Study Guide for Educators

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PCPA – Pacific Conservatory Theatre
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Welcome, your grace, to PCPA - Pacific Conservatory Theatre.

A NOTE TO THE TEACHER
Thank you for bringing your students to PCPA at Allan Hancock College. Our top priority is to provide an enjoyable day of live theater for the audience. We offer you this study guide as a tool to prepare students prior to the performance, to prompt discussion, critical thought, and creativity before and after the performance.

THE LAWS OF OUR LAND
Notable behavior is a vital part of theater for youth. Going to the theater is not a casual event. It is a special occasion. If students are prepared properly, it will be a memorable, educational experience they will remember for years.

1. A tutor should always be with the students! Ushers are available to help with seating. We suggest that teachers sit in between students to help maintain peace in the kingdom.

2. Please remind our young patrons that we do not permit the following in our towers:
   † food, gum, drinks, smoking, hats, backpacks, or large purses
   † disruptive talking
   † disorderly and inappropriate behavior (stepping on/over seats, throwing objects, etc.)
   † cell phones or any other recording devices
   † light up or noise making objects (including shoes)
   † patrons should put cell phones on silent or vibrate

3. Before attending the show, teachers should take time to remind students about a live performances:
   Sometimes we forget when we come into a theater that we are one of the most important parts of the production. Without an audience there would be no performance. Your contribution of laughter, quiet attention, and applause is part of the play. When we watch movies or television we are watching images on a screen, and what we say or do cannot affect them. In the theater the actors are real people who are present and creating an experience with us at that very moment. They see and hear us and are sensitive to our response. They know how we feel about the play by how we watch and listen. An invisible bond is formed between actors and a good audience, and it enables the actors to do their best for you. A good audience helps make a good performance.

PCPA welcomes you as a partner in the live theater experience from the moment you take your seats. We hope that your visit will be a highlight of your school year!
HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This study guide is a companion to the stage production of Richard III and is designed to explore many of the thematic elements and to enhance the theatrical experience. Richard III reflects part of the history of the English empire. It also wrestles with and explores questions regarding the human condition and nature. How far are you willing to go for your beliefs? To save others? Take a step into the battles of those we see as tyrants and see if their brain and thoughts are that far different from your own.

The guide has been organized into three major sections:

Elements of the Story

Elements of the Production

Activities

Teachers and group leaders will want to select portions of the guide for their specific usage. The discussion questions provided are meant to provoke a line of thought about a particular topic. Frequently, the answers to the questions will initiate a process of exploration and discovery of varied interpretations sometimes deviating from original ideas. It is recommended that these thoughts be encouraged and discussed. This can be as insightful and rewarding as the breathtaking experience that Richard III creates onstage.

In addition to this study guide, we encourage you to look at some other outside literature. This is an opportunity to see how the same story can be told in different ways.


The original game of thrones...

RICHARD III
by William Shakespeare

Written by WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

CREATIVE TEAM

Director Robynn Rodriguez
Fight Choreographer Mark Booher
Scenic Design Jason Bolen
Costume Design Eddy L. Barrows
Lighting Design Jennifer ‘Z’ Zornow
Sound Design Andrew Mark Wilhelm
Stage Manager Ellen Beltramo

