

GCSE to Further Education

A Level English Literature

Pre-reading contexts - Some basic context on Shakespeare's play, Richard III which is one of the texts studied for Paper 1 (Drama and Poetry pre-1900)

Some wider reading in preparation Paper 2 (American Literature 1880-1940)

Task 1: The play is based on the life and death of a real king of England. To help you get to grips with the large cast of characters, complete a family tree for Richard III and his immediate family.

Include the following people (their relationship to Richard is indicated in brackets):

Richard, Duke of York (father)

Ceily Neville, Duchess of York (mother)

Edward IV (brother)

Edmund, Duke of Rutland (brother)

Elizabeth Woodville/ Queen Elizabeth (Edward's wife)

Edward, Prince of Wales (nephew)

Richard, Duke of York (nephew)

Elizabeth of York (niece)

Richard, Duke of Gloucester/King Richard III

George, Duke of Clarence (brother)

Edmund, earl of Rutland (brother)

Anne Neville (wife)

Task 1:

1. Research dates of birth and death of these historical figures
2. Organise your information into a family tree

Task 2: Find out five interesting facts about Henry VI and Henry VII.

Research into The Wars of The Roses, the backdrop of the play.

The Wars of the Roses were fought between two branches of the same family, over who had the right to reign in England.

The royal family at the time were the Plantagenets. The warring factions were both members of this extended family: Yorkists and Lancastrians. In 1485, Henry VII was crowned as the first Tudor King, ending The Plantagenet period and the Wars of the Roses.

Task 3: Create a mind map, showing a range of positive and negative views of Richard III.

Task 4: Response to American Fiction

- Choose one text written from the list on the next slide. Read the novel and use the headings below to record your responses and ideas.
- The LRC and Wilmslow library will hold many of the novels
- Many are very cheap to buy (some of the older texts are free via a Kindle/tablet)
- Amazon.co.uk has customer reviews for individual novels which might help you to choose

Task Details: one side of A4 with notes on the following:

- Social and historic context: When and where in the USA is the book set? What was American society like at this time?
- Themes and characters: What do you think are the main ideas explored in this novel? Who are the main characters? How do you respond to them?
- Your response: Did you enjoy the novel? Did it present any challenges?