



Oregon
Shakespeare
Festival.

2018 Study Guide



Falstaff, Poins and Prince Hal by Michael John Goodman, *The Victorian Illustrated Shakespeare Archive* (8 June 2017).

WHERE'S FALSTAFF?

The epilogue to *Henry IV, Part Two* assures us that Henry V will “continue the story with Sir John in it,” a reference to the extremely popular character of Sir John Falstaff. But when *Henry V* premiered the following year, Falstaff did not appear, in fact, we are told early on that he has died. There are many different theories as to why Shakespeare apparently changed his mind. Some scholars believe that Falstaff was played by the company’s popular comic actor, Will Kemp. But in 1599, Kemp sold his shares in the Lord Chamberlain’s Men and left the company. Shakespeare may have been unwilling to have any other actor play the role, and therefore decided that if Kemp was gone then Falstaff was also gone.

However, there is no absolute evidence that Kemp played Falstaff, and other scholars have proposed the more thematic-based theory that Shakespeare needed his title character to move completely beyond his wasted youth, and realized that a live and sympathetic Falstaff would hinder the structure of the new play. Or that Henry V needed to be the unquestioned and singular focus of the new piece, something that the large and charismatic presence of Falstaff would make impossible.

Henry V

by William Shakespeare



King Henry V
National Portrait Gallery, London.



William Shakespeare

KING HENRY V

- Born at Monmouth Castle in 1386 or 1387. Sometimes referred to as Henry Monmouth.
- Saw his first major military action in 1403 at the age of 16 or 17, leading one division of his father’s army against the Percy rebellion at the Battle of Shrewsbury.
- Became king in 1413, and almost immediately re-ignited the Hundred Years’ War, claiming that he and the Plantagenet line were the rightful kings of France.
- The Treaty of Troyes in 1420 forced France to recognize Henry as heir-apparent.
- Henry died of dysentery in 1422 before he could ascend to the French throne.

SHAKESPEARE

- Born around April 23, 1564.
- Married Anne Hathaway at the age of 18. They had three children between 1583 and 1585.
- Became an actor and playwright for the Lord Chamberlain’s Men, which became the King’s Men when King James I was crowned in 1603. Wrote 37 plays, 2 epic poems and 154 sonnets over a 25-year career.
- *Henry V* was written in 1599.
- Died in his hometown of Stratford-upon-Avon on April 23, 1616.
- Buried in Stratford’s Holy Trinity Church.

**“O for a Muse of fire that would ascend
the brightest heaven of invention.”**

—Chorus, Act I, Prologue

Before seeing/reading the play

1. Research the life of King Henry V of England. These and other websites provide information:
<https://www.thoughtco.com/henry-v-of-england-1221268>
<https://www.infoplease.com/people/who2-biography/henry-v>

2. Research Salic Law. How was it related to Henry V's claim to the throne of France? These and other websites provide information:
<http://www.bartleby.com/81/14778.html>
<https://omeka.colorado.edu/specialcollections/exhibits/show/surveying-shakespeare--law-and/shakespeare-and-law--exploring>

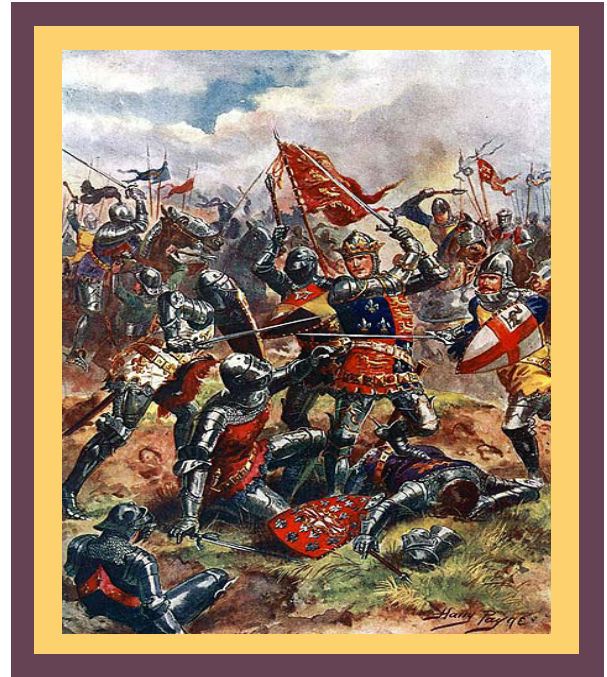
3. Shakespeare begins *Henry V* with a reference to the “wooden O.” Research the meaning of this phrase and its relevance to *Henry V*. These and other websites provide information:
<https://www.playshakespeare.com/study/elizabethan-theatres/2187-the-curtain-theatre>
<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-2155214/Shakespeare-Wooden-O-stage-Curtain-theatre-Shakespeare-premiered-Henry-V-unearthed-near-Thames.html>



Henry V costume rendering.
Designed by Sara Ryung Clement.

