

HENRY V

Education Pack

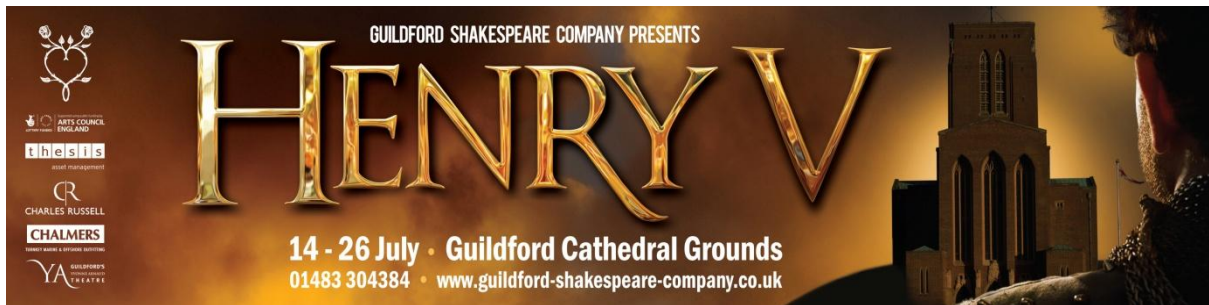


**GUILDFORD
SHAKESPEARE
COMPANY**



EDUCATION PACK

INTRODUCTION



This education pack has been written by GSC to complement the stage production in July 2014, staged at the Guildford Cathedral Grounds.

The information contained in here can be used as preparation material before seeing the performance or as follow-up work afterwards in the class room. This pack is aimed at final year GCSE or A-level students (or equivalent).

This pack contains:

1. GSC – our approach to Shakespeare
2. Cast/Character and Creative Team List
3. Synopsis
4. Shakespeare's Language
5. The Origins of the *Henry V*
6. Interview with Director Caroline Devlin
7. Practical classroom exercise taken from the rehearsal room

Practical in-school workshops on *Henry V* can be booked, with actors coming into your school to work on the play.

Please see www.guildford-shakespeare-company.co.uk or call 01483 304384 for more details.

GUILDFORD SHAKESPEARE COMPANY

OUR APPROACH TO SHAKESPEARE

“One of the strongest and most consistent companies operating in and around London”

PlayShakespeare.com, 2011

Guildford Shakespeare Company is a professional site-specific theatre company, specialising in Shakespeare. Our approach places the audience right at the heart of the action, immersing them in the world of the play, thereby demystifying the legend that Shakespeare is for an elite, educated few but rather is immediate and accessible to everyone.

“...to be spellbound, amused and to follow every moment of text and to want the production never to end...one of the best evenings of theatre I have ever been privileged to attend.” Audience member 2011

We want our 21st Century audiences to experience the same thrill and excitement that Shakespeare’s original audiences must have felt when they first saw the Ghost appear in *Hamlet*, the rousing battle cry of Henry V, and edge-of-your-seat anticipation in *The Comedy of Errors*.

At GSC we use diverse and unusual non-theatre venues to create dynamic and challenging productions. From castles to lakes, churches to pubs, our approach merges the audience and acting space so that you’re given a visceral, stimulating and, above all, unique theatre experience.

“I am so thrilled to be able to bring my grandchildren to such quality theatre right here on our doorstep. I also think that the proximity to the stage makes the action all the more real and compelling for youngsters” Audience member, 2011

GSC productions are fresh, fast and modern in their interpretation of Shakespeare, but always in the original text and NEVER dumbed down.

We hope you enjoy these fabulous stories as much as we enjoy re-telling them.

