

PREPARED BY NAT NUNAN AND CLAIRE CHRISTIAN

LA BOITE PRESENTS

THE TRAGEDY OF KING

RICHARD III

EDUCATION NOTES

BY MARCEL DORNEY AND DANIEL EVANS
BASED ON THE PLAY BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE



LA BOITE
THEATRE COMPANY



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FEATURE TEACHER



NAT NUNAN

Nat is an English and Drama Teacher at Brisbane Bayside State College. She loves to write plays, perform slam poetry and teach all things drama related.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE PLAY AND WHY?

I have been lucky enough to see some incredible theatre and cannot really say what my favourite was. However, if I could narrow it down to three (If I'm allowed) it would be based on what has moved me the most. The first was in 1997 when I was in grade eleven. It was the first play I ever saw as a drama student. My drama teacher took us to see *X-Stacy* by Margery Forde at La-Boite theatre. I sat on the edge of my seat the entire show and fell in love with all things theatre from then on. I even volunteered my time at La-Boite working behind the little bar... that didn't last long as I was horrible at working the till- still no good at maths!

The second would be *'The 7 Stages of Grieving'* by Deborah Mailman and Wesley Enoch. The play resonates with me on a deeper level, its mix of yarns, the climate, the outback and modern streets of Oz, the laughter and utter pain and suffering of grief and loss made my heart burst in ways I couldn't contain nor really explain. I felt like I was a part of this country and yet such an outsider. It was as though I was a spectator watching my horrible history unfold... I felt alienated yet so ingrained in all of it.

And the third was Daniel Evans' transformation of Anton Chekov's play *'The Seagull.'* I love a good tragedy and the direction blew my mind. There was so much action on stage that I felt overtly excited and stimulated. There was always something to watch and yet the never ending action did not once pull focus from the major scenes playing out. The nuances helped develop all kinds of subtext and develop character, whilst keeping the punters entertained. The characters were all narcissists and yet were yearning to be loved, a love that transcended all past hurt, a love that they thought would make them whole and yet they never found it, not internally or externally. How can something so unequivocally sad be so entertaining to watch?

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE THING ABOUT BEING A TEACHER?

The connection to something real that is forever blossoming long after class has ended and it is always surprising; there is never a dull moment.

YOUR GO-TO WARM UP GAME?

I love to dance so I make my students dance as well. We put on a smasher track and then a student starts with four counts of movement (four dance steps/movement) and the circle copies, then the next person in the circle repeats the four counts and adds four new counts to the dance...until the entire circle has added on. Great for memory, repetition, unison, ensemble building, tempo, movement and at the end of it, the whole class has a new and complete dance.

WHAT'S SOMETHING YOU WISH THAT ALL OF YOUR STUDENTS KNEW?

That you have to work hard at something that you love, every day, to begin to do it well. That if you want to do something then it is entirely up to you to get it started. Of course people will help you, you just have to find the right people and give it everything you have to keep it moving. So if you want to be in the theatre then develop your own theatre company. If you want to write scripts then write it and make people read it, collaborate, share, ask for guidance and edit, edit, edit. If you want to act, then get trained, if you don't get accepted then find someone who will train you, film yourself, write yourself into a play, audition, travel to audition, work so that you may pay to travel to audition. Nothing is ever handed to you. Not unless you have Heath Ledger's looks and your parents own the film industry.

ABOUT LA BOITE

ARTISTIC VISION

“Theatre That Matters”

La Boite holds a unique place in the hearts and minds of artists and audiences in Brisbane. For the past nine decades La Boite has represented the adventurous and alternative. There has always been a strong focus on the development of new work and artists, and today it is no different.

The stories, ideas and voices of our city and country are many and varied and as such La Boite seeks to represent and engage in this beautiful and rich diversity; the diversity of form, of ideas, ethnicity, gender – of identity.

HISTORY

La Boite is a story of people, passion, purpose and place.

People like Barbara Sisley, who in 1916 found herself stranded in Brisbane when her theatrical touring company unexpectedly disbanded. She along with literature academic J. J. Stable formed the Brisbane Repertory Theatre Society in 1925 in response to the public's growing appetite for high quality, locally-produced theatre. For twenty years, Sisley and Stable reigned supreme in Brisbane's theatrical community.

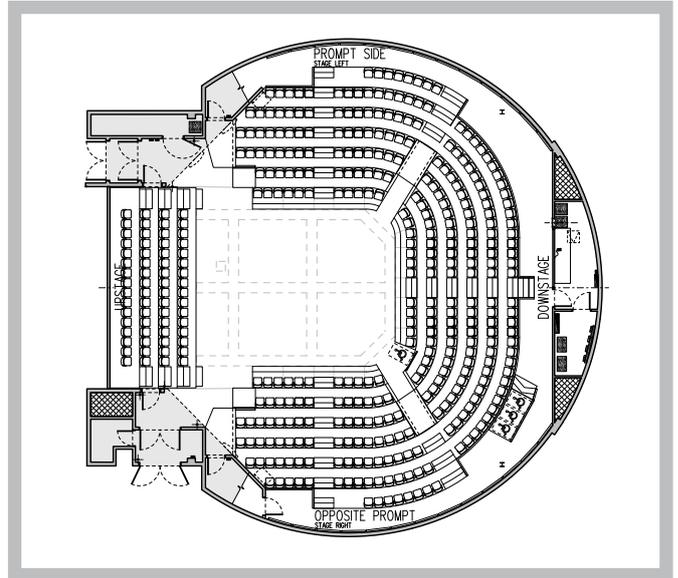
After decades of moving between large venues such as the Theatre Royal and Albert Hall, in 1967 the company finally found a home of its own. Company members converted an old Queenslander in Hale St, Milton into a theatre-in-the-round. Hollowed out, the house had the appearance of a box and the name 'La Boite' was born. In 1972, the company moved next door to the Blair Wilson designed theatre, which so many remember with such fondness. This remained home for three decades, before the move to our current Roundhouse Theatre in Kelvin Grove in 2003.

