

 **HCMUN**
MARCH 3RD, 2018

RICHARD III

BACKGROUND GUIDE

CHAIR: AINSLIE SHOULDICE
DIRECTOR: JOANNE STAVROPOULOS

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to Havergal College's fourth annual Model United Nations conference! My name is Ainslie Shouldice, and I am extremely excited to be your chair for the Richard III committee. I am a grade twelve student at Havergal College, and I have been on the Havergal Model United Nations team for the past three years. Throughout my time in Model UN, I have participated in nine MUN conferences in crisis, specialized, general assembly and Ad Hoc committees. I hope you will all enjoy your time in this committee.

Hello delegates, my name is Joanne Stavropoulos and I am ecstatic to be your director for the Richard III committee. I am currently in grade ten at Havergal College, and this is my second year doing Model United Nations. I am looking forward to moderating your debates.

The famous play Richard III was written by playwright William Shakespeare in 1592, as a historical play. It was written with the intention of bringing the country's history to its illiterate citizens in a manner that was entertaining.¹ Along with other historical plays, it is set in 1066, after the Norman conquest.² Richard is considered to be less developed than Shakespeare's later villainous characters, as he lacks clear motivations for his deeds.³ At the time of the play's writing, Elizabeth II ruled England. Richard III is set in a period of time known as "the Wars of the Roses". This time was marked by conflict between the Lancaster family, symbolized by a red rose, and the York family, symbolized by a white rose.⁴ The war began after the death of Edward II.⁵ His two sons were John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster, and Edmund of Langley, duke of York, who gave rise to the Lancaster and York clans.⁶ After the death of Edward II, he was succeeded by King Richard II, who was neither a Lancaster or a York. He was soon overthrown by Henry IV, a Lancaster. This was followed by a series of increasingly bloody conflicts until Henry VI was put to death after his heir was killed in battle, leaving King Edward IV, Richard III, and Clarence victorious.⁷ This is the time in which the play begins.

It is important to note that Shakespeare takes dramatic liberties within the play Richard III, and that the true Richard was no more vicious than his predecessors. Despite this, our committee will be focused on the Shakespearean history, rather than a historically accurate account. This committee will begin shortly after the marriage of Ann and Richard.

Position papers for this committee should be no longer than three (3) pages, in Times New Roman 12 point font, with 1.5 point spacing. All citations should be in Chicago style, with a properly cited Reference List. Position papers should be emailed to ashouldice@havergal.on.ca or

¹ Nebo Literature. "Background and Context - Richard III."

² Sparknotes. "Richard III Context."

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

jstavropoulos@havergal.on.ca by March 1st, 2018. If you have any conference-related questions, feel free to email us.

In this committee, delegates are encouraged to scheme, plot and betray one another to reach your political ambitions. It is suggested that you look for ways in which to subtly manipulate crises and relationships in order to hide your dealings from one another. We look forward to hearing your fruitful debate, and seeing whether you will be able to change the course of history. Good luck!

Ainslie Shouldice and Joanne Stavropoulos

Richard the III

HCMUN IV

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Timeline⁸

The following timeline is historically accurate, as opposed to being accurate to Shakespeare's play. It is included to provide historical context to events.

- **1452:** Richard Plantagenet is born at Fotheringhay Castle on October 2nd, 1452. He was born to Richard the Duke of York and Cecily Neville, and is the fourth brother of Edward, Edmund and George.
- **1460:** The Battle of Wakefield takes place in Yorkshire. Richard's father, the Duke of York, and brother, Edmund die in the battle.
- **1461:** The Battle of Towton takes place in Yorkshire. The Lancastrian army of Henry VI is defeated by the Yorkist army of Edward Earl of March. With the support of the Kingmaker - the 16th Earl of Warwick - Edward Earl of March becomes King Edward IV of England.
- **1467:** The Earl of Warwick joins Henry VI in the fight for the throne, switching sides from his original position.
- **1469:** The Earl of Warwick presses Yorkshire to rebel against King Edward.
- **1470:** George Duke of Clarence, Edward and Richard's brother joins Warwick's rebellion, which forces Edward and Richard to flee to Flanders. Henry VI returns to the throne.
- **1471:** Edward and Richard return to England. The Battle of Barnet takes place right after the Battle of Tewkesbury, in which Warwick is killed. Edward regains the throne. Edward of Lancaster, the only heir of Henry IV is also killed.
- **1472:** Richard marries Anne Neville, who is the daughter of the Earl of Warwick. Richard is given the Sheriff Hutton and Middleham castles in Yorkshire.
- **1473:** Anne gives birth to Richard's son, Edward. Richard uses the next decade to strengthen his position in Northern England.
- **1483:** In Westminster, King Edward IV dies. His brother, Richard, Duke of Gloucester is named Lord Protector for the new king, Edward's son, Edward V.

