

Connecting Past and Present: War and Loss



This activity pairs well with Part Five of the film at pause point 01:48:41.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Analyze the significance of the character Davy
- Discuss similarities and differences in interpretation of a stage moment
- Interpret Davy's death through the modern lens of the UN definition of war crimes
- Measure the events of *Henry V* against the rules of war
- Devise consequences for the characters for their actions

INTRODUCTION

In Act Four, Scene Seven, we saw the death of Davy, a young boy Henry befriended when he was hanging out in Eastcheap. Davy and the other boys in the English camp were unjustly slaughtered by French soldiers. This is one of the most devastating moments in the play for Henry.

INSTRUCTIONS

Step One: Revisit the scene using either the text (Act Four, Scene Seven) or the Guthrie film (Part Five, between pause point 01:45:30 and 01:48:41).

Step Two: In a five-minute freewrite, students answer the following questions.

- What do you think Davy represents in the play?
- What do you think Davy represents for Henry?
- Why do you think his death is so significant for Henry?

Step Three: Either in small groups or in a guided class discussion, students share their thoughts and discuss the similarities and differences in their interpretations of Davy's significance..

Step Four: Students read through the UN's guidelines for what constitutes a war crime, linked on the next page, and consider if Davy's death (and that of the other boys) constitutes a war crime.

Step Five: Using the UN guidelines, students will do a close reading of the text of *Henry V*, from Act Three through the end of Act Four, and note any moments which fit the UN's definition of a war crime, genocide or crime against humanity. If applicable, students will also note down any consequences the perpetrators of these acts faced in the play.

Step Six: Students share and discuss their findings as a class using the questions below.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How did Bardolph break Henry's rules of war? Would Bardolph also have broken the UN's rules?
- How was the killing of Davy and the other boys a violation of the rules?
- Does the context of a war make these crimes more justifiable?
- Do you think King Henry's claim to the throne justifies his attack on France?
- Would you excuse King Henry's actions? Condemn them?
- What sanctions, if any, would you place on King Henry's England?

RESOURCES

"Definitions of Genocide and Related Crimes." United Nations.

[un.org/en/genocide-prevention/definition#:~:text=Some%20examples%20of%20prohibited%20acts,charitable%20purposes%2C%20historical%20monuments%20or](https://www.un.org/en/genocide-prevention/definition#:~:text=Some%20examples%20of%20prohibited%20acts,charitable%20purposes%2C%20historical%20monuments%20or)