4. Read the two preceding plays, *Henry IV, Parts One and Two*, or synopses of them. Pay special attention to the journey of Hal from apparently irresponsible “madcap” Prince to King of England. What does he learn from the people he encounters: Falstaff and the Eastcheap gang, his father (King Henry IV), the nobles of his father's court, Hotspur, the Lord Chief Justice? How does each contribute to Hal's preparations to become King? These and other websites provide information:
<http://www.sparknotes.com/shakespeare/henry4pt1/summary/>
<http://www.sparknotes.com/shakespeare/henry4pt2/summary/>

5. Research the Battle of Agincourt. Describe the quarrel between the English and the French. What weapons did each side favor? How many fought on each side? How many were killed? What part did the longbow play in the English victory? These and other websites provide information:
<http://www.britishbattles.com/100-years-war/agincourt.htm>
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Agincourt



The Battle of Agincourt by Henry Payne, 1915.

RESOURCES

Books:

Shakespeare's English Kings, Peter Saccio, 1977
The Plantagenets, Dan Jones, 2012

Films:

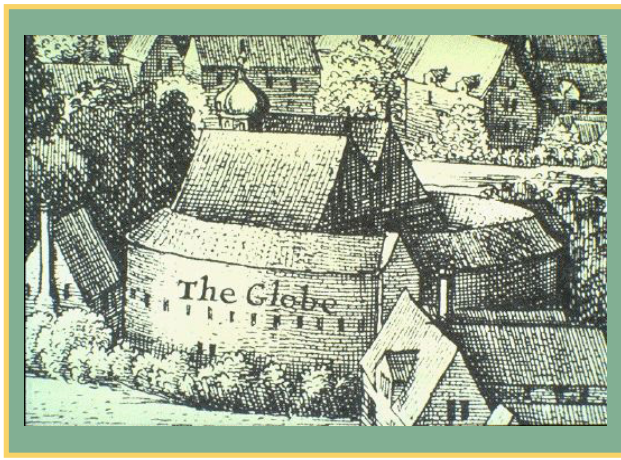
Henry V with Kenneth Branagh, 1989
Henry V with Laurence Olivier, 1944

Learn more about Shakespeare's life and times at the following websites:

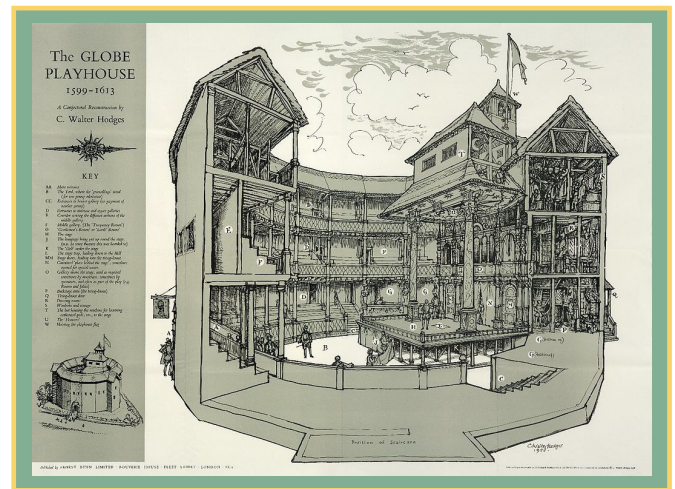
<http://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/Library/SLT/index.html>
<http://www.shakespeare.org.uk/explore-shakespeare.html>
<http://www.bardweb.net/man.html>



English travelers costume rendering.
Designed by Sara Ryung Clement.



The Old Globe, Wenceslas Hollar, 1642.



Globe, C. Walter Hodges, Folger Shakespeare Library, 1958.