⁸ "Timeline of Richard III." Richard III Henry VII Experience Timeline of Richard III Comments.

- Edward V and Richard, his younger brother, are declared illegitimate by Parliament and Richard, Duke of Gloucester, is named as King
- Richard Duke of Gloucester is crowned as King Richard III
- His son Edward becomes Prince of Wales
- **1484:** At Sandal Castle in Yorkshire, the Council of the North meet. Meanwhile, at Middleham Castle, Edward, who is the only legitimate child of King Richard III suddenly dies.
- **1485:** Anne dies of tuberculosis. The City of York sends eighty soldiers to support Richard at Bosworth, to battle against Henry Tudor.
 - At the Battle of Bosworth Field, King Richard III is killed and King Richard III's supporters are defeated by Henry Tudor's Lancastrian forces
 - Henry Tudor is declared King Henry VII of England

Summary

The play begins after the War of the Roses, which was a series of long civil wars. Richard is the Duke of Gloucester, and is extremely dissatisfied with his position. His brother, Edward, is now king of England. Richard feels happy for his brother, yet is lonely and experiences feelings of inadequacy due to his physical deformities.⁹ Secretly, Richard begins plotting to gain the crown for himself.¹⁰

In order to become King, he needs to remove his brother and Edward's successor, George, the Duke of Clarence. He achieves this by convincing Edward of a prophecy that states that his heirs will be murdered by a family member whose name begins with the letter G.¹¹ George is jailed and accused of treason.¹² Shortly after this event, Richard marries Lady Anne, the widow of the late Prince Edward. He approaches her during the funeral of her father-in-law, Henry the sixth, and convinces her to marry him¹³. He then focuses on ensuring George is executed to remove him as a threat, which results in George's stabbing by a band of hired hitmen and the stowing of his body in a vat of wine.¹⁴

King Edward is devastated by the death of his brother, and blames himself for it. He passes away as a result, and young Prince Edward takes the throne. He is too young to formally take the throne, so Richard becomes England's Lord Protector.¹⁵ Despite this, his thirst for power doesn't cease. Richard's right hand man, Buckingham, advocates for his taking the throne while Richard pretends he doesn't want it.¹⁶ Stanley dreams that a boar, Richard's heraldic symbol, beheads him,

⁹ Shakespeare, William, and James R. Siemon. 2009. *Richard III*. (1.1.20)

¹⁰ Shakespeare, William, and James R. Siemon. 2009. *Richard III*.(1.1.34-35)

¹¹ Shakespeare, William, and James R. Siemon. 2009. *Richard III*. (38-40)

¹² Shakespeare, William, and James R. Siemon. 2009. *Richard III*. (43-45)

¹³ Shakespeare, William, and James R. Siemon. 2009. *Richard III*. (1.2.206-207)

¹⁴ Shakespeare, William, and James R. Siemon. 2009. *Richard III*. (1.3.345-347)

¹⁵ Shakespeare, William, and James R. Siemon. 2009. *Richard III*. (1.3.15-16)

¹⁶ Shakespeare, William, and James R. Siemon. 2009. *Richard III*. (3.7.203-206)

and urges Hastings to flee with him.¹⁷ Hastings refuses, and Richard accuses him of treason.¹⁸ Richard then begins to spread a rumour that Edward's children are illegitimate.¹⁹ Buckingham suggests in a meeting that Richard take the throne, and Richard pretends to reluctantly agree.²⁰

Richard asks Buckingham to find the princes to they can be disposed of, but Buckingham becomes nervous and abandons Richard.²¹ Instead, Richard hires the hitman Tyrell.²² Tyrell differs the disposal of the princes to hired thugs, and the two younger princes are killed in their sleep.²³ Richard places Buckingham on his list of enemies.