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Ghost of Richard II………. Kevin Rae
Ghost of Henry IV……………… Don Stewart*
Ghost of Henry V………………… Matt Koenig
Ghost of Henry VI…………….. Garret Lawrence
Ghost of Prince Edward, son of Henry VI………………… Seryozha La Porte
Edward IV, King of England… Andrew Stein*
Richard, Duke of Gloucester, his brother, later Richard III……. Ducky B."B. B."
Duke of Clarence, his brother… Matt Koenig
Duke of York, his son……………… Chloé Babes
Prince Edward, his son……………… Gracie Snyder
Duchess of York, his mother… Polly Firestone Walker
Queen Elizabeth, wife of Edward IV………………… Elizabeth Stuart*
Lord Rivers, her brother………. Alex Jean
Lord Grey, her son………………… Dylan Perry
Marquess of Dorset, her son… Tux Johnson
Queen Margaret, window of Henry VI………………… Kitty Balay*
Lady Anne, widow of Prince Edward son of Henry VI……….. Karin Hendricks
Lord Hasting…………………… Michael Tremblay
Jane Shore…………………… Kyla Kennedy
Duke of Buckingham………. George Walker
Sir Robert Brakenbury……… Brad Carroll
Sir Thomas Vaughn…………… Will Hoshida
Sir William Catesby………… Leo Cortez
Sir Richard Ratcliffe………… Antwon Mason
Sir James Tyrrel……………… Tim Samaniego
Murderer………………………… Seryozha La Porte
Soldier………………………… Zach Johnson
Court Lady………………… Sierra Wells
Court Lady………………… Molly Wetzel
Lord Mayor of London……… Garret Lawrence
Bishop of Ely…………………. Kevin Rae
Stanley, Earl of Derby………… Don Stewart*
Young Stanley, his son……….. Delaney Brummé
Earl of Richmond, his son-in-law, later Henry VII…… Matt Koenig
Sir James Blunt………………. Brandon Molina
Earl of Oxford………………… Taylor Chambers

Ensemble – plays Citizens, Soldiers, Attendants and Messengers:
Taylor Chambers, Brandon Molina, Zach Johnson, Kyla Kennedy, Matt Koenig, Seryozha La Porte
Garret Lawrence, Sierra Wells, Molly Wetzel

* Member, Actors’ Equity Association
The Roots of the Story – Dramatis Personae

**Edward IV:** King from the York line who takes the crown after Henry VI's death.

**Richard, Duke of Gloucester:** Younger brother of Edward IV who later becomes Richard III. After the death of Edward, he commands the murders of his brother Clarence as well as his nephews, the Duke of York and Prince Edward. He seduces and marries Lady Anne, but then has her killed. While trying to secure the throne and his crown, he is killed at the battle of Bosworth.

**Duke of Clarence:** Edward IV and Richard's brother. He supports the blood succession of the Duke of York. He is murdered on orders from Richard.

**Prince Edward:** Son of Edward IV and crown prince. Murdered in the tower.

**Duke of York:** Younger son of Edward IV. Murdered on Richard’s orders.

**Duchess of York:** Mother of Edward, Richard and Clarence, and grandmother of the princes. She is quick to curse Richard III and the day he was born.

**Queen Elizabeth:** Widow of Edward IV. She is helpless to save her sons from Richard's murdering hand and her daughter from his lusting eye.

**Lord Rivers and Lord Grey:** Relatives of Queen Elizabeth who oppose Richard. They are captured and executed.

**Marquess of Dorset:** Son from Queen Elizabeth's first marriage. He joins Richmond in opposing Richard.

**Queen Margaret:** French widow of Henry VI. She revels in cursing and watching the destruction of the York line that overthrew her husband.

**Lady Anne:** Widow of Edward, son of Henry VI. Richard III kills both her husband, father-in-law, and convinces Anne to marry him before ordering her murder as well.

**Earl of Richmond:** Court member living in France. He opposes Richard and returns to England to take back his land. He kills Richard III and becomes Henry VII, instilling a new line of monarchs, the Tudors.

**Duke of Buckingham, Sir William Catesby, Sir Richard Ratcliffe, and Sir James Tyrrel:** Supporters of Richard III.

**Lord Hasting, Sir Thomas Vaughn, Stanley, Earl of Derby, Sir James Blunt, Earl of Oxford:** Opposed to Richard III as king. Tend to support Richmond.
Thinking Makes it So

Philosophies prevalent in Plantagenet, Yorkist, Lancastrian, and Tudor England

As you read through this study guide, it is imperative to understand a few of the prevailing philosophies which dominated the minds of the English during the 15th century. Keep these thoughts in mind as you read the history, plots, and conflicts Shakespeare has put together. It will influence the significance of each event.

DEVINE RIGHT OF KINGS
Religion and common thought sometimes espouses that the monarch has been endowed by God to rule. This is their legitimate position and place above everyone else. Since their opinions and will comes directly from God as his appointed, they do not have the responsibility or obligation to the law or people. In certain instances, this can also be interpreted as the king not being subject to church authority. This is especially important for children from second wives, because the church did not recognize divorce.