After seeing/reading the play

1. Refer to your research on the “wooden O.” Why does Shakespeare begin this play by pointing out that we are in a theatre? What is the contract between audience and players that the Chorus outlines in the opening speech? What is expected of the audience? What is promised in return? What limitations inherent in a stage presentation are pointed out? How will they be overcome? How does this production interpret the speech, and how does that interpretation impact the telling of the story?
2. Refer to your research on the two parts of *Henry IV*. Henry IV’s dying advice to his son, who will become Henry V, is to “busy giddy minds / With foreign quarrels” (*Henry IV, Part Two*, Act IV, scene iii, lines 342 - 343). What is this policy meant to accomplish? What are the “giddy minds” he refers to? What damage is plotted by “giddy minds” in *Henry V*? To what extent does Henry follow his father’s advice? What “foreign quarrels” does he pick?
3. Refer to your research on Salic Law. How is it used in the first scene as an argument for or against Henry’s claim to the French throne?
4. Refer to your research on the two parts of *Henry IV*. Why does Henry V doubt his right to be king? What does he fear will result if his claim is not just? What conditions will convince him that he is the rightful King of England?
5. In *Henry IV, Part One*, Henry is called “The nimble-footed madcap Prince of Wales.” What does that mean? What traces of the “madcap” do you find in King Henry V? Which characters hold his past against him and why? How does Henry chafe against this obsolete image of himself? How does he combat it? How does his experience with the lower classes from earlier plays serve him well as king?
6. When does King Henry place the responsibility on others for his invasion of France and his actions there? On whom, and with what justification?
7. Who sends the tennis balls to Henry in Act I, scene ii? What do they symbolize? What is the attitude of the person who delivers them? What courses of action are open to Henry? What course does he choose? How does his status change during this scene?
8. What do the traitors Cambridge, Scroop and Grey intend? What reasons do they give for their intentions? What would have been the consequences of their success? How does Henry thwart them?
9. Refer to the death of Falstaff (Act II, scene iii). To what extent is Henry responsible for the death of his former friend and mentor? What is the effect of hearing about Falstaff’s death, as opposed to seeing it? What does his death symbolize?
10. What are the circumstances at the beginning of the siege of Harfleur? What is Henry trying to accomplish? What would failure cost the English?
11. Refer to your reading of the *Henry IV* plays. What was Henry’s relationship with Bardolph in the earlier plays? By condemning his former friend to death, what messages does Henry send and to whom? What does it cost Henry?
12. Based on Shakespeare’s characterization of the captains Fluellen and Macmorris, what are the cultural stereotypes of the Welsh and Scots, respectively? What prejudices does each harbor? What rivalries exist among them? What is Henry’s responsibility in uniting such diversity? To what extent does he succeed?
13. What cultural stereotypes did England have of the French? Which characters live up to these stereotypes and which do not? What impression of the French do you take away from the play? Why might Shakespeare have chosen to portray the French in this way?



Henry V from Cassell’s *History of England*, ca. 1902.



Henry V costume rendering.
Designed by Sara Ryung Clement.

Dauphin costume rendering.
Designed by Sara Ryung Clement.



Marriage of Henry and Katherine from *A Chronicle of England: BC 55–AD 1485* by Edmund Evans, 1864.

19. As Princess of France, what is Katherine's destiny? How is she prepared for it? What are Henry's strengths and weaknesses as a suitor? What tactics does he use to win Katherine? What options does she have? What tactics does she use to increase his difficulty and her value?



Katherine costume rendering.
Designed by Sara Ryung Clement.

14. Compare Henry with his French counterpart, the Dauphin. What values does each hold? The thing(s) they most prize? The respect in which each is held? Their abilities? How do their actions support their values? What effect do their actions have on their countries?

15. As he moves through the English camp on the night before the Battle of Agincourt, whom does the disguised Henry encounter? What attitudes do these individuals reveal? What do they teach Henry about the responsibilities of being a king? How do they influence his prayer to the "God of battles"? What fears does his prayer expose? According to Henry, what is his father's crime? How must Henry pay for it?

16. What is the physical condition of the English army on the morning of the Battle of Agincourt? The emotional condition? What techniques does Henry use to transform them into a fighting force?

17. Compare the Constable's speech before the battle (Act IV, scene ii, lines 15–37) with Henry's (Act IV, scene iii, lines 18–67). Who does each address? What is the attitude of each? What does each promise his followers?

18. How is Henry a charismatic leader? In what situations is his charisma particularly apparent? How do others respond to it? Which of his objectives would he be unlikely to achieve without his charisma?

20. In what ways do Henry's actions seem immoral and/or unethical by modern standards? How does he justify them? To what extent do the ends justify his means?

21. Find lines in the text that describe the glories of war. Find lines that describe war's horrors. How does this balance affect the play and this production?



Ensemble costume rendering. Designed by Sara Ryung Clement.

**"Once more unto the breach,
dear friends, once more . . ."**

-King Henry, Act III, Scene 1

What is the Hundred Years' War?

Henry V's great-grandfather, Edward III, was the first English king to claim that the throne of France was his. Edward's mother, Isabella, was the Princess of France and had been married off to the English King Edward II to try to create an alliance between the two countries.

Isabella had three brothers. After the death of their father, King Philip IV, each brother in his turn became King of France, but each died without producing a male heir. The only child of Philip IV to have a son was Isabella. The way the English saw it, that made Isabella's son Edward III the next king of France.

The French did not want the King of England ruling them, even if he was half-French and Philip IV's grandson. Instead, they broke Philip's direct line and gave the French crown to Isabella's male cousin. The English attacked, and the Hundred Years' War was on.

The war is inaccurately named on several counts, conjuring up the image of 100 years of continual fighting. In fact, it was a series of battles fought sporadically, often with years of inactivity, for the next 116 years, from 1337 to 1453.



2018 *Henry V* set rendering. Designed by Richard L. Hay.



2018 *Henry V* set rendering. Designed by Richard L. Hay.

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