90 years of existence takes resilience and ingenuity. La Boite has survived two World Wars, censorship, public outrage, politically-charged programming, changing tastes, floods and the constant flirting with failure that comes with walking the tightrope between risk and certainty.

Ultimately, La Boite's history is your history. Whether you have been with us for years or are new to the fold, we welcome you to join us as we move into our next 90 years.

THE ROUNDHOUSE THEATRE

La Boite's Roundhouse Theatre is an epic-intimate space and Australia's only purpose-built theatre-in-the-round. It's also flexible enough to be used as a thrust stage with the audience on three sides. This 400-seat home stage offers a distinctive theatre experience.



ABOUT THE SHOW

SYNOPSIS

With leaders like these, who needs enemies?

Crippled king. Fierce warrior. Cunning psychopath. For four centuries, Shakespeare's Richard III has been regarded as the greatest villain in world drama; a bottled spider, loved and loathed for spinning a web of lies and violence around the monarchy.

In 2012, Richard's resting place was finally uncovered: an unmarked, unremarkable, shallow grave beneath a supermarket car park - too small for the remains or the myth. But Richard - the crooked shadow, the symbol of unchecked ambition - is larger than any one person, living or dead.

This year, he's getting the royal treatment.

The Tragedy of King Richard III is an excavation of the play, the man and ourselves. Bigger than history, bigger than Shakespeare, this is a story of rampant revenge with some hard questions for us all: What are our dreams of power? Have we created a civilisation that corrupts those who rule it? Or do we need their corruption - to let us off the hook?

Armed with some of Queensland's most intrepid theatre makers, this promises to be a fast and furious blood-soaked battle royale, where nobody's getting out clean - or alive.

For a comprehensive synopsis of Shakespeare's play Richard III check out:

- Schmoop Summary - <http://www.shmoop.com/richard-iii/summary.html>

or

- Spark Notes Synopsis - <http://www.sparknotes.com/shakespeare/richardiii/context.html>



PRODUCTION DETAILS

CAST & CREATIVES

Devised with:

Director **Daniel Evans**

Designer **Kieran Swann**

Composer **Guy Webster**

Dramaturg **Lucas Stibbard**

Lighting Designer **Jason Glenwright**

Movement and Fight Director **Nigel Poulton**

Performers: **Helen Howard, Amy Ingram, Todd MacDonald, Pacharo Mzembe, Naomi Price, Atticus Robb & Peter Rowland**



THINGS TO PONDER

- Shakespeare's Richard III belongs to the genre of Shakespeare's plays known as the histories, which deal with events in England's historical past after the Norman Conquest, in 1066. Whereas The Tragedy of King Richard III is a contemporary look response to the play, Shakespeare himself and history.
- The themes and issues:** Disability, Free will versus Fate, War, Fatalism, violence and brutality, Allegiance, Ambition, Abuse of power, Leadership, Persuasion, Nature versus nurture.
- You may be to explore the themes deeper by using one or multiple themes as a topic to create a slam poetry piece. Slam poetry is a great way to explore Shakespeare to ensure and solidify dramatic meaning through creative writing and poetic performance. A great website to introduce students to the art of slam can be found below:
<http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/lesson-plan/introduction-poetry-unit>
- The Tragedy of King Richard the III* is split into five parts. You could use these as discussion points before and after the play to create scenes, timeline Richard's life and discuss the most important details of the plays.
 - Prologue: The Carpark (i)
 - Part One: The Nursery
 - Part Two: The Palace
 - Part Three: The Globe
 - Part Four: The Tower
 - Part Five: Bosworth
 - Epilogue: The Carpark (II)
- You might also like to discuss the direct relation to the form and style of Epic theatre**
 - multiple role taking
 - direct address
 - gestus
 - stylised movement
 - poetry
 - chorus work- unison
 - narration
 - speaking stage directions aloud
 - spoiling upcoming tension (spoilers!)

CHARACTERS AND CONTEXT

The six actors all play a version of themselves as well as the other characters as needed.

ACTOR	CHARACTERS
Helen Howard	Margaret of Anjou
Amy Ingram	Lady Anne
Todd MacDonald	Duke of York, George, William Shakespeare, Richard III
Pacharo Mzembe	Warwick, Edward, Richmond
Naomi Price	Elizabeth I, Servant
Atticus Robb & Peter Rowland	Young Richard III

LIST OF CHARACTERS – IN THE ORIGINAL TEXT BY WILL SHAKESPEARE

HOUSE OF YORK

Henry, Earl of Richmond Princes Edward and Richard
George, Duke of Clarence
Richard, Duke of Gloucester

HOUSE OF LANCASTER

King Edward IV

CHARACTERS BY RELATIONSHIP

King Edward IV

His sons: Edward, Prince of Wales; Richard, Duke of York

His brothers: George, Duke of Clarence; Richard, Duke of Gloucester

His wife: Queen Elizabeth

His mother: Duchess of York, also mother of Clarence and Gloucester

Allies of Queen Elizabeth: Lord Rivers, brother of Queen; Elizabeth; Marquis of Dorset and Lord Grey, sons of Elizabeth; Sir Thomas Vaughan

Allies of Richard: Lord Hastings, Duke of Buckingham

Other important characters:

Queen Margaret, widow of King Henry VI; Lady Anne, her daughter-in-law, widow of Edward Prince of Wales, who was the son of King Henry VI

Note: Send students to the Internet for more detailed background information about the War of the Roses between the houses of York and Lancaster and for more information about the chronology of monarchs on the British throne.

It may also be of use to look at these characters historically, compared to dramatically.