BALANCE
Everything is about balance. God has established a structure and put each person into their place in society. Things remain in balance as long as they follow the natural course of order that is life. Therefore, whenever an event happens that causes a situation to be out-of-balance, conflict and consequences ensure. Restoration requires the return of the natural order.

PRIMOGENITURE
Who is next in line? Whether it is about inheritance, or ruling the throne of England, primogeniture is the tradition that the crown would pass to the eldest son. Typically, preference would be given to sons over daughters, illegitimate children, or non-blood relatives. If a man didn’t have children, it might pass to his brother. You can imagine that this line of succession would get confusing, inconsistent, and cause debate. Well, that is what Richard III is all about—claims to the throne, greed, and the human condition.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR OUR PLAY
As soon as Richard II is deposed, everything falls out of balance. The Devine Right of the king has been overturned. The natural succession of the eldest son has been denied by a cousin. Wars begin. Catastrophe ensues. And the world is waiting for the restoration of order.
The Wars of the Roses: history leading up to Richard III

It’s not a secret that history tends to be written by the victors. Shakespeare is no exception as he was certainly looking to embellish and spin stories for his own purposes. However, to best understand his interpretation of Richard III, we need to look at the events he has highlighted leading up to this play.

If you look at the graph above, it is apparent that Shakespeare wrote 2 cycles of four plays, also known as tetralogies, for a total of 8 plays about the Wars of the Roses. These were a series of civil wars in England during the 15th century. Family members from the House of York (symbolized by a white rose) and the House of Lancaster (red rose) who are all descended from Edward III, were fighting each other about the right to the throne and crown.

Essentially, when a king was deemed as a poor or incompetent ruler, another descendant from Edward III would usurp him. They would take his crown and make themselves king. This began a series of usurpations, most often with one House or Dukedom saying that the individual from the other House (line of descent) was a bad king. Imagine fighting your cousin for your grandparent’s inheritance.

When Henry VII becomes King and marries Elizabeth of York, he unites the two lines of descent again. He starts a new line, the Tudors, and combines their rose symbols to make one symbol (look at the tree on p. 6). Supposedly, this would bring peace. Of course, it is only a matter of time before the fighting begins again.

Turn to the next page for some key milestones from those wars portrayed in the plays preceding Richard III.
Here is your quest: follow the numbered shields to discover some vital information leading up to the state of the kingdom during Richard III.

1. Richard II exiles Henry Bolingbroke for being an instigator.
2. Henry Bolingbroke, a Lancastrian, returns to England to reclaim his land. He deposes the incompetent and forlorn Richard II and is crowned Henry IV.
3. Henry IV leaves his allies who helped him secure the throne out to dry. Small conflicts and wars ensue.
4. Hotspur and the Northumberland clan don’t turn over prisoners to Henry IV in protest of his reign. The near-do-well Prince Hal, son of Henry IV, kills Hotspur.
5. Henry IV dies. Prince Hal is crowned Henry V. Following the advice of his father, he busies the minds of the quarrelling court with a war in France.
6. Henry V is temporarily successful at reclaiming many of England’s ancient lands in France with a victory at Agincourt.
7. Henry V dies of consumption. His 9 month old son is crowned Henry VI. Land in France is lost.
8. Edward IV, an insatiate man, is crowned King.
10. Queen Margaret, wife of Henry VI, angrily swears oaths that causes a break of agreement and wars for the crown.
11. Richard, Duke of York leads opposition against defeated and failing King Henry VI. Agreement made to let Henry VI rule until his death and then crown Richard king.
The Last Battle:

A Plot Summary of Richard III

Richard III is the culmination of the Wars of the Roses. It is the resolution, albeit brief, of the conflict for power that has plagued England for generations. Look at the story through that lens.

- PART I -

Now, decades of civil war between the royal houses of Lancaster and York are finally brought to an end with the deposition and murder of Lancastrian King Henry VI, replacing him with Edward IV, one of the three remaining sons of York. Left to dream upon the crown now held by his brother Edward, Richard, Duke of Gloucester, determines to use this listless time of peace to work his way to the supreme seat of England, removing, by any means necessary, any impediments to the throne. Knowing that the new king is in a perilous state of declining health, Richard begins by plotting against his other brother George, Duke of Clarence, subversively prompting his imprisonment in the dreaded Tower of London on an inference of treason. Richard then turns his attention to the wooing of a most unlikely prospect to be his future queen, Lady Anne daughter-in-law to the murdered King Henry VI, widow to his son Prince Edward – both of whom Richard murdered - is wooed over the funeral bier of the late king.

