



Social Hierarchies: *Henry V*

This activity can be used before viewing *Henry V* or after viewing Part One.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Identify the characters in *Henry V*
- Categorize the characters in *Henry V* according to their social rank
- Explore systems of power in *Henry V* and in our world today
- Make connections to the themes of *Henry V*

MATERIALS

- Character Map Handout (page 3)
- Blank Social Pyramid Handout (page 4)
- Labeled Social Pyramid Handout (page 5)
- Social Hierarchy Glossary (page 6)

INSTRUCTIONS

Step One: Define social hierarchy together as a class. Start by asking students how they might define the term. Then provide the class with either (or both) of the following definitions:

- **Social Hierarchy (AP World History):** A structured ranking of individuals or groups within a society based on factors like wealth, power and social status.
- **Social Hierarchy (Britannica):** Hierarchy, in the social sciences, a ranking of positions of authority, often associated with a chain of command and control. The term is derived from the Greek words *hieros* (“sacred”) and *archein* (“rule” or “order”).

Step Two: Print out or project the Blank Social Pyramid handout. Brainstorm what a social hierarchy might look like in **today’s society**. Emphasize that those at the top of the pyramid have the most power, while those at the bottom have the least.

Step Three: Print out or project the Blank Social Pyramid handout. Brainstorm what a social hierarchy may look like in a **monarchy**, the system in place during the reign of Henry V.

Step Four: Use the Character Map and pages 9–10 of the *Henry V* Play Guide (see Resources on page 2) to predict where characters from the play fall on the Labeled Social Pyramid handout. Encourage the students to use the Social Hierarchy Glossary as a resource to inform their predictions.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Within each part of the pyramid, are there other hierarchies? What other factors might determine who holds the most power?
- How does gender impact a person's placement in the hierarchy?
- What systems of power do we see in our world today? How do they differ from those in *Henry V*? How are the social hierarchies in our time and *Henry V*'s time similar?
- How do you think hierarchy can be displayed onstage? (See optional activity below.)

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

Consider how theatrical staging impacts an audience's understanding of hierarchy.

Step One: Invite students to brainstorm ways in which hierarchy can be displayed onstage. Consider the use of levels in the staging, colors in the costuming or areas of focus in the lighting design.

Step Two: After viewing Part One of *Henry V*, discuss the ways the Guthrie's staging showed social hierarchies through stage placement, costuming and/or lighting.

