GUTHRIE THEATER

Theater in Focus: *Henry V*

CURRICULUM OVERVIEW AND PAUSE POINTS

PHOTO: DANIEL JOSÉ MOLINA WITH THE CAST OF *HENRY V* (DAN NORMAN)

O for a muse of fire, that would ascend
The brightest heaven of invention,
A kingdom for a stage, princes to act,
And monarchs to behold the swelling scene!

– Prologue, *Henry V*

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Henry V

by **WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE**
directed by **JOSEPH HAJ**
March 23 – May 25, 2024
Wurtele Thrust Stage

This play was produced and performed at the Guthrie Theater as part of Shakespeare's History Plays (*Richard II*, *Henry IV* and *Henry V*) and filmed by HMS Media for distribution. This curriculum was developed by the Guthrie Education and Engagement Team as a guide for educators to use in their classrooms and can be adapted for online instruction. The curriculum was designed for use in high schools, colleges and universities.

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The Guthrie Theater creates transformative theater experiences that ignite the imagination, stir the heart, open the mind and build community through the illumination of our common humanity.

Guthrie Theater
Theater in Focus: *Henry V*

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A Note to Educators

Welcome to Theater in Focus!

We are excited to share the Guthrie Theater's filmed production of *Henry V* with you and your students. We invite you to share this film in class, pause the film at the pause points and engage students with the plot points and themes of the play as they watch the story unfold. The pause points can be used as prompts for class discussions, partnered conversations or individual journaling. You may want to pose questions for the class prior to watching so the students know what to look for in the scenes. If you have questions, please email us at education@guthrietheater.org.

Thank you, and we hope you enjoy bringing Shakespeare into your classroom!

Guthrie Theater Education and Engagement Team

Guiding Principles and Creating a Class Glossary

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Studying Shakespeare elicits a wide array of reactions, interpretations and opinions. Establishing a safe, nonjudgmental, rigorously honest space is key. We encourage you to work with your students to co-create your own classroom guidelines to foster open dialogue. Please use the suggestions below to get you started in developing group agreements to support class discussion. Invite your students to enter the room with:

1. **Curiosity:** Invite students to ask questions and dig into multiple meanings and interpretations. It's okay to know nothing, a bit or a lot about Shakespeare and/or *Henry V*.
2. **Critical Thinking:** Analyze the evidence and give students agency to draw their own conclusions. There are no "bad" or "wrong" answers. Each person's perspective adds value to the discussion.
3. **Active Listening:** Practice active listening to keep discussions constructive and collaborative. Encourage students to share their thoughts — even if they are not fully formed.
4. **Authenticity:** Multiple points of view are essential in exploring theater. Encourage students to find ways to bring their authentic selves into the room.
5. **Inclusivity:** Ask students to consider how the classroom environment can be made inclusive so everyone's voice can be heard.

CREATING A CLASS GLOSSARY

As you move through the film and curriculum, we recommend that you create a Class Glossary as a group, which will give students an opportunity to add new words and definitions to their collective vocabulary. At the end of each section, review all new words to test retention and celebrate the development of a shared Shakespeare lexicon.

GLOSSARY RESOURCES

"Shakespeare's Words" by David Crystal
shakespeareswords.com

"Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary" by Alexander Schmidt
perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.03.0079

Introduction and Context

The play tells the story of Henry V, the new King of England, and follows his trials and triumphs as he leads his country into war with France. *Henry V* is the third of the trilogy of Shakespeare's History Plays that the Guthrie Theater produced in 2024. Each play centers on an English king, and Director Joseph Haj introduced each play as follows:

Richard II
A king becomes a man

Henry IV
A man becomes a king

Henry V
A king becomes a hero

In *Henry IV*, Prince Hal is the young, wild son of King Henry IV. Instead of fulfilling his royal duties and studying how to be a king, he is out drinking and partying with his friends in Eastcheap, which the upper class considered a dangerous part of town. When his father, King Henry IV — also known as Bolingbroke — dies at the end of the play, Prince Hal is faced with a difficult decision: does he uphold his father's legacy and live up to his duty as king? Or does he continue to be the irresponsible party boy everyone thinks he is? *Henry V* shows us the results of his decision — including how he treats his former lower-class friends: Bardolph, Pistol, Nym and Davy.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before you dive into the film and curriculum, invite students to consider the following questions about what makes a hero and their predictions about the play:

- What really makes a hero? Have each student write down their definition of the word "hero." Students can pair and share their definitions.
- Using their definitions as a guideline, have students brainstorm three of their heroes. Who are they? What positions do they hold? What qualities make them a hero?
- Based on the phrase "a king becomes a hero," their definitions of a hero and what they know about the play so far, have students make three predictions about the events in *Henry V*. Invite students to be specific about what they believe will happen and explain their reasoning to the class.

Film Pause Points

Part One of *Henry V* (20 minutes)
00:00:00–00:16:39

1

"We would not seek a battle as we would avoid a friend."

– Henry (Act One, Scene Two)

SHARE WITH STUDENTS BEFORE WATCHING

The play opens with a Chorus who introduces the scene to the audience. The first two characters we meet are the Archbishop of Canterbury (left) and the Bishop of Ely (right). They are worried the church will lose significant funds if a new bill passes in Parliament. (Watch for the Archbishop's tactic to distract King Henry from the bill by focusing on war with France.) The clergymen are hopeful because it seems like King Henry has changed from the party boy he used to be into a thoughtful ruler. The French ambassador arrives in court to meet with the new king and brings him an insulting "gift" from the Dauphin (the prince of France).

Note the French ambassador and the power they hold in the room. Track this character throughout the play and notice how their power grows and/or diminishes.

PAUSE AT 00:03:18

- What did you see in your mind's eye during the speech? How does this speech call on the audience to use their imagination? What do you anticipate will happen based on the Chorus' words?
- Why do you think the director broke up the speech among members of the ensemble? What might that tell you about this production?

PAUSE AT 00:06:15

Activity Pairing:
Social Hierarchies: Church vs. State

- What are the Archbishop's and Bishop's individual concerns? What do they intend to do about it?
- How will they use their power to influence the king?

PAUSE AT 00:11:55

Activity Pairing:
Debate: Claim to the Throne

- What would *you* do? You are the recently crowned King of England. You are aware that your council and people are doubtful about your ability to rule. The archbishop has just presented evidence that you have a rightful claim to France. Do you go to war or focus on fixing things in your country?
- What evidence is presented about Henry's claim to the throne? Do you think it is a strong claim? Why or why not?

PAUSE AT 00:16:08

Activity Pairing:
Social Hierarchies: *Henry V*

- What is the Dauphin saying about King Henry with his gift of tennis balls? How might this gift be insulting to Henry?
- Describe King Henry's feelings about the Dauphin's gift and message.
- Do you think Henry responds like a king to this insult? Why or why not?
- What would *you* do? How would you respond if you were Henry and received an insulting gift? How would your feelings about the gift influence your choices?

Part Two of *Henry V* (30 minutes)
00:16:39–00:43:15

2

"Never was monarch better fear'd and loved
Than is your majesty"

– Richard, Earl of Cambridge (Act Two, Scene Two)

SHARE WITH STUDENTS BEFORE WATCHING

Before he was king, Henry was close friends with an old, drunken knight named Falstaff. When Henry's father dies, Henry must choose between his wild past with Falstaff and his serious future as the King of England. Henry decides to banish Falstaff, which is a painful decision for both men. We don't ever see Falstaff in *Henry V*, but the following scene shows us the impact of Henry's rejection of Falstaff and the knight's impact on the other residents of Eastcheap: Hostess Quickly, Pistol, Bardolph, Nym and Davy. Because of his past, many of the lords don't trust Henry as a leader. In this section, his authority will be challenged by three people he thought were on his side: Edward, Lord Scroop of Masham; Richard, Earl of Cambridge; and Sir Thomas Grey of Northumberland.