ARTIST CHECK IN

with co-writer/Director **Daniel Evans**

1. Could you weigh in on the 'Why Shakespeare is still relevant?' conversation. Why do you think we still connect with and study the Bard some 400 years later?

DAN: We have made Shakespeare culturally relevant; he is in our nation's DNA. When we colonized Australia, we brought with us the Bible, the Dictionary and The Complete Works of William Shakespeare – a holy trinity of literature that presumed to 'know best.'

In 2016, not much has changed. Shakespeare is engrained in our curriculum, classrooms across the country look to him as a paradigm of literary perfection. And for good reason - his profound use of language, his nimble wit, his control of 'story' is something to regale. There is no denying he was an artist of great repute; was being the operative word.

In performing his work in a contemporary context, I think there is a responsibility to interrogate his politics or at least to take pause, to stand still and hold up his plays in a 21st Century light where not all of his work still shimmers. I think about the deeply uncomfortable ending in *Taming Of The Shrew*, the demise of 'Strong Female Characters' like Lady Macbeth or *Much Ado's* Beatrice, and the Tudorist propaganda that warps and distorts *The Tragedy Of King Richard The Third*.

Part of being an artist, part of being human, is to question the stories we are given, the myths that we are told to uphold, The Past doesn't need to be a place of submission, a place we accept blindly, it can be a space we contest to help give us forward momentum into new stories, new myths.

2. Could you speak to what it's been like to write and collaborate on the script together? Can you describe your process and how you worked being two playwrights used to working individually and living inter-state?

DAN: Working with Marcel Dorney has been amazing. I have long been an admirer of his work - his ability to take audiences into cerebral places, the large ambition of his work and his eloquent turn of phrase. I have learnt a lot - particularly about structural mechanics - how to get the most out of what you've packed underneath the hood.

The process was highly collaborative. We began in a series of small focused developments that uncovered why Richard and how we might tell his story.

There was a lot of philosophical talking - lots of talking - before we put fingers to keys. Once in the drafting process, we fired back and forth scenes before finally coming together to stitch the work into an offer that we've taken into rehearsals.

On the floor, the work is thrown against the walls and we see what sticks; re-writes continue and re-tweaks are constant. It's the thrill of growing a new work ... everything is a live wire, everything is fair game.

3. In your script you speak a lot to Shakespeare, Richard III as a man, the historical context of the work and Shakespeare's play itself. The script is more of a response to Richard III than an interpretation of, was this the original concept for the play? Or did you have something else in mind. How would you describe where it's ended up?

DAN: We always knew we were never going to do Shakespeare's *Richard The Third*. For a few reasons – the text is very long, the play (in its entirety) requires an intimate knowledge of the preceding Henry The Sixth Parts One, Two and Three, plus it has one of the largest casts in the Shakespearean canon.

I think a key moment in the writing was letting go of the Bard and realizing that this play would be our Tragedy of King Richard The Third – and that one of those tragedies was what Shakespeare (and by virtue Queen Elizabeth The First) did to his namesake.

The work went through an evolution off the back of this discovery and became something like The Book of Richard with key testimonies from Anne Neville (his wife), Queen Margaret of Anjou (his father's adversary), and William Shakespeare (his unauthorized biographer) with special guest appearances from The Princes In The Tower and Queen Elizabeth The First.

In a way, the main character is History – who are its authors, how is it constructed and, as a result, who wins and who loses at its hands.

4. What do you hope the audience takes away from this work?

DAN: I hope they're provoked or incensed by what we put on the stage. It's no easy feat taking on The William Shakespeare but our missionary statement – if we're getting evangelical - is that you shouldn't be able to look at Shakespeare's Richard III in the same way ever again.



ELEMENTS OF DRAMA

ELEMENT OF DRAMA	QUESTION
<p>ROLE Performers will take on one or more roles throughout a dramatic piece. This requires them to embody someone or something beyond themselves to make a believable and credible character for the audience. It is also important to think about their role in the dramatic action.</p>	<p>Is it pivotal? Supportive? Was the piece character or plot driven? How were the roles used to help create the story? Did the actors play more than one role? How did they do this? What changes were evident in their performance? Was the role convincing? How were the roles established and maintained?</p>
<p>LANGUAGE The words that are spoken. It's the foundation of a text based play. Subtext should also be analysed as well as stage directions when reading and interpreting a play and establishing role for both the actor and the audience.</p>	<p>How were words used to create power? What was the subtext behind some Of the memorable lines? How did the language help to shape the drama? What was interesting about the language? Was it hard to understand?</p>
<p>RELATIONSHIPS Consider how relationships in the play are communicated through body language and movement.</p>	<p>(Consider how you can show a relationship without "explaining" it.)</p>
<p>MOVEMENT The way an actor uses their body to show emotions/reactions. Blocking on stage. Movement can be literal or abstract, depending on the piece.</p>	<p>Was the movement symbolic in anyway? How was movement contrasted by stillness? What effect did this have? How did the blocking change the way you interpreted the play? Was the movement direct or fluid? Why was it done this way? What were some of the major physical differences between each character that helped differentiate each character? Why did the director make these particular choices? Why was this symbolic and added dramatic meaning?</p>
<p>MOOD The atmosphere created. It helps to focus the action and 'move' the audience into different feelings and emotions throughout the piece.</p>	<p>What did you feel throughout the drama? Do you think this was the intended reaction? How were elements such as lighting, set design and A/V used to help create and maintain the mood?</p>
<p>SYMBOL The deeper or implied meaning of props, costumes, lighting, text, sound or movement.</p>	<p>What could the deeper meaning have been for things you saw on stage? Was lighting, sound or A/V used in a symbolic way? Was this effective? Were props or costumes used in a symbolic way?</p>
<p>TENSION The driving force of the dramatic action. It must be built, maintained or broken at various points in the dramatic action.</p>	<p>How did the tension engage you? What were you invested in? How was it built between characters? Why was the tension broken? How did it happen?</p>
<p>PRODUCTION ELEMENTS:</p> <p>LIGHTING Lighting can be used for several purposes - to establish mood, emphasize space, show a change in day/night, or to symbolise a variety of things.</p> <p>MUSIC Any external sound or image that is used on stage to help tell the story, create mood, establish the setting, show inner thoughts and/or subtext.</p>	<p>Were the lights used to show time passing? How was the lighting design used to highlight key characters/scenes/elements? How effective were the use of blackouts? Was colour used in the lighting? If so, why? Did it support your understanding of what was going on? Was it effective in creating mood? How was sound effects used to enhance meaning and create mood or heighten tension in the show?</p>

