
1. AT A GLANCE 6

2. WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: LIFE & WORK 9

2.1 Biography	9
2.2 Contemporary Background	11
Politics and society	11
Culture and the theatre	14
Niccoló Machiavelli	15
2.3 Notes on Other Important Works	16
The tragedies	16
The comedies	18
The history plays	19
The sonnets	21

3. ANALYSES AND INTERPRETATIONS 23

3.1 Origins and Sources	23
Historical sources	23
Artistic sources – Senecan tragedy	24
3.2 Summaries	27
Act I	27
Act II	30
Act III	32
Act IV	35
Act V	38
3.3 Structure	40
3.4 Characters	43
Main characters – House of York	44

Richard, later King Richard III	44
King Edward IV	47
George, Duke of Clarence	48
Duchess of York	48
Queen Elizabeth	48
The young Prince Edward	49
The young Duke of York	49
Boy and Girl	49
The Woodvilles	50
Marquess of Dorset	50
Lord Grey	50
Earl Rivers	50
Women of the House of Lancaster	50
Old Queen Margaret	50
Lady Anne	51
Other nobles	52
Earl of Richmond (Henry Tudor)	52
Lord Hastings	54
Lord Stanley	55
Supporters of Richard	56
Duke of Buckingham	56
Sir Richard Ratcliff	57
Sir William Catesby	57
Lord Lovel	57
Sir Robert Brakenbury	58
Earl of Surrey	58
Duke of Norfolk	58
Further characters	58
3.5 Notes on themes	61
The history plays: genre and themes	61
The themes of <i>Richard III</i>	64

Morality, immorality and the laws	64
Ambition & power	69
3.6 Style and language	81
Rhetoric	81
Black comedy	83
Boar imagery	85
Extreme language and imagery	86
3.7 Interpretations	88
Power and manipulation	88
Al Pacino's <i>Looking for Richard</i>	89

4. RECEPTION

91

5. MATERIALS

94

The Globe Theatre in London	94
Some useful information	96

6. SAMPLE EXAM QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

98

SOURCES & REFERENCES

101

INDEX

103