

Individual, Small Group, Whole Class	Writing, Speaking, Listening, Viewing, Reading, Creating, Formal, Informal	Description of the Activity
SG	RCI	1. Because many of the characters in the play were actual people, and because it is often difficult to remember who is who, in small groups choose one of the following families, Somerset (Lancaster), Plantagenet (York), or the French Royal Family, and draw out a family tree including characters from the play.
WC	RCI	2. Compile a family tree for the major factions of the play and post them on the wall of the classroom as one large poster. Draw lines marking the connections between the various different characters in the play. A red line means allies of Lancaster, a white line means allies of York, and a blue line means allies of the French. Discuss the following: Are there any people in the play that have several different lines drawn to them? Why do you think they are allied to two different sides? What effect does this have on the play?
SG	RWSLI	3. In Act II iv, the Temple Garden scene, Shakespeare gives us a condensed version to explain the complicated politics leading to the fighting between the houses of York and Lancaster, which eventually sparked the Hundred Years War. Instead of trying to explain the politics, he uses the metaphor of the choosing of red and white roses by the main houses to represent their allegiance to the houses of Lancaster or York respectively. One half of the class will trace references to the colour white in the play and the other will trace references to the colour red. In a word journal, record what happens in respects to the conflict whenever these colours appear? What are the colours supposed to represent? Discuss your findings with the other group.
I SG	VWLSI	4. Watch the BBC Version of Henry VI Part one and The Messenger: The Story of Joan of Arc (1999 dir. Luc Besson). Both movies present the battle of Orleans from opposing points of view. Pretend you are a reporter for either the English account of events (BBC), or the French account of the events (Besson). Create a script for the newscast that you would give describing the events of the battle. Compare your script with a partner who wrote for the other side. How did your accounts change? With what slant was each account written? Why do you think this is?
I	RWF	5. The point of climax for the play is generally thought to be when Henry unwittingly chooses the red rose over the white rose, which leads to dissention between the houses and the eventual fall of Talbot. Although the play is called Henry VI, King Henry does not appear in the play until Act III Scene i and he seems to be controlled by the various different factions. Pretend that the play was named for one of the other major characters, Joan of Arc, Plantagenet, Somerset, Talbot, Charles etc. Looking at the play from the point of view of your character, choose the point in the play that would be the climax for that character and rewrite it from that character's point of view.
SG WC	RCSLI	6. Draw a plot graph for the play from the point of view of each of the major characters indicating the point of introduction, rising action, climax, and denouement for each character. Compare them and discuss how the focus of the play changes depending on which point of view you are reading the play from.
I	VWF	7. Watch Braveheart (1995 dir. Mel Gibson). Both Gibson and Shakespeare have been the brunt of criticism for their "history" movie/play. Some critics argue that Henry VI and Braveheart should be considered dramas and not histories because they are too loosely based on history. Research the history of William Wallace and Henry VI and compare it to their movie/play counterparts. Write a paper discussing the changes that Shakespeare and Gibson made and why they may have decided to make these changes. Keep in mind audience and dramatic techniques in your discussion.
I	WRF	8. In Act I scene i, the lords mention the prophecy given in regards to Henry VI being a weak king who will loose all of his father's land. Pretend that you are Henry's advisor and he has come to you for advice on how to make sure the prophecy does not come true. Citing evidence from the text, what would you advise him regarding who to trust and who to support?
SG	RSLI	9. The Duke of Bedford, Act I scene i, Winchester, Act I scene iii, and the Countess of Auvergne, Act II scene iv, all speak out against the horrors of war and how there has been so much bloodshed that soon all of the men will have been killed. The Anglo-Saxon poem "The Wanderer" reflects the same sentiments. Find other sources of literature, poems, stories, or