DISCUSSION POINTS

- 1: In the end is Richard totally evil or does his portrayal suggest any admirable traits? Defend your point of view.
- 2: What is Richard's reaction when the fighting seems to be going against him? What does his reaction show about his character? Has Richard changed in the course of the action in his motivation or dedication?
- 3: What does Anne realise about her relationship with Richard?
- 4: Do you agree or disagree with Margaret's idea of retributive justice and why? Must death be answered by death or is there another way justice can come about?
- 5: What does Richard reveal about his character and motives in the opening scenes?
- 6: Explain Anne's change of heart toward Richard. What does this scene between Anne and Richard show about Richard's personality?
- 7: What strategies does Richard use to set his plots in motion? Why are they so effective?

BEFORE YOU SEE THE SHOW

You need to discuss the original context and history of the play with students.

Possible ideas to discuss the Anti-hero:

- A central character in a story, film, or drama who lacks conventional heroic attributes.

“With the age of the anti-hero, baddies and goodies became less distinguishable from one another.”

In the opening act of the play the audience can almost sympathise with the hunched back boy who suffers from crippling scoliosis. His family murdered and his only guide Warwick, a ruthless and brutal character who urges him to kill a puppy and look into its eyes, so that he is ready for the brutality of war and become the leader of the battlefield; a role he is destined to fulfil. However, as Richard's character unfolds throughout the play he begins to transform and the audience is left to question whether his evil nature is formed due to his environment and so called role models or whether his devil like nature was there all along...

In class you could begin writing a monologue or a soliloquy that involves one of the five types of Anti-Heroes. Students can choose which one they would like to portray and develop this as an introduction to the Anti-Hero of the show 'Richard.' Once students have finished they can present their monologue/soliloquy to the class.

Pick one of these types of anti-heroes and write for fifteen minutes, introducing your reader to the character. Give a sense of your anti-hero's motivation.

FIVE TYPES OF ANTI-HEROES

by Liz Bureman

So we've established that there is a difference between the hero and the anti-hero. The hero is the Disney Hercules, and the anti-hero is the Hercules of actual Greek mythology (who was actually called Heracles, because Hercules is the Roman name, but whatever). But did you also know that there are different levels of anti-heroes? I mean, there is a difference between Batman and Frodo, and yes, Frodo is technically an anti-hero.

The Classical Anti-Hero

Traditionally, a classical hero is a character who always wins their battles, with sharp intellect, unshakable self-confidence, and excellent judgment.

So it stands to logic that the classical anti-hero, which is the original anti-hero, is terrible in a fight, is not the brightest crayon in the box, riddled with self-doubt, and makes decisions based on self-preservation instead of bravery. The classical anti-hero's story arc follows the conquering of his own fears and coming to terms with himself to fight whatever threat faces him.

Frodo falls into this category, since he's a decent guy, but there's a lot of baggage that comes with carrying that ring through three books.

The "Disney" Anti-Hero

This is what most people tend to think of today when they think of an anti-hero. At his core, the Disney Anti-Hero is still fundamentally good, but doesn't have the relentless optimism of a classical hero.

They tend to be sarcastic and more realistic, and tend to put logic before honor, but they won't outright perform acts that are morally ambiguous. Like the Classical Anti-Hero, odds are pretty good that this type of anti-hero will develop into a classical hero by story's end.

Haymitch Abernathy from the Hunger Games trilogy and Severus Snape of Harry Potter fame are two good examples of this type of anti-hero.

The Pragmatic Anti-Hero

The Pragmatic Anti-Hero is basically exactly what it sounds like. Generally no worse than neutral in morality, the Pragmatic Anti-Hero takes a big-picture view of his role, and if something or someone needs to be sacrificed for the greater good, so be it.

They won't kill indiscriminately though: anyone who dies at the hand of the Pragmatic Anti-Hero either had it coming, or had to be killed in order to achieve the higher goal. These anti-heroes are equally as likely to defect from classical heroism by the end of the story as they are to convert.

Harry Potter himself, by the end of the series, fulfils this role, as he is constantly breaking rules, and uses two unforgivable curses and robs a bank by series' end in order to off Voldemort once and for all.

The Unscrupulous Hero

This is as dark as you can get with your anti-hero while still being technically good.

The Unscrupulous Hero lives in a world that has a morality that is made up of varying shades of grey, with their grey being slightly lighter than that of the villains. Often they live in a really crappy setting, which accounts for their distrust of humanity and penchant towards violence. They're big on revenge, and when they take their revenge, count on it being something to see. There might be some collateral damage in their actions, but that doesn't faze them.

Jack Sparrow of the Pirates of the Caribbean film series and the Blues Brothers of the titular film are examples of this type of anti-hero: their intentions are good, and they are fighting on the moral high side, but they don't really care how much damage they cause or who they double-cross on their way to achieving their goals.