PAUSE AT 00:21:49

- How do Nym, Bardolph, Pistol, Davy and Hostess Quickly (the residents of Eastcheap) react to the call to war?
- What are they anticipating? What are they afraid of?

PAUSE AT 00:23:45

- What would *you* do? Imagine that, like King Henry, you have decided to march to war with France. In finalizing preparations, you discover three high-ranking lords (and good friends) have plotted to aid the enemy's cause and betray you. How do you respond to their treason?
- What message does your response communicate to your countrymen? What does it communicate to your enemy, the French?

PAUSE AT 00:30:25

- How does your earlier decision about how to handle the traitors compare to King Henry's decision?
- What do you think of Henry's leadership so far?

PAUSE AT 00:35:00

- How do the residents of Eastcheap respond to Falstaff's death?
- What does their sadness tell you about this character we never see onstage?

Part Three of *Henry V* (30 minutes)
00:43:15–01:10:40

3

"Once more unto the breach, dear friends."

– Henry (Act Three, Scene One)

SHARE WITH STUDENTS BEFORE WATCHING

The French court is preparing for the English invasion. They learn that Henry and his forces have arrived in France. Henry rallies his troops with a rousing speech, and we see the many different ways people respond to being in a war zone. Look for the differing opinions about the war, the king and their country. We are also introduced to Princess Katherine of France, who is looking to improve her English.

PAUSE AT 00:45:40

- In Henry's speech, did you see any of the heroic characteristics you wrote about earlier?
- What language did Henry use to inspire his troops? What do you think was effective in encouraging them?

PAUSE AT 00:47:43

- How do the characters from Eastcheap — Bardolph, Pistol, Nym and Davy — respond to being in a war zone? What are their priorities? Are those heroic priorities? How are they different from the priorities of Henry and the other nobles? What does that tell you about social class in Henry's world?
- How does Davy respond to the choices Bardolph, Pistol and Nym are making?

PAUSE AT 00:51:13

Activity Pairings:
Listen and Respond: Shakespeare in a Diverse World
Stage a Scene: The Captains

- Consider the conversation between Gower (English soldier), Fluellen (Welsh soldier), Captain Macmorris (Irish soldier) and Captain Jamy (Scottish soldier). What clues help identify the characters by nationality?
- Shakespeare's England was a multicultural nation, with influences from multiple different nationalities. (The United Kingdom wasn't ratified until 1801!) What do you think is the impact of seeing soldiers from so many different nations speaking the same language and all fighting for the English cause?

PAUSE AT 00:59:11

Activity Pairing:
Comic Wordplay: *The Taming of the Shrew*

- Why do you think Princess Katherine asks Alice to teach her the names of the body parts in English? How do you think knowing a foreign language will help her?
- Considering your answer above, how do you think an English audience would have found comedy in a French woman trying to learn English?
- How does Princess Katherine inadvertently use wordplay in this scene?

PAUSE AT 01:06:36

- Why was Bardolph's act of stealing from a church so wrong? Why did Henry need to make an example of him?
- Why do you think Henry carried out the execution himself?
- Why was it important for the director to put this moment onstage? What does it tell us about Henry?

Part Four of *Henry V* (30 minutes)
01:10:40–01:40:40

4

"We few, we happy few, we band of brothers."

– Henry (Act Four, Scene Three)

SHARE WITH STUDENTS BEFORE WATCHING

This next part begins with the Chorus describing the scene where both armies are camped near Agincourt, a French town. We then visit the French and English armies on the night before the battle. Both groups are nervous, but they express their nerves in different ways. Notice the contrasting attitudes of the English and French leaders and their respective camps. We also see Henry wrestling with his role as king on the night before a big battle. He observes that the morale among his men is low. Henry encourages them to fight and be remembered on Saint Crispin's Day.