All best wishes

Matt & Sarah

Joint Artistic & Executive Producers

THE CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM

ACTOR 1	Matt Pinches
ACTOR 2	Chris Porter
ACTOR 3	Richard Galazka
ACTOR 4	Morgan Philpott
ACTOR 5	Emily Tucker

The five actors play all the parts, with the key characters of:

ACTOR 1

Archbishop of Canterbury, Bardolph, Lord Scroop, Dauphin of France, Captain Fluellen, Williams, Alice (the Princess of France's maid), Sir Thomas Erpingham

ACTOR 2

Duke of Exeter, Ancient Pistol, Captain Jamy, Duke of Bourbon, Duke of Burgundy, Sir Thomas Grey

ACTOR 3

King Henry V, Hostess Quickly

ACTOR 4

Earl of Westmorland, Corporal Nym, Earl of Cambridge, King of France, Captain MacMorris, Montjoy the Herald

ACTOR 5

Bishop of Ely, French Ambassador, Boy, Constable of France, Captain Gower, Princess Katharine of France, Bates, Governor of Harfleur

Creative Team

Director / Adaptor	Caroline Devlin
Design Co-ordinator	Anett Black
Lighting Designer	Declan Randall
Sound Designer	Matt Eaton
Fight Director	Philip d'Orléans
Movement Director	Vanessa Cook

Stage Management

Production Manager	Colin Newton
Deputy Stage Manager	Christine Hollinshead
Assistant Stage Manager	Kate Thompson

SYNOPSIS

The Archbishop of Canterbury convinces the newly crowned Henry V to lay claim to the crown of France. Having matured from his debauched days as a prince in the taverns of Eastcheap, Henry is now more cautious.

The King of France's son and heir – the Dauphin – sends Henry an insulting gift of tennis balls as a peace offering. Enraged at the Dauphin's audacity, and on advisement from his closest friends, armed with a legal technicality, Henry decides to take the throne of France by whatever means necessary.

The fortunes of the war also follow the fortunes of ordinary soldiers. Two groups of characters populate the story: Henry's former drinking companions from *Henry IV Parts 1 & 2* (Bardolph, Nym, Pistol and Hostess Quickly), and four captains representing England (Gower), Ireland (MacMorris), Scotland (Jamy) and Wales (Fluellen).

Before leaving for France the Lords Cambridge, Scroop, and Grey are discovered to be conspiring to assassinate

Henry (paid for by the French). Henry makes a public example of all three, arresting them in person and seeing to their execution.

Upon landing in France, Henry lays siege to the port of Harfleur, eventually capturing it after heavy losses. Realising that his small force is badly weakened Henry attempts to take them out of France before the onset of winter. During their march north, they are harried by the French and eventually cut off from the route to Calais just outside the village of Agincourt.

The night before the battle, Henry disguises himself as a common soldier in order to gain an insight into his men's true feelings. The battle the next day is long and bloody with the English outnumbered five to one. Somehow, miraculously, the English win.

The French sue for peace and the English set about agreeing the treaty. Meanwhile Henry attempts, (very badly in French) to woo the Princess of France. She finally agrees and England and France are united in peace.

SHAKESPEARE'S LANGUAGE

Elizabethan Language

In Elizabethan English people were much more used to telling stories and listening to them, than they are today. Books and printing were expensive and not everyone could read, so the world Shakespeare was working in could be said to be an Oral Culture.

People went to **hear** a play, not **see** a play. An important point. Shakespeare's society relied on listening. From accounts of voyages in taverns to folk stories, people were naturally trained to listen and to speak; something we don't give as much weight to today because we rely on seeing.

The way people spoke was also a lot rougher and tougher than English is today - there is the opinion that Shakespeare himself might have had Birmingham accent! When you add to this the fact that on stage theatres had no scenery, lighting or modern special effects to create atmosphere, you begin to see the mechanics behind why Shakespeare's language is descriptive.

Shakespeare's Stage

Shakespeare was a 'commercial playwright', writing to make money: if his plays didn't sell, not only did he not get paid but the rest of the company didn't either! He was also an actor and perhaps most importantly, a share-holder in the theatre in which he worked.

Plays were performed during the day, usually between 2pm and 5pm – it is very likely that the original performances of Shakespeare's plays were only about 2 ½ hours long – and the actors could see the audience, unlike in today's theatre – a very exciting but dangerous thing!

