of the English baggage boys which leads Henry, in anger, to order the death of all the French prisoners. At the end, victory is declared for the English.



The English and French kings and their courtiers meet to sort out the peace settlement after the fighting. Henry leaves his noblemen to do this while he meets alone with the French Princess Katherine. He convinces her to marry him, despite her not speaking much English. The French King and Queen bless the marriage and the play ends with hope for a better future.

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