PAUSE AT 01:18:27

- Compare and contrast the attitude of the French (as seen in the Dauphin and lords) versus that of the English (as seen in Henry and his lords). What similarities and/or differences do you observe?
- Consider the casting of the French camp versus the English camp. How does the gender of the actor reflect on the characters?
- How does the language of the chorus reflect on Henry's actions in this scene? What kind of leader does the chorus project Henry (or Harry) to be?

PAUSE AT 01:28:26

Activity Pairing:
Analyze and Visualize: The King's Responsibility

- Why does Henry pretend to be a commoner? What does he learn from his troops?
- What message would he like his troops to receive?

PAUSE AT 01:31:22

- What does Henry argue for in this speech?
- Do you agree with him?

PAUSE AT 01:40:40

- How does Henry's speech encourage his men? What hopeful future does he envision for them?
- Think of a time when someone felt discouraged and you helped lift them up or a time when you felt discouraged and needed a push. Find a partner and share that experience with them. If time allows, share some examples with the group.

Part Five of *Henry V* (20 minutes)
01:40:40–01:57:32

5

"For he today that sheds his blood with me shall be my brother."

– Henry (Act Four, Scene Three)

SHARE WITH STUDENTS BEFORE WATCHING

During this next section, the English begin to win the battle and the French begin to despair. Pistol captures a French soldier. Not being able to speak French, Pistol relies on Davy to translate for him. Notice the difference in how Pistol and Davy treat the soldier. Then, both the English and the French make choices which go against the rules of war: Henry orders the death of the French prisoners, and the French kill the boys who were guarding the supplies in the English camp. Note the impact the news of each death has on the other characters.

PAUSE AT 01:45:30

- How are the French portrayed in this scene?
- How might this portrayal differ if the story was told from the French perspective?

PAUSE AT 01:48:41

Activity Pairing:
Connecting Past and Present: War and Loss

- Consider Henry's response to Davy's death. Why is this death more impactful for him than the others that have happened in the play?
- Do you think Henry is responding intellectually or emotionally? What did the actor do to make that clear?
- Do you think his response is an act of heroism, an act of revenge or both?

PAUSE AT 01:52:20

- How does Fluellen emphasize the role the Welsh have played in Henry's lineage, reaching back to "Edward, the Black Prince of Wales"?
- Why is Henry's Welsh heritage important to him?
- What does the scene say about the relationship between England and Wales? What does it say about the significance of language, country and lineage in this play?

Part Six of *Henry V* (26 minutes)
01:57:32–02:21:22

6

"Then shall I swear to Kate, and you to me;
And may our oaths well kept and prosperous be!"

– Henry (Act Five, Scene Two)

SHARE WITH STUDENTS BEFORE WATCHING

The English have won the war, and the characters settle differences. A leek is a national symbol of Wales, one that makes Fluellen proud. Note the significance of the leek in the first scene. The Duke of Burgundy facilitates peace talks between England and France. Part of the new peace is a wedding between King Henry and Princess Katherine of France. Watch for glimpses into new aspects of Henry's leadership as the play comes to a close.

PAUSE AT 02:01:42

Activity Pairing:
Exploring Nationalism: Leagues and Leeks

- What do you think is the purpose of this scene? Do you think it is comic relief or does it have a deeper purpose beyond humor?
- How does the interplay between comedy and serious themes (like honor and respect) function in this scene?

PAUSE AT 02:14:43

- How does the political nature of Henry and Katherine's marriage affect the way they interact in this scene?
- How does Henry attempt to win Katherine's affection and, thus, her hand in marriage?
- What does this new side of Henry tell us about him as a man? As a leader?
- Do you think Katherine has the freedom to choose her future in this situation?
- Do you think there is an imbalance of power between these characters? Why or why not? What evidence can you draw to support your answer from what the actors playing Henry or Katherine do in the scene?