1500 people would gather to see a play, with 400-600 people paying a penny to stand. In the theatre there would have been representatives from every part of society, talking, doing business, eating, drinking, chatting each other up! It was the playwright's and the actors' job to keep their attention.

Practical ideas

Don't try to analyse the meanings of words and phrasing but rather let them inform you by how they make you feel. It is a bit of a leap of faith to begin with, but if we give ourselves over to the words, rhythms, and sounds, they will tell us how the character/situation is to be played.

Tip. This is a play – so do that! **Play** with the words, their sounds, their rhythms; play with the characters and their situations.

GSC'S CO-FOUNDER AND ACTOR, MATT PINCHES, CONSIDERS THE POPULARITY OF SHAKESPEARE'S *HENRY V*

"King Henry the Fifth is manifestly Shakespeare's favourite hero in English history: he paints him as endowed with every chivalrous and kingly virtue; open, affable, yet as a sort of reminiscence of his youth, still disposed to innocent raillery, in the intervals between his perilous but glorious achievements." **AW Schlegel** from Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature, 1809-11

Henry V is arguably one of Shakespeare's most popular plays, containing some of his most well known lines and speeches: 'O for a Muse of fire', 'Once more unto the breach', 'We few, we happy few, we band of brothers', 'The game's afoot!' and the curiously modern 'Tennis balls, my liege'. Is he the most popular of Shakespeare's kings? Is *Richard III* not more exciting as we eagerly watch him devour the stage and all before him as he lusts for the throne? A different 'popular' perhaps.

Before beginning his play, Shakespeare was on to a winner with his subject matter. Whilst under thirty, Henry twice raised the largest and best-equipped expeditionary force England had ever seen, took them to France and against the most incredible odds defeated a fresh French army on home soil. Though accounts of the Battle of Agincourt (15 October 1415) vary wildly it is roughly assumed that Henry's dishevelled and homesick force were outnumbered 6 to 1.

The battle secured the throne of France for England, and the victory became an instant legend. 100 years later, Henry VIII, whose father brought the Wars of the Roses to a close and promoted a peaceful foreign policy, never gave up trying to emulate the triumphs of this Plantagenet hero.

Shakespeare's play takes Henry's celebratory status even higher. At the hands of the playwright, Henry V's heroic status is immortalised in some of the most memorable and rousing speeches written in the English language. So much so that over the years they have been used to instil pride and passion whether they are on a battlefield or at a football match: TV stations regularly use the speeches for introductions to their sports' coverage; management courses examine the rousing speeches for promoting good leadership; Peter Holland (former Director of the Shakespeare Institute) noted in the programme of the National Theatre's 2003 production that the Crispin's Day speech was used by the US Congress as *"the way for the chief prosecutor in the impeachment of President Bill Clinton to thank his co-workers."*

There is something undoubtedly stirring in the speeches and set pieces, and when I have been at the theatre watching a production I genuinely feel like I want to get up there and join in the battles with Henry. When I've done workshops the common reaction from participants is how emotional they feel afterwards. Who doesn't feel a little tingle when you hear...

*"And you good yeomen whose limbs were made in England
Show us here the mettle of your pasture,
Let us swear you are worth your breeding which I doubt not."*

HENRY V

Education Pack

Henry's Speeches are a tremendous piece of writing: selective use of personal pronouns in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd person, majestic plural, rhetoric, homely imagery to savage brutality. The speeches play on the present – '*For he today that sheds his blood with me/ Shall be my brother*' – but also in the same speech (Crispin's Day), on the glories to come '*He that outlives this day and comes safe home/ Will stand a tiptoe when this day is named*'.