		plays, from different time periods that discuss the same theme. Compare them to the speeches made by the above characters. Discuss why you think the theme of the fruitlessness of war is one that has lasted the test of time.
I	RWF	10. Despite their pleas for peace, it is decided that war is necessary by King Henry the VI and Talbot. Are their instances today where the same arguments have been made for war despite public opposition? Find newspaper articles or newscasts that support going to war and ones that oppose going to war and compare them to the arguments in the play. Write your own editorial explaining your point of view on the subject.
WC	SLI	11. One of the tensions in the play is the change from the traditional chivalry where one nation stood united together against outside foes, represented by the reign of Henry V, and destruction of chivalry and the united front through political infighting, represented by Henry VI. In many ways, Talbot represents the old ways of chivalry. Read Tennyson's "Guenievere" from <u>Idylls of the King</u> and compare Talbot with the ideals of chivalry presented in it. Brainstorm all the ways that Talbot represents the ideals of chivalry and how these features lead to his downfall.
I	WSLF	12. Chivalry exists today. War destroys society. Women are more delicate than men. Elders always know best. Choose one of these themes from the play and prepare a speech to be given to the class arguing for or against the claim.
SG WC	RWSLVI	13. Henry is a young king who faces many pressures from the elder Dukes who think they know what is right for him. Even today young people are often forced to do things that their elders think is best for them. In Act 5 scene v, Henry decides to marry Margaret even though their marriage would have no political advantage. Keeping the original language, rewrite this scene so it is set in modern times and perform it for the class. Discuss how many different scenarios were presented and whether they were realistic or not.
I WC	RWSLI	14. One of the most interesting female characters in the play is Joan of Arc. Joan of Arc is a woman who plays the role of the man and fights for France. During the time that Shakespeare was writing, a boy, pretending to be a woman who is playing at being a man, would have played the role of Joan. This strange combination leads to some interesting questions surrounding gender. Write a story from the point of view of Joan of Arc describing her experiences in the battle of Orleans. Focus on the claims by the nobles that Joan could not have completed what she did without divine intervention. Was she, a mere woman only able to accomplish what she did because of the aid of God, or was it because of her own skills? Compare the stories written by the girls in the class to the stories written by the boys in the class. Does one sex or the other have a more realistic point of view on what it would be like to be a woman playing at being a man? Why or why not?
WC	SLI	15. Henry VI has only three female roles, Joan of Arc, The Countess of Auvergne, and Margaret. All three of the women try to influence the male world of battle to some extent. Create a chart comparing the three women and how they affect the play. What are the similarities in the way they affect the male world and what are the differences? Are any of the women successful? Why or why not?
SG	RSLI	16. Joan of Arc and Margaret are two women who are placed at the opposite ends of the female spectrum. Joan of Arc is seen as manly and unholy, while Margaret is seen as feminine and innocent. In partners, have one person go through and find all the descriptions of Joan and have the other find all the descriptions of Margaret. Discuss the difference in the language Shakespeare uses when comparing the two women.
I	WI	17. At the end of the play, Suffolk claims "Margaret shall now be queen, and rule the king; But I will rule both her, the king, and the realm." (Act V Scene V) Based on this claim and what has happened in this play, predict what will happen in Henry VI part II.
I SG	RWF	18. Much of the action in the play takes place on the battlefield. One of the problems a director of this play would have is trying to represent a huge battle on a tiny stage. Add stage directions to one of the battle scenes in Act I, II, or III describing how you would stage the scene to convey the effect of a large battle on a small stage.
I	CWLF	19. The BBC version of the play is presented like a play being filmed and does not use music very often. Modern filmmakers, however, rely heavily on music to support their vision of the play. Pretend you are going to do your own film version of the play. Create a sound track to go along with each of the scenes and provide an explanation of why you believe each song supports your reading of the scenes.
SG	CWRVLF	20. Create your own 30 min Henry VI Part I. You can put it in any time period you want and you can change the characters and the setting as you need, but it still must resemble the general plot of the play. Perform your version of the play for the class and provide a written statement describing why you made the cuts you did and defending your interpretation.