Claiming the murders were for love of her, Richard bears his heart to a sword, claiming that if he cannot win her love, he would rather be dead. The bereft Anne relents and, in spite of her disdain and own reason, deigns to accept his proffered love. Richard, having arranged the murder of his brother George (whom all refer to by his dukedom ‘Clarence’), feigns despair and lays responsibility for his death on an order by King Edward and on the persuasion of his Queen Elizabeth and her family, which is just enough to push the ailing King over the edge and he dies as well.

Internal wrangling within the court continues between powerful lords and members of the royal family, aggravated by the former queen Margaret, widow to Henry VI, who, though banished, remains in the royal court. With the throne unseated and Queen Elizabeth having sought sanctuary in this time of tumult, Edward's sons the young Duke of York and Prince of Wales are summoned and arrangements commence for the coronation of young Edward Prince of Wales.

See next page for Part II…
Richard, having imprisoned and executed even other uncles (Rivers, Grey and Vaughn) for false claims of treason, places the young princes in the Tower of London for their "protection," hatching a plan with his ally the Duke of Buckingham to discredit the legitimacy of their birth and requisite right to the throne. In the midst of this, Richard accuses the powerful Lord Hastings of plotting against his life and has him summarily beheaded, leveraging the episode to dupe the populace of London and the Lord Mayor to press for his installation as England’s royal king. Having swiftly swept to the throne, Richard villainously arranges the murder of his nephews in the Tower, removing any future possibility of opposition to his reign, while we simultaneously learn of the mysterious death of Richard’s poor wife Anne. Buckingham, sensing his friendship with the new King Richard cooling and knowing well the danger of such a position, flees the court, even as King Richard begins to hear fearful rumors of a new threat from his cousin Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond. With an eye to consolidate his power and legitimize his monarchy Richard impulsively presses the mourning Queen Elizabeth for access to her daughter as the next queen of England. Elizabeth cannily demurs, fearing the response to her outright refusal, but joins with Queen Margaret, who she had replaced on the throne but with whose grief she can now truly sympathize, and with Richard’s mother the Duchess of York in sending Richard off to the battle with Richmond laden with their curses.

Having marched out of London to the environs of Bosworth, Richard and Richmond’s camps prepare for battle. In the night each of the contenders for the throne are visited in dreams by the dead, who heap curses on Richard and blessings of Richmond. The next day the battle fares as the ghosts have promised with the Earl of Richmond meeting the bloody tyrant Richard in single combat and finally defeating him. Henry Tudor is named King Henry VII with a promise to marry young Elizabeth of York, reuniting the houses of Lancaster and York and bringing to a close England’s bloody Wars of the Roses.

Richard, the Anti-Hero

History has never been on the side of Richard III. He is has been depicted as a monster, tyrant, and murderer in pop culture, textbooks and literature. He is considered as perhaps the most complex and provocative villains in Western literature. Still, historians debate the legitimacy of all the murders and crimes attributed to Richard. After all, writing history books was a paid job sourced by the English government. Will the truth ever be complete and certain? Perhaps not. But history is still one of the best teachers.

Richard III is a hunchback in Shakespeare’s play. There has been much debate over the years if his body was actually disfigured or if it was a literary device to symbolize for his twisted reign.

In 2012, archeologists found Richard’s burial site and his skeleton. He was born with scoliosis, which is a disease that makes the spine curve to one side.
Straight Shooting
Themes in *Richard III*

– POWER –
Whether it is the House of York fighting the House of Lancaster, Richard ordering the murders of family members, or Richmond killing Richard and taking the crown, a lust for power is one of the primary sources of conflict. Control is a funny thing—the more it is grasped for, the more quickly it slips away.

– TRUST –
Pledging allegiance requires the upmost trust in a leader. Time and again that trust is broken throughout *Richard III* and Shakespeare’s plays detailing the Wars of the Roses. Richard kills anyone who questions him or stands in his way. This includes his allies. We see evidence that noblemen and countrymen mistrust their rulers and struggle to follow them. They live in fear rather than faith in their leadership.

