

# RICHARD II

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

## EDUCATION PACK 2: THE ACTOR'S JOURNEY

### ABOUT THIS PACK

This is the second of **THREE** teachers' packs supporting the RSC's 2013 production of *Richard II*, directed by Artistic Director Gregory Doran, which opened on 10 October at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon.

The packs are specifically designed to support KS3-4 students participating in the broadcast of *Richard II* to UK schools on **Friday 15 November at 9.30am**, although activities can be adapted for different age groups. Each pack will explore the process of one of the artists at the heart of the production.

This pack focusses on the different stages that an actor goes through in exploring and interpreting the language of the text and bringing it to life, looking specifically at Nigel Lindsay's portrayal of Henry Bolingbroke. It will be followed by one further pack, for use after seeing the production, which will focus on design.

The words of Nigel Lindsay, who plays Bolingbroke, are used throughout this pack and are indicated in red italics.

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These symbols are used throughout the pack:



#### READ

Notes from the production, background info or extracts



#### ACTIVITY

A classroom or open space activity



#### WRITE

A writing activity



#### LINKS

Useful web addresses

## ABOUT YOUNG SHAKESPEARE NATION



Over the next six years, the RSC will 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 starting with *Richard II*.

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](http://www.rsc.org.uk/education)
- Participate in our schools broadcast series, starting with *Richard II* on 15 November
- Explore a new text or a new way of teaching through our CPD programme
- Try one of our range of courses for teachers and students in Stratford-upon-Avon.

Find out more at [www.rsc.org.uk/education](http://www.rsc.org.uk/education)

## THE ACTOR'S JOURNEY

*"For me rehearsal is always about the chance to fail. You have to be in what you consider to be a safe environment and feel able to let yourself go. It's a place where you have a chance to try things and find out if they work and to explore and experiment"*

The actors who make up the *Richard II* Company use the six week rehearsal period to work together in creating the world of the play, developing their portrayal of the character they have been cast as and exploring the interpretative possibilities of the play. Looking at individual scenes, the cast can try out ideas with the Director. Sometimes they will also work with members of the voice and movement departments who can help the actors to explore specific elements of their performance.

Each actor has a different way of exploring their character, their lines and their role. This pack follows the journey of Nigel Lindsay through this particular rehearsal process, drawing on his experiences in the *Richard II* Company.

Throughout this pack you will find quotes and insights from Nigel as well as references to some of the production diaries which can be found at:

<http://onscreen.rsc.org.uk/richard-ii/production-diary.aspx>

# SETTING AND INTERPRETATION

"Greg (Doran, the Director) has quite a meticulous way of working so in the first week we went through the text. This stage was really important as you really do need to go through this play carefully to see where you are and what you're doing"

Led by the Director, the acting company spends a significant amount of time reading and analysing scenes together before they start to work with them practically.

The following activities and discussions are designed to help you and your students explore meaning and interpretation, using Act 1 Scenes 1 & 3.



## THE OPENING SCENE

The opening scene of *Richard II* sees Bolingbroke accusing Mowbray of killing his Uncle, the Duke of Gloucester, in front of King Richard. This highly dramatic scene can be seen as a catalyst for the rest of the play's events and the tournament which takes place in scene 3.



## ACTIVITY 1: PLACE AND SPEECH

In order to help the audience connect with the opening scene, and appreciate the significance of Gloucester's death, Gregory Doran has chosen to open the play at the Duke of Gloucester's funeral rather than at court. Ask students to work through the following activity, considering the importance of setting and its impact on the text.

- Invite students to form a circle.
- Ask students to step into the circle and move around the space as though they are in the following scenarios:
  - A friend's Birthday Party where you want to meet as many people as you can.
  - A session at Parliament where you want to impress your colleagues.
  - The Funeral of a relative where you want to pay your respects to the deceased.
- As students are moving around the space, ask them to greet the people they pass, speaking to each person for no more than 20 seconds.
- Invite students to reflect on the differences in their movement and the way they speak to one another in those settings. How are they different?
- As a whole group look at the parts of Bolingbroke and Mowbray, and the accusations they make against each other (See 'Act 1 Scene 1 Extract' in the Resource Materials).



Nigel Lindsay, Jane Lapotaire and David Tennant in Rehearsal. Photo by Kwame Lestrade.