There are dark parts in this play, and indeed some controversial moments such as Henry's decision to kill the French prisoners and the hanging of his old drinking chum Bardolph, but Shakespeare also gives this king a wonderful touch of humanity (including a sense of humour). This is a king who questions himself:

*“Upon the king! Let us our lives, our souls,
Our debts, our careful wives,
Our children and our sins lay on the king...
...What infinite heart's-ease
Must kings neglect, that private men enjoy?”*

For an Elizabethan audience used to seeing kings as tyrants, misguided or self-obsessed individuals, here Shakespeare gives us a young man who we have journeyed with through the taverns of Eastcheap and his raucous days with Falstaff in *Henry IV parts I and 2*, and whose father wished him to be more like the impetuous Harry Hotspur. This is Shakespeare's culmination of his second history cycle, joining up the three parts of *Henry VI* and *Richard III* which he had completed 7 years before. He would not write another history play for 14 years (*Henry VIII* in 1613).

The presentation of a warrior king who has human faults and fears, well-loved and victorious also had its contemporary references. James Shapiro notes in his book *1599: A Year in the Life of William Shakespeare*, of the playwright's fleeting allusions to the fated Irish campaign of the Queen's favourite the Earl of Essex. These references are also tempered with the rose-tinted spectacles of history. Like Elizabeth I at Tilbury watching the advancing Spanish Armada breaking the horizon in 1588, so Henry's weakened and diseased army as they cross the River Somme in northern France face a similarly insurmountable force led by, until now, a monarch not made for fighting.

I suppose the other key aspect of this play, like its protagonist, is its refreshing honesty. "*Can this cockpit hold/ The vasty fields of France?*" asks the Chorus at the beginning. In no other play does Shakespeare make the same use of a Chorus to such a dramatic effect. Through this character we are invited to see both the imperfections and limitations of theatrical presentation but also celebrate the brilliance of those limitations. We are instructed to "*piece out [the actors'] imperfections with [our] minds*".

Through the Chorus we are pulled into the story; made complicit in Henry's fears; recruited as part of the army; a fly on the wall in the French camp and, perhaps most importantly, recognised as team in our own right. For without us the play cannot happen. Like the soldiers at Agincourt we are all in this together, and only by working together can our dreams come to life.

Could the reason for the popularity of Shakespeare's *Henry V* then lie in the inclusivity of the theatrical experience and the stirring symphonic writing, rather than just the hero-legend of old?

IN CONVERSATION WITH...CAROLINE DEVLIN

Director of *Henry V* and five previous GSC productions, talks about the challenges and joys of taking us 'Once more unto the breach' at Guildford Cathedral...

There has been something really extraordinary about working on *Henry V* for this summer season, but also something daunting. Tackling one of the most epic plays Shakespeare wrote is one thing, but when I first visited this extraordinary Cathedral, I realised I was dealing with two giants, the play and the venue!

It's always exciting to work in site-specific theatre and visiting a new site feels, bizarrely, a little bit like a first date. Although the situation is different, there is the fundamental worry...will there be that spark? The magic, when you just know – “*Oh wow, this could be something really special...*”. Staging a play about war in the grounds of a Cathedral, could that work? The task of bringing *Henry V* to life in this glorious setting, presented a fundamental challenge.

On reading and re-reading the words afresh however, I began to see the similarities. The Cathedral is a fundamental part of the Guildford skyline, it's location on Stag Hill giving it a commanding, elevated grandeur and certainly when one pays a visit, you can't help but be in awe of it's stature and indeed – majesty. Majesty, an intrinsic characteristic shared with Henry in his role as King.

In Act 4 Scene 1, the eve of the battle of Agincourt, Henry finds himself wrestling with this elevated role of Kingship versus his feelings as a man:

*“Upon the king! Let our lives, our souls...our sins lay on the king!
O hard condition...What infinite hearts-ease must Kings neglect, that private men enjoy!”*

Henry discovers however, that his success depends not on commanding his troops in to battle with sovereign authority, but by uniting with them through his humanity

*“We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;
For he today that sheds his blood with me,
Shall be my brother.”*

It was this brotherhood, which led to one of the most extraordinary victories in history; outnumbered and starving the English troops routed the French army.

The play celebrates the underdog and in the opening lines, Shakespeare surprisingly puts his play in the role of underdog! We lack “*A Muse of fire...A kingdom for a stage*”, instead, we must rely on “*...your imaginary forces*”, ask you to “*...piece out our imperfections with your thoughts*”.