– FATE –
There is an underlying tone in the events of the play that suggests everything has already been planned and will happen as it was meant to. There is a Divine will to restore balance, as when Richmond unites the House of Lancaster and the House of York. That there is an order in which fate has created succession of the crown. And yet, Richard III toys with all of these and attempts to assert his own free will to make himself the king, to take something that is not a part of his fate.

Shakespeare and His Words

**ALIGANCE:** support, service, and approval.

**BOAR:** a wild hunted pig. A symbol for the uncontrollable and evil Richard III.

**CLAIM:** blood relation to inherit to the throne and monarchy.

**CURTAIL:** cut short or diminish, end a reign.

**FALCHION:** a curved broadsword.

**HOUSE:** a group of people from one family and/or Dukedom.

**HUMOUR:** state of being, a mood, or temperament.

**INSATIATE:** never satisfied, a man with many mistresses.

**LIGITIMATE:** justifiable, accurate, within the law.

**MINISTER:** a messenger or servant with a specific purpose.

**PROTECTOR:** guardian, someone who makes decisions and for those who can’t.

**REMORSE:** regret for past actions, compassion, pity.

**TOWER:** the Tower of London, used for protection, also known as a prison before death.

**TROTH:** truth.

**USURP:** to take power from one already in authority.
The man known as…

William Shakespeare

William Shakespeare was born in Stratford-upon-Avon in 1564. He had seven brothers and sisters, three of which died in childhood. He received just seven years of formal education having been taken out of school at the age of 14 due to family financial problems. In 1582 he was married to Anne Hathaway, eight years his senior. They had three children, the first born less than seven months after their marriage. Speculation of his activities between leaving school and his marriage range from working as a glover, a sailor or soldier, law clerk, or a teacher. He left his wife and children around 1588 to go work as an actor and playwright in London finding success as both by 1592 when his first play, Henry VI Part 1 was performed. Over the next 21 years he would pen 37 plays and over 150 sonnets. As both an actor and writer, and eventually a shareholder in the Globe Theatre, he made his reputation with plays that ranged from tragedy and comedy to history and romance. Shakespeare's life and career spanned the reigns of two influential and distinctly different monarchs, Elizabeth and James I. Shakespeare's company became the King's Men, achieving the pinnacle of period sponsorship - royal patronage.

Following two and a half decades of financial and artistic success, Shakespeare retired to a country gentleman's life with a good reputation, a coat of arms, and cash. He died of typhoid fever on April 23, 1616 at the age of 52. According to his will, he left most of his estate to his eldest daughter and her husband and his wife Anne, who was to receive the couple's "second best bed." He is buried in the Stratford-upon-Avon's Holy Trinity Church. Shakespeare enjoyed great popularity in his lifetime, and over 400 years later, he is still the most produced playwright in the world. He also influenced, perhaps more than anyone else in history, the English language. Words he invented and phrases he coined in his plays are still in common usage today, among them: fashionable, sanctimonious, lackluster, foregone conclusion, in a pickle, wild goose chase, one fell swoop, it's Greek to me, vanished into thin air, refuse to budge an inch, tongue-tied, hoodwinked, too much of a good thing, suspect foul play, without rhyme or reason, pure as the driven snow.

Was He Really One Man?

Scholars have long debated practically everything about Shakespeare. Many believe the man credited with writing all his plays simply was not educated enough to have composed such literature. Others believe it was multiple authors. Perhaps Shakespeare was just a pen name. Ironically, we can be just about as sure of his history as we are about Richard III. But that will never change the fact that these stories resonate to generations.
ABOUT OUR PRODUCTION

Propaganda. Shakespeare was indeed writing about times past. He was also writing about what was socially relevant. England was questioning their ruler, who was without an heir, and speculating about the next monarch and the line of succession. Some questioned the legitimacy of Elizabeth I as queen (being that she was both a woman, and daughter from a second marriage, which was not looked on kindly by the Catholic Church). How better to prove her right to the throne than to show Richard III as a monster and have Henry IV, Elizabeth’s grandfather, save the day and unite the houses? This would establish the validity of the House of Tudor and their reign. Richard III and the controversial ruling years of the Plantagenet’s, York’s, and Lancastrians became a focal point and distraction from the reign of the Tudors who were facing similar problems (like murdering family members for the right to the crown). To quote Henry IV part 2 and our playwright, the Tudors were anxious to “busy giddy minds with foreign quarrels” of those who ruled before them. This kept their own faults out of the limelight and off the stage. Similarly, Richard III will try distract from his actions.