- Organise students into two lines facing each other. Ask one team to read the lines of Bolingbroke and then repeat this with the second team and Mowbray's lines.
- Read the two accusations again, asking students to stamp on the floor when they reach words that they think have a particular impact or force. Reflect on why this might be and what the differences between these two characters might be. This could be further developed by asking students to translate individual lines in pairs, in the same way that the acting company does, to get a clear sense of what they are saying.
- In threes, ask students to create a short version of this scene between the two men and King Richard. Each group should set the scene in one of the settings they explored in the introductory activity.
- Consider together how the two speeches are affected by setting them at the funeral of a relative and how this is different to the other two interpretations.
- Introduce the idea that Gregory Doran has set the opening scene at the funeral of Gloucester. What impact might this have on an audience?



## LOOKING AT THE LISTS

The argument between Bolingbroke and Mowbray comes to a conclusion in Act 1 scene 3, when the two men come face to face and prepare to fight each other in the lists.

After the company reads through the scenes on the page the actors start to look at different ways of playing those scenes. The Director decides on the order in which the scenes should be worked and how much time should be spent on each one. This work is always supported by physical and vocal warm up activities. Some scenes, like the lists in Act 1, will also involve the company's Fight Director and Movement Director.

*"A day in rehearsal normally starts with a company warm up, which involves the whole company. That then prepares you for the work you do on the individual scenes"*

Terry King, the Company's fight Director, spent time working with Nigel Lindsay and the rest of the cast on how the company can create tension and anticipation for the audience in the build-up to Scene 3's tournament so that the audience would experience the same feeling as the spectators at a tournament would have felt.



## ACTIVITY 2: CREATING RITUAL

Using the stage directions offered in the Resource Materials (entitled 'Ritual in Act 1 Scene 3'), ask students to work through the following activity exploring movement and ritual and how they can create tension in this highly dramatic scene.

- Separate the group into two, with one half representing Mowbray and the other half Bolingbroke.
- Using the words from the stage directions and quotes in the scene ask each group of students to create a movement or gesture for each word or phrase. You might want to select 4 or 5 for the group to focus on.
- Every movement should carry them forward one step. Appoint a voluntary 'leader' for each team to decide on the movements.

- Arrange the groups so that they are on opposite sides of the space, facing each other. Explain that they are going to advance towards each other using the movements their 'leaders' decided on.
- Using a drum beat, or a steady rhythm, ask them to move towards each other. They should complete one of their movements on every drum beat, to keep their advance steady. You could choose to speed this up as they draw closer to increase tension.
- Just as the students reach one another announce (as King Richard does in the play) "Stay" and "Let them lay by their helmets and their spears,/And both return back to their chairs again"
- Reflect with the students on how they felt to have that chance taken away? What was the effect of all that ritual when it was put together? How did those movements help to increase tension and why would Shakespeare do this when he knows their fight will be interrupted? How does it make us feel towards Richard, Bolingbroke and Mowbray?

## GETTING INTO CHARACTER

*"When you're first on your feet and working through scenes with other actors you want freedom to do whatever you like and to have a Director who knows that's not how it's necessarily going to end up"*

As they become more familiar with their scenes the acting Company takes the chance to "try things out and get to know other people and how they're going to work on stage". The rehearsal process is designed to give the cast time to explore their characters in a number of different ways. The room is full of props and clothes that the actors can use and play with to help them learn more about their characters with the Director.

*"I like to get on my feet quite quickly and I prefer to wear clothes in the rehearsal room that might reflect who my character is. For Bolingbroke I'm wearing strong stout shoes, gloves and a sword. That strategy just helps you to get the feel of who your character is"*

The following suggestion will help students to explore some of the other characters in the play and the ways in which these characters can be brought to life.



The rehearsal room. Photo by RSC Education

### CHARACTER TRAITS

Nigel Lindsay feels that sturdy boots, a sword and gloves help him to inhabit the character of Bolingbroke. You might choose to encourage students to think about three props that could represent each of the other characters, looking at the character list in the Resource Materials. This could be developed by providing physical props or sections of text about each character as guidance.

# BECOMING A LEADER

In order to unlock the language of the play and the journey of each character the actors look at their speech and delivery with the company's vocal coach, Head of Voice Lyn Darnley. These vocal sessions are usually one to one and draw on a number of strategies to unlock the nuances of the text. This also helps actors to develop their performance and prepares them for the challenges of the thrust stage of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre. You can see some of this work in the fourth production diary at: <http://onscreen.rsc.org.uk/richard-ii/production-diary-4.aspx>

*"It's very different working on Shakespeare. Initially it can be more difficult to get inside the characters, but it's easier to work with the lines. So, once you're comfortable with your lines the rhythm of them tells you which words to stress and can reveal the feelings and intentions of the characters really clearly"*



## BOLINGBROKE'S CAMPAIGN

After the death of his father, John of Gaunt, Bolingbroke returns to England. A number of other characters then join him as he travels around England gathering support. To create a collective sense of his journey, Gregory Doran used a map of the United Kingdom to chart his movements. As a research task this might also help students to understand the scale of the rebellion.