RESOURCES

***Henry V* Play Guide.** Guthrie Theater.

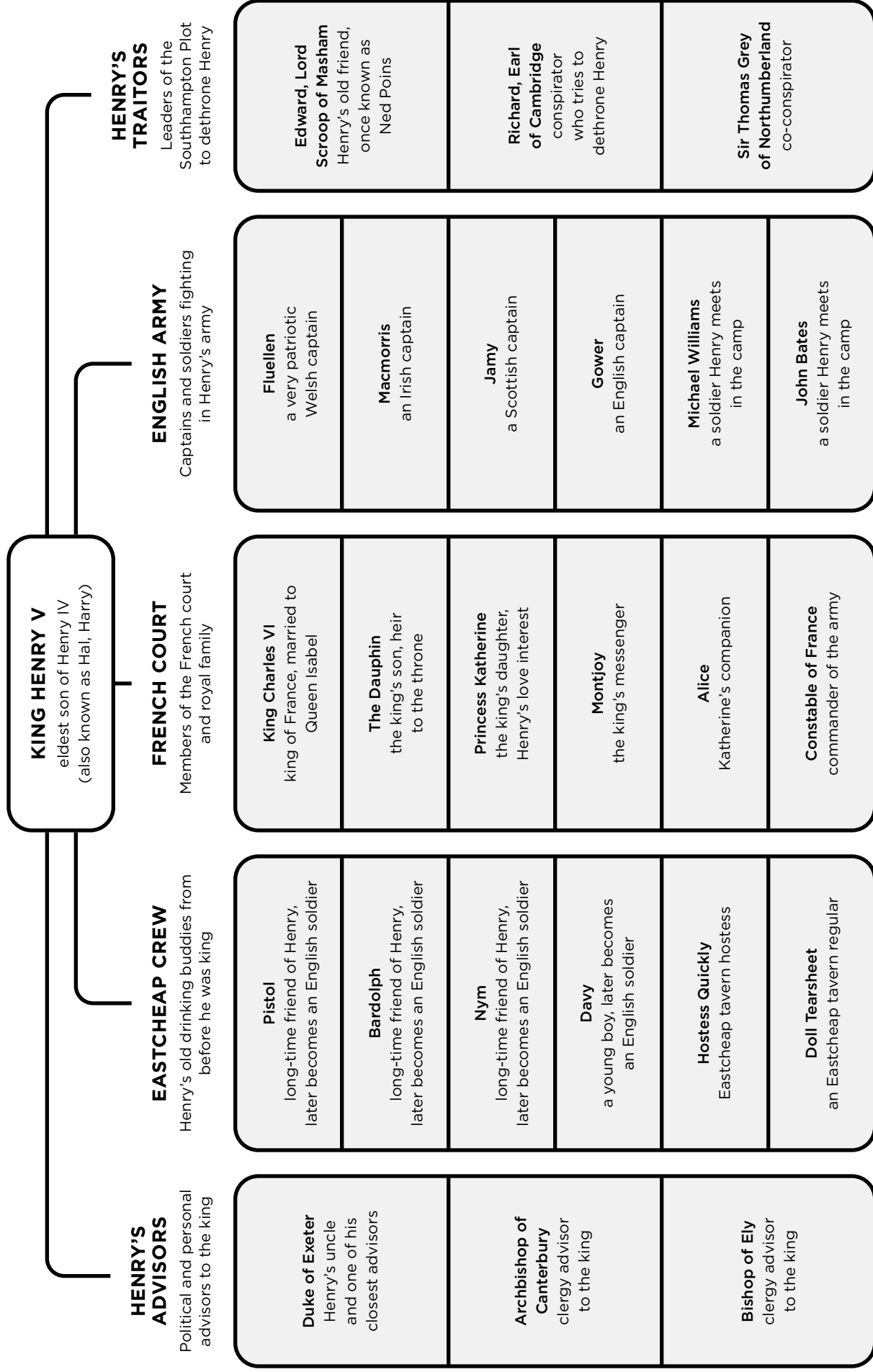
A robust resource for all three plays in Shakespeare's Henriad trilogy, including *Henry V*.