While Richard plots for the throne, the Earl of Richmond begins gathering allies in France with the objective of storming England and stopping Richard. The civilians have begun to notice Richard's tyranny.²⁴ His own mother, the Duchess of York turns against him, cursing him to die in battle. Richard is aware of his fragile hold to the crown, and decides he needs a new wife whose familial ties could help him lay claim to the throne. He develops and spreads a rumour that Lady Anne is sick, and has her murdered. He meets with Queen Elizabeth, his sister in law, and convinces her to let him marry her daughter, young Elizabeth. She does not actively oppose to the idea, but has secretly planned for her daughter to marry the Earl of Richmond.

With battle imminent, Richard assembles an army and places them at Bosworth Field. He aspires to stay up all night to have an advantage on Richmond, but soon falls asleep. In his dreams the spirits of his murder victims approach him and warn him of his imminent downfall. Specifically, they utter the words "despair and die". Richard then wakes and engages in dialogue with himself. It is here that he realizes that he is evil, yet he is unwilling to change. He heads to battle in the morning.

During the battle, Richard is knocked off his horse and loses his composure. It is here that he says "A horse! A horse! My kingdom for a horse!". Richmond arrives and kills Richard in battle, taking the English throne for himself. He becomes King Henry the Seventh.

Character Matrix

- **Richard the Third:** Richard, the Duke of Gloucester, is the youngest son of the third Duke of York. He first appears as a Yorkist and warrior. Much of Richard's bitterness is as a result of his physical deformities, which Shakespeare has suggested to be a reflection of his evil character: "a ragged fatal rock" and an "undigested lump". He will do anything to fulfil his ambition and win the crown of England.
- **Buckingham:** Henry, the Duke of Buckingham is one of the commanders of the Royal forces. In the play, Queen Margaret praised him as blameless, and Richard found him easy to

¹⁷ Shakespeare, William, and James R. Siemon. 2009. *Richard III*. (3.4. 75)

¹⁸ Shakespeare, William, and James R. Siemon. 2009. *Richard III*. (3.4. 83-86)

¹⁹ Shakespeare, William, and James R. Siemon. 2009. *Richard III*. (3. 5. 74-76)

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Shakespeare, William, and James R. Siemon. 2009. *Richard III*. (4.2.25-26)

²² Shakespeare, William, and James R. Siemon. 2009. *Richard III*. (4.2.72-73)

²³ Shakespeare, William, and James R. Siemon. 2009. *Richard III*. (4. 3.22-25)

²⁴ Shakespeare, William, and James R. Siemon. 2009. *Richard III*. (3. 7. 24)

handle. Buckingham is easily manipulated, and is convinced that he will achieve great things if he serves Richard. Ultimately this is untrue; Buckingham backs out on a Richard-ordered hit and is placed on Richard's list of enemies.