As Bolingbroke returns to England and begins his campaign the audience sees him trying to establish his own different style of leadership and justice. The following activity is designed to help you explore Bolingbroke's language, the structure of his speech at this stage in the play and to consider his approach to leadership.



## ACTIVITY 3: JUSTIFYING ACTIONS

In Act 3 scene 1, in front of his new supporters, Bolingbroke chooses to remove Richard's more faithful followers. In his opening speech he lists the reasons for Bushy and Green's executions.

- Invite students to form a circle.
- Provide each student with their own copy of the speech Bolingbroke makes at the start of the scene ('Act 3 scene 1' in the Resource Materials). Read this speech aloud together, taking turns around the circle, with each student reading one line only.
- Read the text again, this time asking students to repeat or echo any words that stand out to them. After listening to this, ask students to think about who Bolingbroke is talking to and why.
- Invite students to read the speech aloud individually, this time walking as they speak. Ask them to change the direction they are walking in at every punctuation mark.

- Ask pairs to look at the section of the text not in bold and try to identify the four main reasons that Bolingbroke claims these men should die. What do these mean? Why does he feel he has to explain? Who is he talking to?
- Select one student to stand in the middle of the circle and read the lines in bold from the speech again. As they read ask the rest of the group to repeat any uses of the words 'me', 'mine', 'my' and 'I'.
- Ask students what they notice in that section. What kind of person would talk like this? What kind of regime might he create?

*"I think Bolingbroke genuinely believes that he is just coming back for his land at the beginning. He's managed to convince himself that he's not doing anything wrong and he doesn't even realise that he's even got his eyes on the crown."*

## COMPARING THE COURTS



### THE DEPOSITION

During the rehearsal process Nigel Lindsay and the rest of the cast had the opportunity to hear historian James Shapiro, author of '1599', talk about the importance of the deposition scene and how the scene builds up to Richard's ceremonial hand over of the crown to Bolingbroke. This scene shows the contrast between the way Bolingbroke manages the Lords who have followed him and Richard's style of leadership as he hands over his crown. You can hear James Shapiro discussing the significance of this moment in the play in the fifth production diary at: <http://onscreen.rsc.org.uk/richard-ii/production-diary-5.aspx>.

*"There is a journey with Bolingbroke that I hadn't noticed before. When he comes back from France he is incredibly grateful to everyone for following him, saying they will be worthily rewarded. Later he then changes, and starts commanding people. There's a complete switch in his language"*

For an actor, it is important to develop a sense of "journey" for their character and to be able to explore different ways of playing pivotal moments in the play. Every actor will have their own approach to this, but as the company starts to run the different scenes together that journey begins to form.

*"In our script my character is still referred to as 'Bolingbroke' even after Richard has been deposed and the crown is put on my head. Part of my process was to go through and tip-ex out all those places and change them to 'King Henry'. This really helped me to get into the right mind-set as his attitude changes to the people around him and he expects more deference"*



## RICHARD AND BOLINGBROKE

In his speech outside Flint castle Bolingbroke announces:

**"Methinks King Richard and myself should meet  
With no less terror than the elements  
Of fire and water...  
Be he the fire, I'll be the yielding water".**

- Ask students to decide, thinking about the four elements of earth, air, fire and water, which two elements they would expect to represent Bolingbroke and which they would expect to represent Richard.
- Using 'The Two Courts' in the Resource Materials ask students to look at the quotations from Bolingbroke's new court at the start of the deposition scene. Reflect on what kind of King they think he would make, based on these.
- Then ask students to look at the quotations taken from Acts 1 and 2, looking at Richard's court.
- Ask students to decide on 5 different adjectives to describe the two courts. Do these impressions match with the elements they chose earlier?
- In groups, challenge students to create a 30 second play depicting part of a day in that court. This could be set as a specific challenge to create a dinner scene in this court or you could leave it open.
- Allow students the opportunity to watch, or visit, the different courts and to explain their impressions and choices.
- Reflect with students on which court would be a better one to live in.

# RESOURCES

## ACT 1 SCENE 1 EXTRACT (Edited by RSC Education)

**KING RICHARD II**

What doth our cousin lay to Mowbray's charge?  
It must be great that can inherit us  
So much as of a thought of ill in him.

**HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

Look, what I speak, my life shall prove it true;  
That all the treasons for these eighteen years  
Complotted and contrived in this land  
Fetch from false Mowbray their first head and  
spring.

Further I say, and further will maintain  
Upon his bad life to make all this good,  
That he did plot the Duke of Gloucester's death,  
Sluiced out his innocent soul through streams of  
blood:

Which blood, like sacrificing Abel's, cries,  
Even from the tongueless caverns of the earth,  
To me for justice and rough chastisement;  
And, by the glorious worth of my descent,  
This arm shall do it, or this life be spent.

**KING RICHARD II**

How high a pitch his resolution soars!  
Thomas of Norfolk, what say'st thou to this?

**THOMAS MOWBRAY**

Then, Bolingbroke, as low as to thy heart,  
Through the false passage of thy throat, thou  
liest.

For Gloucester's death,  
I slew him not; but to my own disgrace  
Neglected my sworn duty in that case.  
This is my fault: as for the rest appell'd,  
It issues from the rancour of a villain,  
A recreant and most degenerate traitor  
Which in myself I boldly will defend;  
And interchangeably hurl down my gage  
Upon this overweening traitor's foot,  
To prove myself a loyal gentleman  
Even in the best blood chamber'd in his bosom.  
In haste whereof, most heartily I pray  
Your highness to assign our trial day.

### RITUAL IN ACT 1 SCENE 3

The following are stage directions and instructions taken from Ascene 3:

*Enter in Armour*

*Flourish*

*Enter King*

*Enter Herald*

*"say who thou art... and what's thy quarrel?" (To Mowbray)*

*"what is thy name?" (To Bolingbroke)*

*"what's thy quarrel?" (To Bolingbroke)*

*Attendant gives lance to Bolingbroke*

*Attendant gives lance to Mowbray*

*Charge sounded*

*A long flourish*

## CHARACTER LIST

### 15 characters from *Richard II*

King Richard II, King of England

Queen, Richard's wife

John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, Richard's Uncle

Henry Bolingbroke, Duke of Hereford, John of Gaunt's son

Duke of York, Edmund of Langley, Richard's Uncle

Duchess of York, his wife

Duke of Aumerle, their son

Duchess of Gloucester, widow of Thomas of Woodstock the Duke of Gloucester  
(Richard's Uncle)

Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk

Bishop of Carlisle

Bushy

Bagot

Green

Earl of Northumberland

Harry Percy, Northumberland's son

The *Richard II* Family Tree, which can be found at [www.rsc.org.uk/education](http://www.rsc.org.uk/education), will provide more information about some of these characters and their relationships as well as giving you access to past production pictures of many of them.

## ACT 3 SCENE 1 EXTRACT

HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Bring forth these men.

I will unfold some causes of your deaths.  
You have misled a prince, a royal king,  
A happy gentleman in blood and lineaments,  
By you unhappied and disfigured clean:  
You have in manner with your sinful hours  
Made a divorce betwixt his queen and him,  
Broke the possession of a royal bed  
And stain'd the beauty of a fair queen's  
cheeks

With tears drawn from her eyes by your foul  
wrongs.

Myself, a prince by fortune of my birth,  
Near to the king in blood, and near in love  
Till you did make him misinterpret me,  
Have stoop'd my neck under your injuries,  
And sigh'd my English breath in foreign  
clouds,

Eating the bitter bread of banishment;

**Whilst you have fed upon my signories,  
Dispark'd my parks and fell'd my forest  
woods,**

**From my own windows torn my household coat,  
Razed out my imprese, leaving me no sign,  
Save men's opinions and my living blood,  
To show the world I am a gentleman.**

This and much more, much more than twice all  
this,

Condemns you to the death.

## THE TWO COURTS

### Bolingbroke's Court (Act 4 Scene 1)

"Call forth Bagot"

"There is my gage, the manual seal of death"

"there is my gage, Aumerle, in gage to thine"

"Dishonorable boy!/That lie shall lie heavy"

"I... spit upon him, whilst I say he lies,/And lies, and lies."

"these differences shall all rest under gage"

"Your differences shall all rest under gage/Till we assign you to your days of trial"

### Richard II's Court (Act 1 Scenes 1 & 3)

"Then call them to our presence./Face to face,/And frowning brow to brow, ourselves will hear/Th'accuser and the accused freely speak"

"Wrath-kindled gentlemen, be ruled by me"

"We will descend and fold him in our arms"

"Lay on our royal sword your banished hands;/Swear by the duty that you owe to God –"

"Let them lay by their helmets and their spears"