Henry VI Part 1: Study Guide

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Plot Summary:

The play starts with the funeral of Henry V. During the funeral, it is revealed that several of the French towns that were won by Henry V have been lost once more to France and the Dauphin Charles who has just been crowned King of France. To make matters worse, the English hero Talbot, whom was previously thought to be unbeatable, has been captured. Despite the reminder of the prophecy that Henry VI will lose all of the land gained by his father, the nobles hurry to crown Henry VI so he can take over his duties, under their guidance of course, and reclaim the land for England. Meanwhile, Talbot's forces are laying siege to the city of Orleans where Charles and his men are trapped. Although the English are outmaned and starving, they still manage to beat the French. Just when Charles begins to think that all is lost, the Bastard of Orleans, Henry VI's bastard brother, brings Joan of Arc to meet Charles and the French nobles. Joan tells Charles she receives visions from God that have told her that their fight is a holy one and that she will lead them to victory against the English. Charles does not believe her and challenges her to single combat to prove her truth. She easily beats Charles and he concedes to believe her claim. Charles offers Joan the honour of becoming his mistress, but she declines claiming she must remain a virgin to communicate with God. At the Tower of London, tensions grow between Church and State. Gloucester, who is ruling in stead for the young King Henry until he comes of age, comes to blows with Winchester, the head of the church. Winchester accuses Gloucester of plotting to take over the throne and refuses to allow the "traitor" to enter the Tower. A rollicking brawl ensues between the serving men of both men until the Mayor steps in to break it up. Once more we leap back to France where it is revealed that the hero of England, Talbot, has been released in exchange for the freedom of a French lord. The English hopes of success with the freedom of their leader are quickly dashed, however, as the French, led by Joan, manage to break the siege on Orleans and many of the English nobles are killed. Joan and Talbot fight and Joan is clearly the winner, but she allows Talbot to live as she has been given visions that it is not his day to die. The French think they have won the day, but Talbot manages to rally his troops and retake the city so he can bury his dead comrades within the walls. The Countess of Auvergne sends for Talbot and plans to trap him in order to stop the war. Talbot outsmarts her, however, and arrives with a large force to back him up. Soon we are off again to London to a gathering in the Temple Garden. Richard Plantagenet and Somerset are representing two opposing camps within the English who are disputing a point of law. Plantagenet and Somerset pick white and red roses to symbolize the split in the English unity and all of their men follow suit to signal their allegiance. Somerset insults Plantagenet's father claiming he was put to death because he tried to claim the English throne. Warwick predicts that this argument, although small, is the start of a longer argument that will span decades and result in the death of thousands. Plantagenet goes to the Tower of London to talk to his uncle Mortimer to find out whether the Somerset's claims about his father are true. Mortimer confirms that truth and then dies in Plantagenet's arms. Plantagenet becomes anxious to claim his birthright. Henry, hearing of the dissention among his nobles, seeks to put an end to it. He urges Winchester and Gloucester to stop fighting for the good of the nation and he grants Plantagenet's request for his father's former title and also gives him the title of his Uncle and renames him the Duke of York. Gloucester convinces the King to go to France and reclaim the land that has been lost and Exeter reminds him of the danger of the growing factionalism among the English and reminds him once more of the prophecy. Once again, the French and British fight and the British win. Joan manages to convince Charles it will be all right because she has a plan to weaken Talbot. Joan manages to convince Burgundy, a French noble fighting with Talbot, to rejoin the French. Talbot is meeting with Henry and his nobles in Paris when he hears news of Burgundy's betrayal. When Talbot leaves to talk to Burgundy, Henry learns of the dissention between the supporters of York and Somerset when two of their underlings ask for the right to have an armed fight. Henry tries to convince York and Somerset to put aside their differences, but makes the fatal mistake of picking a red rose as he is telling them that he supports them both. York is offended, but hides it from Henry. Henry makes York the leader of troops in France and Somerset the leader of cavalry. The French traps Talbot in Bordeaux. He sends to York for cavalry, but York has none to send because Somerset is in charge of cavalry. York is convinced that Somerset delayed cavalry because he knew how close York was to Talbot and he wanted Talbot to fall. Meanwhile, the same messenger goes and tells Somerset that York refuses to send help to Talbot because he wants Talbot to fall so he can take over Talbot's post. The messenger warns that the death of Talbot will be the shame of both noblemen. With