The "Hero" in Name Only

These anti-heroes fight on the side of good, but they have no good motivation. Either their intentions are completely selfish, and they only happen to be pointing their weapons at the token bad guys, or their motivations are only slightly less terrible than the villains'. Sometimes they're just bored and need someone to point a gun at.

You'll still root for them, but you won't agree with a lot of the ways they do things.

Sherlock Holmes in the BBC's re-imagining of the character is an example, since he explicitly describes himself as a high-functioning sociopath, and makes it clear that he only takes on cases that he finds mentally stimulating. Dexter of the TV series of the same name walks the line between this and a villain protagonist.

Which is your favourite anti-hero type?

SHAKESPEAREAN SLURS

Objective: To become familiar with Shakespeare's language and work collaboratively to form Shakespearean insults and warm-up vocals.

Instructions for students:

- Work in groups of four to five.
- Refer to the Shakespearean slurs listed below.
- Create two slurs to hurl at an opposing group.
- Practise insults.
- Hurl the slurs at the opposing group.
- Receive a mark out of five based on each of the performance criteria from the teacher.
- Identify the group with the highest score at the end of the two rounds as the winner.

To create your Shakespearean slur

- Commence your slur with 'Thou'.
- Select an insult from each column and string the insults together to create a powerful slur.

Example: Thou lily-livered maggot-pie measle!

Performance criteria

- Unison
- Clarity
- Volume
- Conviction

Source: Slurs taken from a range of Shakespearean works.

SHAKESPEARE SLURS		
Column 1	Column 2	Column 3
apple-john	pox-marked	jack-a-nape
queasy	foot-licker	egg-shell
frothy	haggard	pignut
hideous	rank	whipster
gull-catcher	rump fed	pantaloon
guts-gripping	saucy	hedge-pig
horn-beast	rabbit- sucker	flirt-gill
swag-bellied	un-muzzled	hugger-mugger
toad-spotted	bladder	dankish baggage
weedy	beef-witted	barnacle
Jarring	lumpish	boar pig
mad-bread	maggot-pie	malt-worm
miscreant	paunchy	ruffian
peevish	pigeon-egg	reeky bug-bear
roguish	ratsbane	strumpet
sheep-biting	snipe	canker-blossom
venomed	vain	mold-warp
waggish	villainous	fool-born
yeasty	wenching	lout
codpiece	dismal-dreaming	nut-hook
dismal-dreaming	dizzy- eyed	
dissembling	evil-eyed	
giglet	eye- offending	
hasty-witted	gnarling	
haughty	evil-eyed	
ill-breeding	fat-kidneyed	
lean-witted	haughty	
moldwarp	ill-breeding	
muddy-mettled	knavish	
dog-hearted	bunch-backed	
fly-bitten	common-kissing	
gorbellied	pukeing	
	prating	
	elf-skinned	
	goatish	
	greasy	



ACTIVITY

1. Before reading any Shakespearean play, review with students their knowledge of other plays and conventions of the stage by having students list and compare the plays they already know. For example, have students generate titles of comedies and tragedies and discuss the type of action that usually occurs in these genres. What is the usual conflict in a comedy? In a tragedy? How do these kinds of plays usually end? What subjects are common to each genre? If students have read a history play, you can ask how histories compare to the other two genres in terms of subject, tone, and themes. If students have not read a history play, have them articulate ideas that come to mind from this term.

BUILDING BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE THROUGH A PROBLEM SITUATION

By getting students to think about how they might solve Richard's "problem," this activity prepares them to connect their own knowledge of human behaviour, especially about ambition and abuse of power, with motives and behaviours they will discover in the play. Give students the following problem to write about and discuss in small groups:

1. You are Richard, the Duke of Gloucester, the third son of a duke who is killed in a civil war against Henry VI, the King of England. In revenge, you join with your brothers to overthrow the King and kill his son, leaving his wife, Lady Anne, a widow. Your oldest brother, Edward, has become the new King of England. However, Edward is dying, and you want to become the King when he is gone. There are some barriers to your ambition, though. King Edward has a wife, Queen Elizabeth, who has two brothers and two grown sons from a previous marriage. The King and Queen have two grown sons, Edward and Richard, who are in line before you, and a pretty, young daughter, Elizabeth. And also, there is your popular older brother George, Duke of Clarence, who might stand in your way. Clarence has two children, Margaret and Edward.
2. Although you are intelligent and courageous in battle, you suffer from a physical deformity. You are of small stature, sinister looking, and have a crooked back that hunches you over and raises your left shoulder higher than your right. You have an aggressive attitude, a persuasive tongue, and are quick to argue or fight. You aren't interested in love or the benefits of peace. All you want is the ultimate power of kingship. How will you get it?
3. Write a plan for overcoming the obstacles before you and gaining kingship. Figure into your plan: Lady Anne, Queen Elizabeth and her daughter Elizabeth, your persuasive ability, the Tower of London, some unscrupulous nobles, and a couple of common murderers.

4. Give students ten to fifteen minutes to develop their plans for becoming King. After sharing in small groups, several students can share their plans with the whole class. The class can vote on the plan they think will be most similar to Shakespeare's play. Discuss why they chose a certain plan. Have students keep their writings, and after reading the play the students can see which plan is closest to Shakespeare's plot.

** You could alternatively have them create scenes that show Richard's rise to power and how he overcomes the problems at hand to gain the throne. Pick the best to show the class.*

ACTIVITY:

To make connections to the present day political scene, choose several contemporary leaders and read articles on these persons in magazines and newspapers, noting their decisions and behaviours. Questions to be discussed include:

Do political decisions seem to be based on principle or made for pragmatic ends? Which philosophy seems to rule the leaders' political behaviour? How do you know? What are the benefits and disadvantages of each leader's style of political leadership?