WRAP-UP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Activity Pairings:
Writing Activity: Holding out for a Hero
Image Analysis: *Henry V*

- After seeing the play, do you think Henry is a heroic character or not?
- Who holds power in this play? What does it take to maintain power? How does one lose power?
- What do you think the play is saying about what it takes to be a good leader?
- How does the play build a sense of national identity for people in Shakespeare's era? Consider the contrast between the English and French forces. Also consider the Welsh, Scottish and Irish characters. What kind of unified — or imperial — Britain is the play proposing?
- Think about the differences between the portrayal of men and women in the play. What do you think the play is saying about constructions of masculinity versus femininity? Then, consider the casting choices: How does the Guthrie's production comment on or disrupt gender constructions?

Minnesota Academic Standards

The curriculum for *Henry V*, including pause points and activities, utilizes the following Minnesota Academic Standards.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS (9–12)

- **Listening, Speaking, Viewing & Exchanging Ideas 3.1.1** Exchange ideas through storytelling, discussion, and collaboration, both as facilitator and participant, expressing ideas, intentionally considering the perspectives of different patterns of speech.
- **Listening, Speaking, Viewing & Exchanging Ideas 3.1.2** Extend conversations by posing and responding to questions that prove reasoning and evidence; ensure exploration of a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives, demonstration preparation for the discussion.
- **Listening, Speaking, Viewing & Exchanging Ideas 3.1.3** Give and respond thoughtfully to constructive feedback, summarizing points of agreement and disagreement, and solicit relevant feedback for use in revising work.
- **Listening, Speaking, Viewing & Exchanging Ideas 3.2.1** Make effective choices regarding vocabulary, language, structure, and advanced application of features of spoken language, in a variety of forms including digital and face to face interactions, considering audience and context.
- **Listening, Speaking, Viewing & Exchanging Ideas 3.3.1** Select and deliver the most applicable style of presentation to communicate knowledge and ideas appropriate to task, purpose, audience and discipline, ensuring that audience can follow the line of reasoning in presentation of knowledge of ideas, following ethical and safe communication practices.
- **Listening, Speaking, Viewing & Exchanging Ideas 3.3.2** Create and present a piece of digital work or digital communication, which may include ethical remixing or transformation of work, for a specific, current, relevant purpose publish work, considering audience, demonstrating understanding of digital footprint.
- **Reading 1.2.3** Read widely, locating, selecting and reading texts to examine concepts of issues from multiple viewpoints or perspectives like and unlike their own from dominant, non-dominant and marginalized social groups.
- **Reading 1.4.1** Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support conclusions of what a text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain; objectively summarize the text.
- **Reading 1.4.2** Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and synthesize their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex synthesis.
- **Reading 1.4.3** Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate the elements of a story or drama in a literary text (e.g., Where a story is set, how action is ordered, how characters are introduced or developed).
- **Reading 1.5.1** Evaluate the impacts on meaning and appeal of the author's choices concerning structuring the text, including how specific parts of the text interact with each other and contribute to the whole.
- **Reading 1.5.3** Compare and contrast the impact of illustrations, graphics and other audiovisual elements on the use, meaning and aesthetics of a wide variety of texts.
- **Reading 1.6.1** Examine how the author's, including Dakota and Anishinaabe authors, purpose, stated identities, biases and perspective shape the content and style of a text.
- **Reading 1.8.1** Analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning, mood and tone of literary texts (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place, how it sets a formal or informal tone)

- **Writing 2.4.1** Write to argue, supporting both argument and counterargument with evidence and making strong, logical appeals, building on skills from previous years
- **Writing 2.4.2** Write to persuade, supporting a position with developed ideas and logical reasoning, building on skills from previous years.
- **Writing 2.5.2** Write to respond to literary text, choosing either a deeper or wider analysis of narrative elements.
- **Writing 2.6.2** Use structure appropriate to the task and purpose in written narratives, poetry, or other creative texts.
- **Writing 2.7.1** Formulate self-generated questions that guide inquiry, generating additional questions for further research and investigation.
- **Writing 2.7.2** Plan and conduct independent research from a wide variety of sources including academic journals and peer-reviewed sources, demonstrating understanding of subject of investigation, and share findings in writing.
- **Writing 2.8.1** Use and cite a wide variety of print and digital sources, quoting, paraphrasing and summarizing, avoiding plagiarism and following the guidelines in a style manual appropriate for the discipline and purpose.