no aid being sent, Talbot prepares to die fighting. Just as the battle thickens, Talbot's son, John, comes to learn how to fight in a battle with his father. Talbot tries to convince him to flee, but he refuses to be a coward and is killed fighting. Talbot dies of grief and the English army is easily defeated. Back in London, Gloucester reads a letter to Henry from the Pope that urges England and France to stop fighting. Henry sends word to Charles and Charles agrees to talk. Somerset and York realize the foolishness of their differences and unite to attack France. Joan calls on her visions to aid her, but they refuse to respond and York captures Joan in battle. Meanwhile, while everyone is fighting, Suffolk captures Margaret a daughter to one of Charles' nobles. He falls in love with her, but cannot marry her because he is already married. He decides to woo her for Henry and convinces her father of the advantage of her marriage to Henry. While all this is happening, York and Warwick are holding the trial of Joan. A Shepard claims to be her father, but Joan refuses to acknowledge this. The Shepard declares she should be burnt at the stake for her lies. She defends herself by saying she is a virgin, which is why God speaks to her. When this defence fails her she claims to be pregnant. York doesn't believe her and condemns her to being burnt at the stake. As she is being led to her death, Joan curses England. Winchester starts the peace talks between Henry and Charles. At first Charles refuses, but in an aside his nobles convince him to agree so they can have time to regroup as they can always break the treaty once they are ready to fight again. Charles agrees and leaves Henry and Winchester believing they have negotiated peace. Suffolk arrives with Margaret and tells Henry of her availability for marriage. Once Suffolk is sure that Henry is enamoured with her charms, he reminds Henry that he is promised to a relative of Charles and that Margaret offers no political advantage. Henry refuses to listen and says that he does not care if his refusal to marry Charles' relative causes more political strife. He insists on marrying Margaret and Suffolk reveals to the crowd that his plan has worked as Margaret will now rule Henry and Suffolk himself will now rule Henry and England through her.

Themes and Issues

- the horror of war
- the death of chivalry
- gender, the role of women, and the blurring of gender roles
- the heroic ideal vs. the potential weakness in man
- political feuds: the danger of infighting
- older generation vs. the younger generation
- manipulation of people for political gain

Language and Structure:

- Extended metaphors: the continuing reoccurrence of the colours red and white to represent conflict.
- Plot driven by conflict: conflict as a linking device.
- Five Act Structure: climax point changes depending on whose point of view you read the play from.
- "feminine" language vs. "masculine" language: how Shakespeare uses "feminine" language and speech to describe weakness and "masculine" language and speech to describe strength ie: Joan of Arc is described with "masculine" language, while Henry VI is described with "feminine" language.
- Complicated battle scenes to reflect the complications of war.
- Uses of extreme female characters to portray the strength and weakness of women in society ie: the masculine Joan vs the feminine Margaret.
- Drastic differences in the accounts of the battles depending on whose point of view it is being told through.
- Prophecy, witchcraft and divine intervention vs. human guided outcomes

Extended Resources:

Movies:

BBC Henry VI Part 1. Directed by Jane Howell c. 1982, *Braveheart*. Directed by Mel Gibson c. 1995, *The Messenger: The Story of Joan of Arc*. Directed by Luc Besson c. 1999.

Wide Reading: “The Wanderer” *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*. Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1975. , Tennyson, Alfred Lord. *Idylls of the King*. New York: The New American Library, 1961., Rutherford, Edward. *London: The Novel*. New York: Fawcett Crest, 1997., Davis, Kenneth C. *Don't Know Much About Kings and Queens*. Harper Collins, 2002.

Websites: “The Royal Family Genealogy Page” www.genealogysource.com/royaltylinks.htm, “Henry VI Part 1” *SparkNotes from Barnes and Noble* www.sparknotes.com, “Wars of the Roses History Guide” www.geocities.com/Athens/Oracle/2719/

Current Events: War in Iraq, worldwide anti-war marches, media coverage of the Iraq war, claims by both Bush and the fundamentalist Muslims that God is on their side, infighting among different factions in Liberia, women in Afghanistan pre, during, and post Taliban, the recent suicide of the British scientist who was being used as a pawn in the British reasons for joining the US in war.

Teaching Resources: *Teaching Shakespeare on the Screen* ed. Neil E. Bechervaise. Vancouver: Pacific Educational Press, 2001.