- **King Edward IV:** King Edward is the oldest son of the Duke of York, and has a gallant reputation. He was married to Elizabeth, which led to the contempt of the Earl of Warwick. King Edward favoured Elizabeth's relatives at the expense of other families, who supported the Yorkist cause. Edward engages in a relationship with Jane Shore, yet the rumours of his mistress ruined the way he conducts public affairs. There are rumours planted by a well-known clergyman that the children of King Edward IV were not legitimate, or rightful heirs. This statement was based upon the notion that Edward was secretly married to another before Elizabeth, and that his first wife was still alive. King Edward IV may have a slight player reputation, yet his main concerns are to ensure peace and proper succession of the crown.
- **Queen Elizabeth:** Elizabeth is the widowed daughter of Sir Richard Woodville. Her family is over Lancastrian connection. In Richard the III, her faction consists of her, her brother Earl Rivers, and her two sons Marquis of Dorset and Lord Grey. She seems submissive to Richard, but she survives to watch her daughter be the Queen of England. Many wonder if Richard's sentiments of her being a "relenting fool and shallow challenging woman" are true.
- **Anne:** Anne is the widow of Edward, Prince of Wales. Edward is the son of Henry VI. Anne is the daughter of the Earl of Warwick. She is a Neville. Richard of Gloucester becomes her wooer due to her grand possession of property and Neville connection, which is vital to his ambitions to take over the crown.
- **Duchess of York:** The Duchess of York is the mother of King Edward IV, Clarence and Richard. She is the daughter of Ralph Neville, the first Earl of Northumberland. Her husband made his bid for the crown, but since then she has endured a lot. She survived both the Duke of York's death, and the death of her sons. She also realizes that Richard was "on earth to maker [her] earth a hell", and that she deserved her curses.
- **Margaret:** Margaret is the Daughter of the Duke of Anjou, who is the honorary King of Naples. She is also the niece of Charles VII. She is determined and strong-minded, in contrast to her husband. Her strength is shown when the Duke of Somerset was slain in the first battle of St. Albans. Here, she came forward as head of the royal party against the Yorkist. She was defeated at Tewkesbury and imprisoned, but later released on payment of her ransom by France. Margaret was also the wife of Henry VI – the last Lancastrian King and mother of Edward of Lancaster, the last Lancastrian heir.
- **Young Elizabeth:** Young Elizabeth is the daughter of Queen Elizabeth and Edward IV, as well as Richard's niece and the sister of the two princes who Richard kills later in the play. Richard desires to use a marriage arrangement with her to further his political agenda, however this never occurs. Instead, she ends up marrying Richmond, who becomes King Henry VII, and is still used as a political tool.²⁵

²⁵ Shmoop. "Young Elizabeth."

- **Tyrell:** Tyrell is asked to murder Richard's two nephews at the coronation. Later in the play he appears to be upset by his actions.²⁶ "The tyrannous and bloody deed is done./ The most arch of piteous massacre/ that ever yet this land was guilty of."²⁷ In the play Tyrell appears to meet Richard at the coronation, yet historically they knew one another for a time before the murders.²⁸
- **Richmond:** Henry Tudor, or the Earl of Richmond is the nearest male representative of the Lancastrians. Henry, Earl of Richmond, inherited the Lancastrian line, but was not allowed to the throne by Parliament. He has many English supporters, and escaped to France after the Battle of Tewkesbury. He marries Elizabeth, daughter of Edward IV and is able to unite the claims of both parties.
- **Hastings:** Hastings was warned by Stanley that he had a dream in which Hastings was killed by a boar, and feared for Hastings' safety.²⁹ The boar is Richard's heraldic symbol, yet Hastings did not find the correlation between Stanley's dream and his monarch. He believes that he is close with Richard; however, he does not support Richard's plan to take the crown from young Prince Edward.³⁰ As a result, Richard arranges for Hastings' execution. The last scene that Hastings is featured in is Act 3 Scene 5, when Lovel and Ratcliffe climb the tower of London with his head.³¹
- **Stanley:** Lord Stanley, Earl of Derby is Richmond's stepfather.³² This makes Richard extremely wary of him, and Stanley seems to sense this.³³ In Act 3 Scenes 2-4, he interprets a dream to suggest that he will be killed by Richard, along with Hastings.³⁴ This likely is a result of his fear that Richard will kill him, yet he continues to help Richmond throughout the play.³⁵
- **Lord Mayor of London:** It is relatively unknown as to what the Lord Mayor of London thought of Richard.³⁶ When he was told that Hastings had confessed to treason before his execution, the Mayor took steps to announce the fact to the people, stating that it was "just" to remove Hastings.³⁷ This points to two possibilities; one is that the Lord Mayor of London is incredibly gullible, and the other is that he does not want to cross Richard.³⁸

²⁶ Shakespeare and History. "James Tyrell."

²⁷ (4.3.1-3)

²⁸ Shakespeare and History. "James Tyrell."

²⁹ SparkNotes. "Act III, scenes ii-iv."