guthrietheater.org/henry5



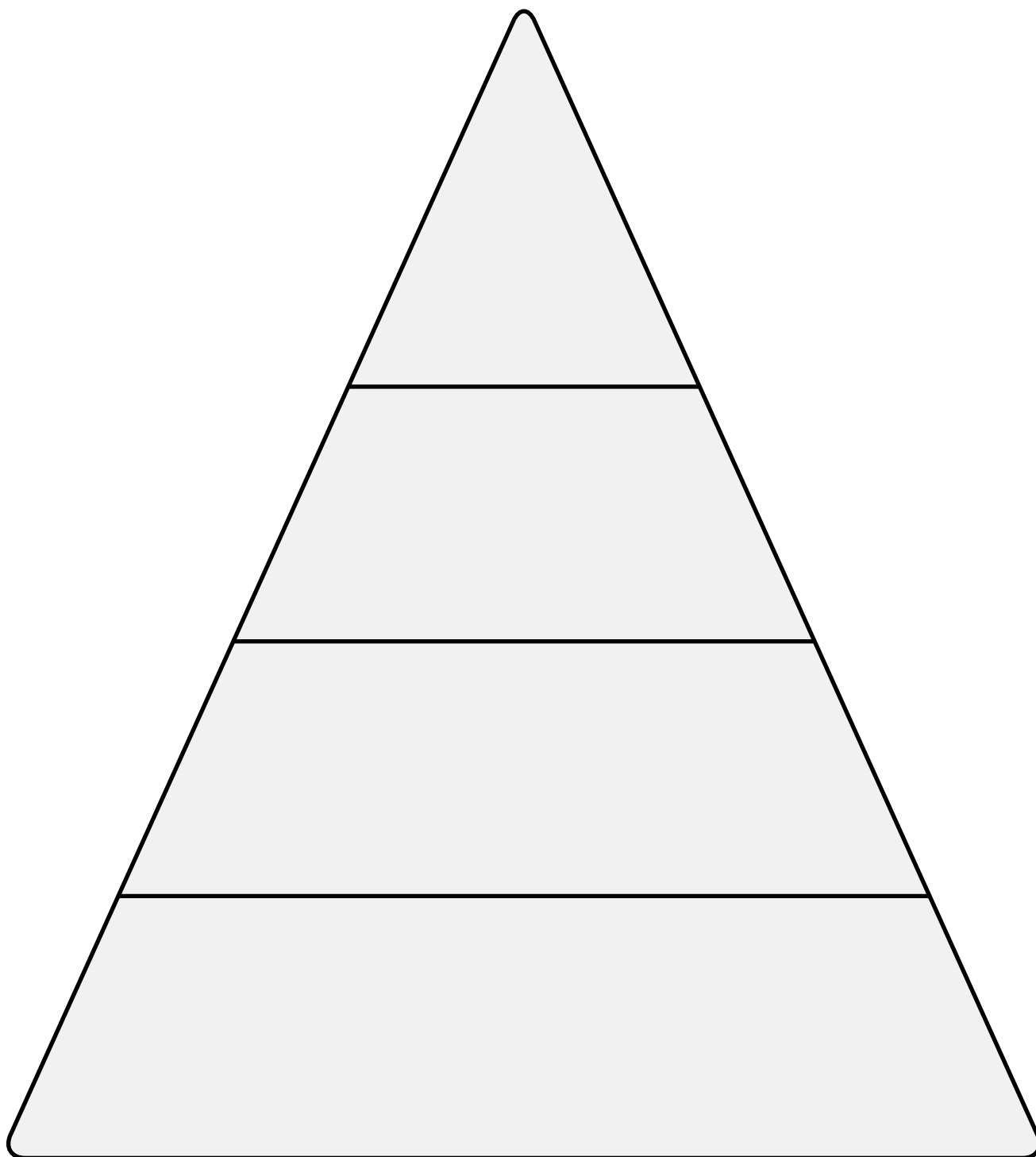
Character Map

SOCIAL HIERARCHIES: *HENRY V*



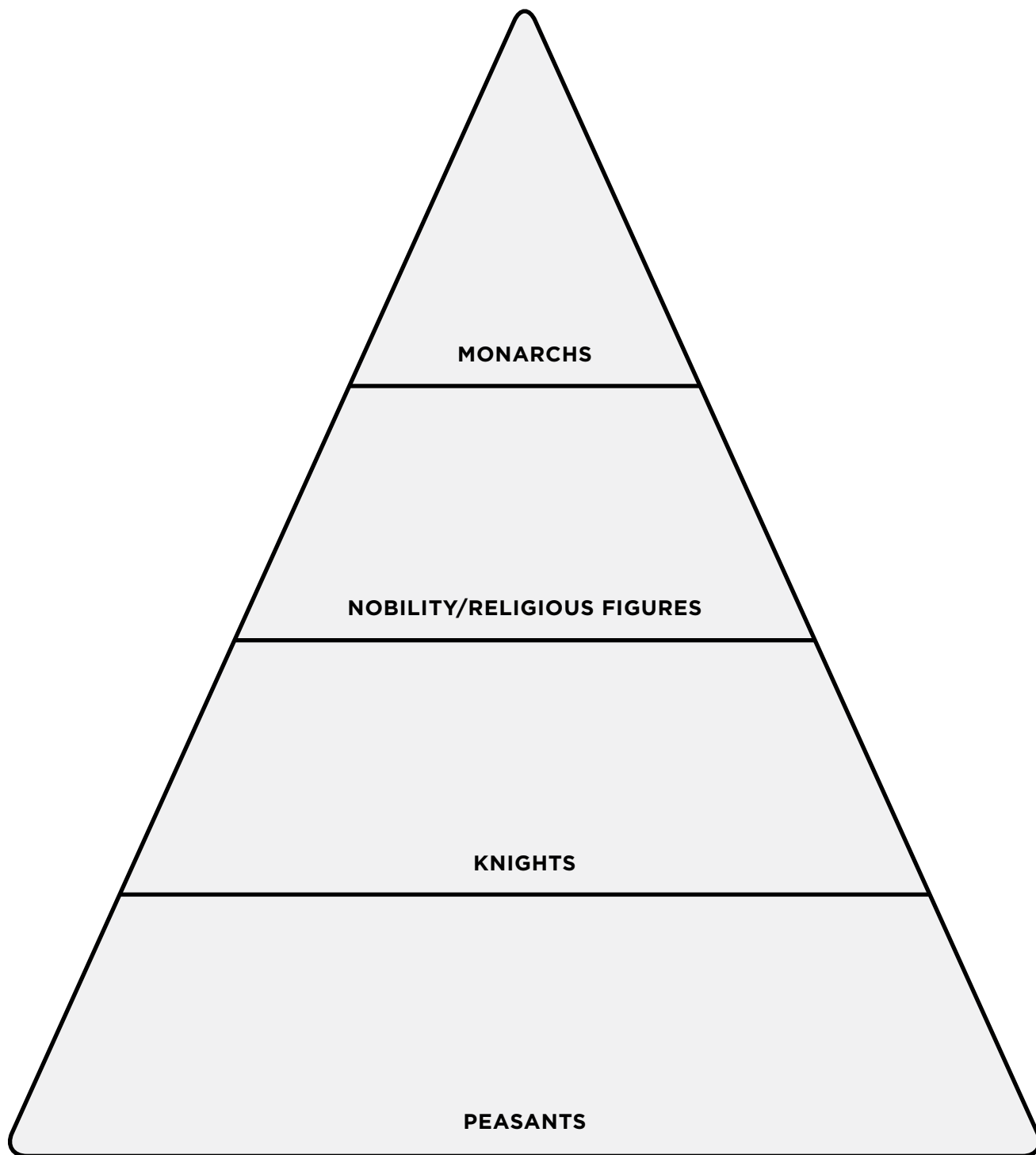
Blank Social Pyramid

SOCIAL HIERARCHIES: *HENRY V*



Labeled Social Pyramid

SOCIAL HIERARCHIES: *HENRY V*



Social Hierarchy Glossary

SOCIAL HIERARCHIES: *HENRY V*



Terms are listed in the order they appear in the text and read from top to bottom by column.

Archbishop

A bishop at the head of an ecclesiastical province or one of equivalent honorary rank

Bishop

A senior member of the Christian clergy, usually in charge of a diocese and empowered to confer holy orders

Captain

One who commands a company of infantry, a cavalry troop or an artillery battery

Dauphin

The eldest son of the King of France

Duke

A male holding the highest hereditary title in the British and certain other peerages

Earl

A British nobleman ranking above a viscount and below a marquess

King

The male ruler of an independent state, especially one who inherits the position by right of birth

Knight

A man who is given an honorary title of knighthood by a monarch or other leader for service to the crown, often associated with chivalry and military service

Lord

A name for a person or deity who has authority, control or power over others, acting as a master, chief or ruler

Princess

The daughter of a monarch

Queen

The female ruler of an independent state, especially one who inherits the position by right of birth or marriage