SOCIAL STUDIES (9–12)

- **Ethnic Studies 5.23.3** Investigate the connection between language and power and how it has benefitted or been used against various racialized and ethnic groups.
- **Geography 3.14.1** Places and Regions: Describe places and regions, explaining how they are influenced by power structures.
- **Geography 3.15.7** Describe the effects of sovereignty, nationalism and supranationalism on the establishment of political boundaries and economic activities.
- **History 4.18.3** Ask historical questions about change, continuity and context in order to identify and analyze dominant and non-dominant narratives about the past. (World History Era 3, 700–1500).
- **History 4.19.3** Historical Perspectives: Identify diverse points of view and describe how one's frame of reference influences historical perspective. (World History Era 3, 700–1500)
- **History 4.21.3** Causation and Argumentation: Integrate evidence from multiple historical sources and interpretations into a reasoned argument and/or compelling narrative about the past. (World History Era 3, 700–1500)
- **History 4.22.3** Connecting Past and Present: Use historical methods and sources to identify and analyze the roots of a contemporary issue. Design a plan to address it. (World History Era 3, 700–1500)

THEATER (9–12)

- **4.4.4.8.1** Describe how technical elements or technology may support a theme or idea in a work.
- **4.6.2.2.2** Propose and create a comprehensive design using all technical theater elements and available technology to support the story and given circumstances in a work.
- **4.7.4.8.1** Use criteria to evaluate a work and explain preferences, providing supporting evidence.
- **4.7.4.8.2** Analyze the production elements used in a work to assess the artists' aesthetic choices.
- **4.8.2.3.2** Collaborate as a creative team to make interpretive choices for a work.
- **4.8.4.7.1** Analyze how artistic choices and personal aesthetics and preferences impact meaning and the audience.
- **4.8.4.8.1** Respond to a work using supporting evidence, personal aesthetics, and artistic criteria.
- **4.8.4.8.2** Apply the production elements used in a work to assess aesthetic choices.
- **4.9.2.2.1** Apply research (including available technology) to construct the visual composition for a work.
- **4.9.2.2.3** Analyze how a character becomes authentic in a work.
- **4.9.2.2.2** Investigate the impact of technology on design choices in a work.
- **4.9.2.3.1** Synthesize original ideas into an original work, utilizing critical analysis, historical and cultural context, and research.
- **4.9.2.3.2** Explain the collaborative and interdependent roles of the actor, director, playwright, designers and the community
- **4.9.3.5.1** Explain and demonstrate how character relationships and character choices assist in telling the story of a work.

- **4.9.3.5.2** Analyze how different resources influence making unique character choices for a work. For example: Resources may include the script; research from various sources; the director's concept; technical choices.
- **4.9.4.7.1** Analyze and interpret a work, considering historical and cultural contexts as well as personal aesthetics, preferences, and beliefs.
- **4.9.4.8.1** Evaluate a work using supporting evidence and criteria, while considering other art forms, history, culture, and other disciplines.
- **4.9.4.8.2** Evaluate the aesthetics of the production elements displayed in a work.
- **4.9.5.9.1** Explain how cultural perspectives, community ideas, social issues, and personal beliefs are reflected or challenged in a work.
- **4.9.5.10.1** Determine how personal, societal, cultural, global, and historical contexts (including those of Minnesota American Indian tribes and communities) affect creative choices for a work.