This comradeship between actor and audience is compelling, for without your imagination the story cannot live. However, this is still a play for 2014, so as night falls, we hope to illuminate the Cathedral and Henry's journey, in a peculiarly 21st century way.

It is easy to see *Henry V* as a rabble-rousing, celebration of all things English with even a touch of xenophobia, but in Shakespeare's hands, the experience becomes far more

HENRY V

Education Pack

profound. A King and a Cathedral, both awe-inspiring with innate power and authority, but at the heart of what makes these titans great is the service of their community through humanity and brotherhood.

So, in the end, I had no need for those “first date” jitters; play and setting had way more in common than I could ever have imagined.

Caroline has previously directed *Othello*, *Macbeth*, *Richard III*, *Hamlet* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* for GSC.

HENRY V EXERCISE

Try this exercise with your students. It will allow them to explore different ways of communicating status and power using different methods of communication. Give each of your students a copy of the Tennis Balls speech from *Henry V*. It marks the moment Henry becomes a true king.

1. Go through the speech together a couple times, exploring the images and words fully, talking through anything that might be confusing.
2. Then get the group walking around the room, inviting them to speak the speech aloud not paying attention to others around them. Have them do this a few times until they get the mood of the speech. This gives them an opportunity to have personal response to the speech.
3. Next, ask them to get into pairs and have them place chairs in different parts of the room (they don't have to face any particular direction). Have them sit in the chair and place their partner for the speech on the wall or space in front of them. They should now do the speech silently in their head but still portray the message to the partner.
4. Next invite them to whisper it to the invisible partner.
5. Finally, they will stand and give the speech aloud. Stress that they can be as loud or quiet as they think they must be to fully affect their invisible partner and the same will apply with any movement they make.
6. Bring them back into the group and discuss how it felt to narrow the focus, and give the speech to one invisible partner. How does it compare to walking around the space speaking aloud to silently saying it? Is there power in the silence? In stillness? What did they find most effective when communicating Henry's rise to true power? Encourage students to interject with their experiences.

This is just one aspect of the speech, one which invites them to have a personal response, without worrying too much about meaning, which can often get in the way of DISCOVERING.

Enjoy the power of Henry's words and strength!

SAMPLE SPEECH FOR WORKSHOP

ACT I, Scene 2

KING HENRY V

We are glad the Dauphin is so pleasant with us;
His present and your pains we thank you for:
When we have march'd our rackets to these balls,
We will, in France, by God's grace, play a set
Shall strike his father's crown into the hazard.
Tell him he hath made a match with such a wrangler
That all the courts of France will be disturb'd
With chances. And we understand him well,
How he comes o'er us with our wilder days,
Not measuring what use we made of them.
We never valued this poor seat of England;
And therefore, living hence, did give ourself
To barbarous licence; as 'tis ever common
That men are merriest when they are from home.
But tell the Dauphin I will keep my state,
Be like a king and show my sail of greatness
When I do rouse me in my throne of France:
For that I have laid by my majesty
And plodded like a man for working-days,
But I will rise there with so full a glory
That I will dazzle all the eyes of France,
Yea, strike the Dauphin blind to look on us.
And tell the pleasant prince this mock of his
Hath turn'd his balls to gun-stones; and his soul
Shall stand sore charged for the wasteful vengeance
That shall fly with them: for many a thousand widows
Shall this his mock mock out of their dear husbands;
Mock mothers from their sons, mock castles down;
And some are yet ungotten and unborn
That shall have cause to curse the Dauphin's scorn.
But this lies all within the will of God,
To whom I do appeal; and in whose name
Tell you the Dauphin I am coming on,
To venge me as I may and to put forth
My rightful hand in a well-hallow'd cause.
So get you hence in peace; and tell the Dauphin
His jest will savour but of shallow wit,
When thousands weep more than did laugh at it.
Convey them with safe conduct. Fare you well.