³⁰ Shmoop. "Lord Hastings."

³¹ *Ibid*

³² Shmoop. "Lord Stanley."

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ SparkNotes. "Act III, scenes ii-iv."

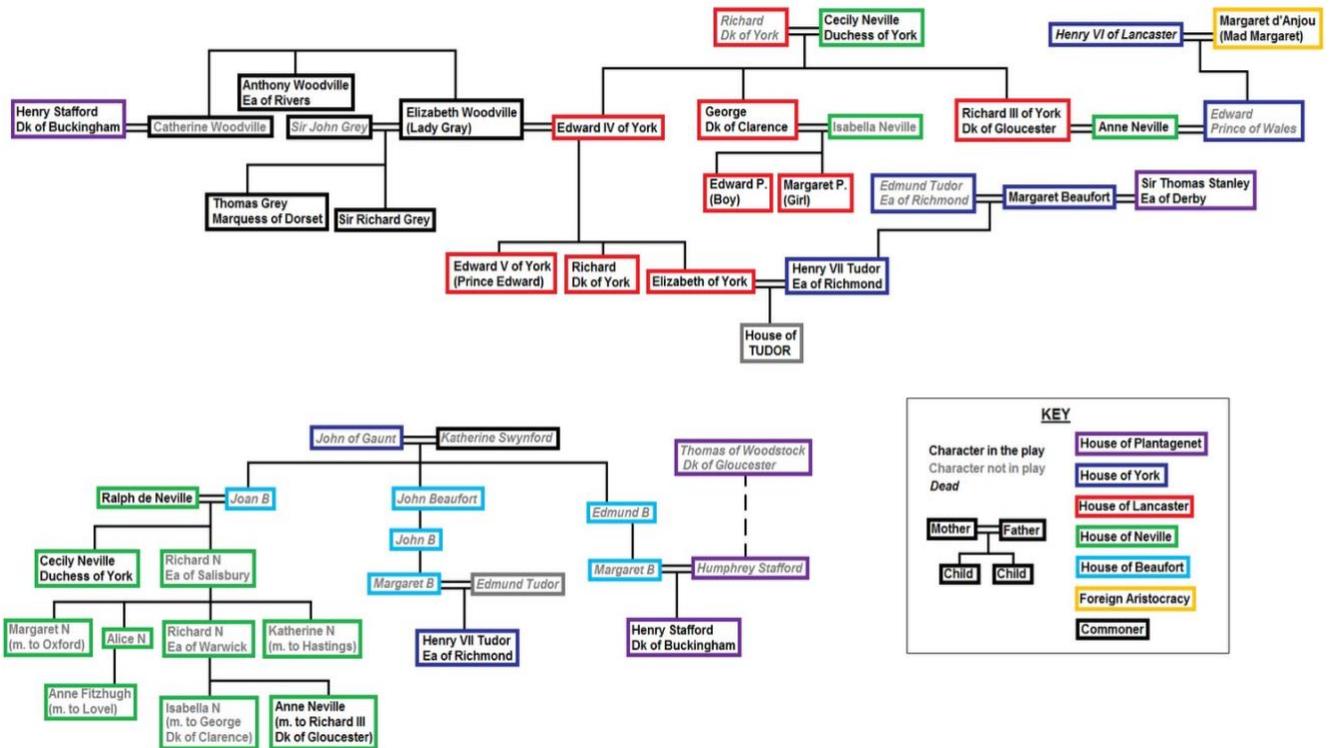
³⁵ Shmoop. "Lord Stanley."

³⁶ Shmoop. "Lord Mayor of London."

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*

Family Tree (Historical Personages of Richard the III)³⁹



Guiding Questions

1. When/where did Richard's schemes begin to derail?
2. It is often stated that Richard is one of Shakespeare's most one-dimensional characters, as he is seemingly malicious for the sake of greed and maliciousness. Is there a place in the play that Richard seemingly becomes "human" to the audience?
3. In what ways were supporting characters able to help or hinder Richard's plans?
4. What other political agendas might factor into this story?

³⁹ "Richard III: Plot Overview." 2010.

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