ACTIVITY

Make two lists: the common personality traits of women and men. List all the terms on the board. Mark the traits viewed as positive and/or negative in contemporary culture. Discuss: Do males or females have more of the traits commonly considered to be positive? Why? What view of males/females arises from this listing of traits?

b. List slang words used to identify males/females (only terms suitable for a mixed group in a school setting). Which terms are positive/negative? What differences do you see between terms used for males/females? What do these differences suggest about the commonly held assumptions about gender differences?

c. Write a brief definition of "feminist." Is "feminist" a positive or negative term? Do a poll. Ask ten different women if they consider themselves "feminists" and why or why not. Record their responses for comparison and discussion.

Ask ten different students for their definition of "feminist." Compare and discuss the responses as a class. Discuss:

What is the common view of women's roles?

d. Skim newspapers for articles pertaining to women, women's rights, attitudes toward women. Create a profile of the "modern woman." What are commonly recognised positive traits for women? Negative traits? What overall view of women emerges from media coverage of women? What is the common view of women's nature today?

AFTER YOU SEE THE SHOW

GETTING DOWN INITIAL REACTIONS

After students have seen the play, have them discuss what they already know and also what they would like to know about the characters and the events of the play. Write these ideas on large chart paper so they can be displayed in the room. Use these lists to review what has happened, add additional information, and make connections as students learn more with each scene.

AUDIENCE RESPONSE

Students need to have the opportunity to express their initial reactions to the play, based on their personal experiences and understanding of what they have seen. Audience response writing encourages this type of personal, subjective response to the play. Use open-ended questions, such as, how do you respond to the scene or what do you know about Richard?

Ask students to choose the most important scene in the play and explain why they consider it important. Or choose quotations and invite students to explain what it means to them. Tell students to write freely for three to five minutes about ideas the quotation brings to mind. Have students share their responses in pairs and then invite reactions as a way to start a whole-class discussion.

READING OTHER LITERATURE AND BOOKS CONNECTED TO THE THEMES OF THE PLAY

Read another Elizabethan play, *Doctor Faustus*, by Christopher Marlowe, written around 1592 (Signet Classic, 1969) and compare the downfall of Doctor Faustus to Richard III.

ENSEMBLE BUILDING:

Physical Warm up and image building

This exercise was done in the rehearsal room for *The Tragedy of King Richard the III* as a way to explore the character of William Shakespeare and his relationship with his own ideas.

1. Play music and get students are to walk around the space. They are to respond to five different energy levels.
 - 1: Moving as slow as they possibly can without stopping
 - 2: Increased speed and attentiveness
 - 3: Their normal pace
 - 4: Increased speed and attentiveness
 - 5: As fast as they can move without running.
2. Select some students to be in role as 'leaders,' the rest of the students are to be in role as 'followers.'

The leaders are told that they are to move the followers into different positions, tell them what pace to walk at, they are to build images and control the whole scene. The leaders are in charge, like William Shakespeare crafting his work, and the followers are his ideas – blank until he tells them what to do.

You could get the leaders to create images based on a word or theme, you could change the music to develop different moods, and you could introduce different props or objects to inspire different images.

After discuss what images were created, how it felt to be the leader or the follower, how different speeds or positions made them feel, or what they could have symbolised. This exercise could be a good place to start scene building. Or just be used as an ensemble warm up.

STRATEGIES TO BUILD STUDENTS' DRAMATIC PRESENTATION SKILLS THROUGH GROUP DEVISED WORK.

Drama promotes and encourages students' oral development, kinaesthetic body movement, the imagination and its connections to everyday experiences, and development of communication skills and public speaking skills. It is better to start with small scenes and more limited actions. Students will gain confidence and a comfort level, enabling them to risk more detailed dramatic presentations.

Following is a list of strategies to use to develop students' speaking and acting skills:

1. Reading for meaning:

Student one reads several lines of a character. Student two explains what the character "really" means.

Example.

Lady Macbeth: Out, out damn spot.

Explanation: I've got to wash this blood off my hands or everybody will know that my husband killed the king.

Richard: Now is the winter of our discontent
Made glorious summer by this sun of York;
And all the clouds that loured upon our house
In the deep bosom of the ocean buried.

Explanation: Our bad times are over and we have time to enjoy more pleasant things.

2. Reading for dramatic action:

One student reads the lines of a particular scene or part of a scene while other members of the group pose as specific characters and perform the actions in pantomime, giving more meaning to the words.

Note: Students need time to plan this activity by reading the lines together and deciding on the best actions to convey the meanings of the lines. Students should also practice reading aloud to increase their ease and fluidity with the complex syntax of Shakespeare's language.

Suggested scenes:

3. Slide show:

Choose four key moments in a scene or part of a scene. Plan a fixed tableau to present each moment and then present the scenes in succession to the class. Each time you switch positions, call out "switch." The "audience" closes their eyes until the actors call out "open." This happens four times in succession creating a visual "slide show."

EXCERPT ONE: FROM THE PROLOGUE: THE CARPARK

The rumble is heard.

AMY Five centuries ago.
NAOMI A field in England.
PACHARO A fire that has consumed three generations.
TODD One grandson of a king deposed another, and the movement of the spheres had ever since been thrown from its order.
KID Civil War.
PACHARO It shook the chain of Being, and stained the sky.
HELEN So many scenes of slaughter have been played.
TODD Fathers killed by sons, and sons by fathers –
AMY Women, land, and other property destroyed.
HELEN Children slain at the hands of that twisted beast Richard the Third!
NAOMI But it's alright.
TODD We stand on firm cement,
KID and history can't hurt us.
NAOMI Look at me.
Listen to my voice. It's all alright.