At PCPA, the production draws on the fact that the internal fighting among the royal family is actually a reflection of the country as a whole. There is unbalance, warring, and blaming throughout the realm. Richard III, desperate for his father’s approval, fought alongside his brothers and dad to bring order to the kingdom—order for which his father died. He slowly watched it melt away under the reign of Edward IV. As his father’s son and for the greater good, he refuses to let all the hard work go to waste under the reign of young princes or his brother Clarence who Richard feels is incompetent. Power leads to corruption. Still, are his following actions evil? Or is it just a matter of survival?

Preparing for the Role: Andrew Philpot

Richard III is one of the most challenging roles to play from the Shakespeare cannon. How did Andrew go about preparing for such a difficult character?

As a young actor, Andrew learned a lot of Richard’s speeches because he was so drawn to them. Those words meant something different to him then than they do now. He has taken a lot of time to sit with the text and dwell on what is being said and worked diligently to think the way Richard thinks to justify his actions.

He is also a bit of a history buff. He has a wealth of knowledge about the Wars of the Roses which he has used to inform his character. Recently, he directed a 3 hour play he put together called Upon the King. This was a summary of Shakespeare’s plays leading up to Richard III.
DESIGN CONCEPT

Gothic architecture, a popular style during the Wars of the Roses, is strongly reflected in the set and prop design of Richard III at PCPA. Flying buttresses, towering pillars, and spiraling cylinders flourish on stage. The structures are also pretty barebones. This transparency allows the audience to see the interworking of the design. The magnificence and openness of the set is symbolic of the royal family and their murderous dysfunction which is laid bare in our story. The imagery for what should be protective is strangely sharp, poisonous, and weapon like. There is an impending sense of danger. A character cannot climb to the top of the throne cleanly, because their hands will end up covered, at least in part, by blood.

The design team worked with the director to settle on a more modern setting for the story. While many historic elements are present in the show, the costumes, weaponry, and set appear to be from modern-day military and technological advancement. This is one way of demonstrating the universality and time transcendent message of the show. It also establishes that Richard III could happen here and now, and is not a story that is only foreign and historic.
PRESHOW ACTIVITY:
Read Shakespeare’s Richard III. It is always fun to read scenes aloud and work with students to discover the meaning of some of the more challenging sections of text.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Compare the strategies of Richard III to obtain power and control nobles to those used by current politicians and statesmen (US or foreign). What are the similarities? What are the differences?

2. Richard III is considered a history play. However, that is a substantial amount of supernatural events—ghosts, visions, dreams, boars, etc. It seems unlikely that these situations are historically accurate. What is the function of adding these supernatural incidents to the play? What do they symbolize? How do they affect the meaning?

3. There are a lot of moral themes and critiques throughout the play. In some ways it seems more like a morality play instead of a history. How would you classify this play? What themes are prevalent throughout? Why would these be important to portray when Shakespeare wrote it and now?

4. How do you think the authority and influence of the Catholic Church influenced the way this play was written? Are there elements of protestant and evangelical doctrine present? If so, why would this be important to the reign of Queen Elizabeth I and her claim to the throne?

EXTRA CREDIT:
WRITE LIKE SHAKESPEARE

Shakespeare may have learned to write only through practice. Have your students try their hand at one of the following subjects!

| Read the play Richard III. Compare the play to the PCPA production. Is it how you imagined it? What is different? What themes did you think were most highlighted? | Research the Wars of the Roses. Compare how Shakespeare portrays the events and how they are believed to have happened historically. Why do you think these differ? | Compose your own version of Richard III. How do you think the story should end? You can make anything happen. What if you set the story in a different time period? |
Thank you!

We hope you enjoyed and learned a lot from our brief trip back in time! Visit again soon.