EXCERPT TWO: FROM PART ONE: THE NURSERY

AMY – but we know that didn't stop him.
PACHARO Right.
AMY We know that he lived in a world where people shaped differently were thought to be at fault, and cursed by God.
TODD Would it be any wonder, then, that as this boy grows up, and his shape changes – and so does the staring, from pity into fear – that the talent he indisputably possessed for fighting, both in combat and in strategy, would become the engine of his self-image, that he would spurn those gifts given to others and not to him, of love, of truth, of beauty, and become instead a man whose only measure of success in this existence is to dominate, whose natural environment is war, who hates the idle pleasures of these days –
NAOMI Oh, I see.
No, no, that's a great midday movie.
TODD It would explain –
AMY Sure, it explains everything, which is exactly the problem with it, it's incredibly simple and boring and reductive –
TODD I don't think it reduces him at /all –
AMY – we're doing this again, are we? we're using somebody's difference from us as a symbol?
TODD – it's not a symbol –
PACHARO I think you mean a metaphor –
TODD – it's a story, about overcoming the odds –
AMY I do not mean a metaphor, I mean a symbol, we make his spine into a symbol that takes over everything else and excludes every human quality, and this kid's spine is not your inspirational Facebook post.

TODD that's just –
PACHARO Look, in mediaeval England, right, having a deformed spine was gonna be a very real obstacle / to –
AMY To what? to being Normal Like Us?
PACHARO To being a leader –

EXCERPT THREE: FROM PART THREE: THE GLOBE

HELEN Anne.
KID The Lady Anne?
WS YES.
AMY No.
WS Anne – YES
Anne – BUT
Not with a sword this conquest
He will not draw her blood
But rather her consent – YES.
He will woo her.
Anne.
Anne.

AMY is ANNE.

Now with her father gone –
Her husband dead –
Her mother-in-law a mercenary.
EXTERIOR.
Morning.
The rain swept streets of London.
A cavalry of Lancastrians bringing in their dead.
Strewn across a mountain of Unknown Soldiers –

A beep.

Fallen Heroes –

A beep.

Valiant martyrs – of this struggle for the soul of a nation – is the corpse of The Dead King Henry.

And – and – The Monster – The Monster
With her husband's blood not yet dry upon his armour
will sue for the hand of the piteous Lady Anne.

AMY The silenced Lady Anne.
WS The gentle Lady Anne.
AMY The resilient Lady Anne.

A beep.

The Lady Anne left abandoned by her father in a foreign country.

Another beep.

The Lady Anne married to a She-Wolf's spawn, locked-up and tortured by her cub.

Another beep.

She keeps going.
The Lady Anne abandoned on a battlefield.
Raped on a battlefield.
Alone.
Exiled.

Beep.

HELEN Irrelevant.
 AMY EXACTLY.
 Worthless.
 Discarded, to claw her way back to civility –
 No, not civility – Decency.

HELEN Master Shakepeare.
 ANNE Dishonoured and silenced and /
 HELEN Master Shakespeare.
 ANNE When no-one else would touch her?
 When no-one would speak her name?

WS is listening.

ANNE Do you know who extended a hand?
 Who repaid her family's treachery with kindness and
 humanity?
 Who vouched for her name and went against The King's
 wishes to marry her?
 He did..
 He did.
 None of this is true. None of this is –

WS grabs at her. Amy is ANNE.

ANNE What, do you tremble? are you all afraid?
 Alas, I blame you not; for you are mortal,
 And mortal eyes cannot endure the devil.
 Avaunt, thou dreadful minister of hell, William /
 Shakespeare – !

WS covers her mouth before she can get the Shakespeare out.

EXCERPT FOUR: FROM PART FOUR: THE TOWER

KID I'm supposed to be in character.
 PACHARO It's just us.
 KID Ugh, it's not, though.
 PACHARO Can we pretend, just for a second?
 Just Me. And You.
 You: why? Why'd they / have you ?
 KID I dunno.
 I guess –
 Because my mother and father loved each other.
 And when two people love each other
 they want everyone to see that love.
 Because love is invisible. You can't show it to anyone.
 So you want to prove it. Bring it into existence.
 I'm that proof.
 I'm their love.

PACHARO Do you believe that?
 KID No.
 I think they were horny, and had sex.
 Which is gross.

PACHARO It's not –
 It shouldn't be. It's sacred.

KID Sex?
 PACHARO Making life.
 KID Is that why you don't /want to –

PACHARO When do you think a person stops being a child?
 KID They asked me that when I got the part.
 (My parents.)
 And I just looked at them, and thought,
 "I can't explain this to you. You've forgotten."
 I was born after 9-11.
 On my first Birthday, America invaded Iraq.
 My second – Facebook launched.
 By the time I turned six, North Korea had detonated a
 nuclear bomb.
 What's happening in here, Pacharo, is the tip of a larger
 iceberg.
 ... which, by the way, is melting.
 The arctic ice sheet had started to break up by the time
 I hit my teens.
 Adults are always saying kids grow up too fast.
 But I think kids have always grown up too fast.
 When the killers came for the Princes in the Tower, they
 wouldn't have been in gentle slumber – they would've
 been waiting.
 Kids get sub-text. Because no-one tells us the truth. We
 have to figure it out.
 Maybe we lose that habit.

PACHARO I didn't.
 KID Because people treat you differently here?
 PACHARO –
 KID When do you think someone stops being a child?

INDIVIDUAL DEvised WORK

Much like the pre-show activity where a student writes a monologue based on the Anti Hero, students then choose a character from Richard the Third and they write an inner monologue. They need to choose a specific moment in the play when this inner monologue would occur. Depending on your unit of study students can either do this as an activity to better explore the character, they can perform it or they could devise a movement piece which performs the monologue through the style of epic theatre using the conventions of this particular style.

Interview hot seat: Interview another student who poses as a character in the play, for example, Lady Anne. It is important to remain in character and respond in ways that most naturally reflect the actions and words of the character in the play.

Monologue: In character, describe a particular locale in the play. Talk about the best/worst thing about living in this particular place. Talk about your daily life. Describe your relationship to other characters. This might be especially useful to contrast the natures of the two young princes: Edward, Prince of Wales, and Richard, Duke of York.

CONTEXT & INTERTEXTUALITY.

- What references to other work exist in this play?
- What references can you see in modern pop-culture that may have drawn on imagery, characters, themes from Richard the III?
- Why do you think that's the case?
- What context does the audience bring to this play?
- How does your own understanding of the story change the way you watch and respond to it?

VIOLENCE

- Everyone in the play experiences violence/terror either through being the victim or the abuser. Why is violence such a prevalent theme in the story? What could it represent?

SYMBOL

- Who/what could the character of Richard represent in today's society? Why?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Writing in Role: Students could write as one of the characters, showing a different perspective.

Improvisation: Students could improvise a new scene, perhaps a scene that happened before the play or after the play.

Using script excerpts from the play, try these activities in small groups.

STYLE 1- WHISPER

Still making sure that you can hear each other, read the script as if you both don't want to be overheard. When does this work for the scene? And when does it not?

STYLE 2 -YELL

Stand 10 paces apart from you partner and read the script across the space, projected so that they hear you at full volume. You don't care who hears you. When does this work for the scene? And when does it not?

STYLE 3 – PHYSICAL WITH NO WORDS

Explore telling the dialogue of the scene using nothing but your physical language.

STYLE 4 - PHYSICAL WITH WORDS

One stands still and the other can move around the space while reading the script. They can stand next to them, circle them, and whisper in their ear, go behind them etc.. Swap. Once you have both had a go. Freely move around the space – only when you are speaking.

STYLE 5 – EYE CONTACT

Perform the scene with each actor not making eye contact- they should look past the person they are speaking to. Repeat with actors maintaining eye contact and never looking away.

STYLE 6 – MIX IT UP

Combine different styles after discussing what you think worked and didn't work at each turning point of the scene. Perform the scene for your fellow students at this stage. Discuss with your classmates what worked and didn't work.

STYLE 7: ONE LINE- act and react

Memorise one to two lines of dialogue from The Tragedy of King Richard the III.

Find a partner and sit opposite them. Maintain eye contact without laughing or looking away.

Once you are focused you are to begin saying your lines in turn. Do not ever break eye contact. You are to play around with the tone, inflection, subtext and meaning of the lines. Your partner is to react and respond with their line accordingly.

Your objective is to move around the room playing with extreme spatial relationships. Infringe on personal space and then move to the corner of the room- far from your partner. Notice how having extreme distance or closeness changes the way you say your lines.

Never break eye contact and try to heighten tension wherever possible.

CHECK THESE OUT...

LA BOITE *Tragedy of King Richard the Third* trailer:
<http://www.laboite.com.au/cms/page.asp?ID=261>

INTERESTING READING & STARTING POINTS

Richard III: Rumour and Reality:
<http://richardiii-ipup.org.uk/timeline>

Richard III: The Warrior King's Painful Spine Treatment
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/04/19/richard-iii-scoliosis-king-spine-treatments_n_3116679.html

Adolescent Idiopathic Scoliosis
<http://scoliosisjournal.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1748-7161-1-2>

Richard III: King In The Car Park
This is a fantastic YouTube Channel completely dedicated to Richard The Third from Leicester University.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wR11jOVWI7Y&list=PLkBZZhQeuA83nTnkPNHVbpF-QnyntzQxl>

Richard III: His Love Affair With Anne Neville
A pretty great blog that's quite easy to read about the theory that Richard might've been deeply in love with his wife Anne Neville.
<http://historyhoydens.blogspot.com.au/2009/11/richard-iii-anne-neville-love-story.html>

Lachlan Philpott: We Should Ban Shakespeare for Five Years
<http://www.smh.com.au/comment/we-should-ban-shakespeare-from-the-stage-for-five-years-20160502-gojv86.html>

Richard III's skeleton found under English car park:
<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-02-04/researchers-confirm-skeleton-is-that-of-richard-iii/4500598>

Richard III: English king starts final journey after remains found under car park:
<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-03-23/car-park-king-richard-iii-starts-final-journey/6339502>

YOU TUBE LINKS

The Wars That Inspired Game of Thrones:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vj055pKuBo4>

Richard the III The New Evidence:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fDHDvnnK4nI>

BOOKS

Barton, John. "Playing Shakespeare: An Actor's Guide." New York: Anchor, 2001

Smallwood, Robert. "Players of Shakespeare 4." Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998.

Spolin, Viola. "Theater Games for the Classroom: A Teacher's Handbook." Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1986.

Stanislavski, Constantin. "An Actor Prepares." New York: Routledge, 1989.

Tolaydo, Michael. "'A Touch, A Touch, I Do Confess': Sword Fighting in the Classroom. Shakespeare Set Free: Teaching Twelfth Night and Othello." Ed. Peggy O'Brien. New York: Washington Square-Pocket, 1995.

ONLINE

The British Academy of Stage and Screen Combat: www.bassc.org
Fight Directors Canada: www.fdc.ca

The International Order of the Sword and the Pen: www.iosp.org
Masterpiece Theatre: Adapting Shakespeare: http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/masterpiece/othello/tg_adaptact.html#othello_scene

Shakespeare's Globe: <http://www.shakespeares-globe.org/>

The Society of American Fight Directors: www.safd.org



Photo by the University of Leicester.



In Person 9am - 5pm, Monday - Friday
La Boite at the Roundhouse Theatre
The Works Level 5, 6-8 Musk Avenue
Kelvin Grove Village, QLD 4059

Mail PO Box 212, Kelvin Grove QLD 4059

Website www.laboite.com.au

Email info@laboite.com.au

Phone (07) 3007 8600

Fax (07) 3007 8699

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