



# SHAKESPEARE SHORTS

GRADES  
**4-6**

OTM-1867

PERFORMING ARTS SERIES

TEACHER  
**Rubrics**  
INCLUDED!  
STUDENT

- 6 Ten To Twenty-Five Minute Plays
- 2 Holiday Concert Plays
- Program For Easy Staging, Costumes & Shakespeare Festival



Reproducible  
**ARTS-ON**  
Activities

Romeo & Juliet

ON THE **MARK**

# Richard II

Performance Length	Number of Parts	Genre
10 to 15 Minutes	15	History

## Synopsis



Long ago, in England, the young king, Richard II was proving to be unpopular for his arrogant decisions and pursuits. The final straw for many of the nobles occurred when Richard seized the inheritance of Henry Bolingbroke, his cousin who he had earlier banished, to finance an armed assault on some rebel Irish. Upon returning to England, Richard found his reign opposed almost universally, and several of his supporters already executed. Surrendering his crown to Bolingbroke, Richard was sent to the Tower of London, where he was assassinated by a supporter of Bolingbroke, now King Henry IV. Saddened by the news of Richard's death, Henry promised to go on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land to atone for his role in Richard's demise.

## Characters



### Reading Levels of Difficulty:

**Non-Speaking (NS)**    **Easy (E)**    **Moderate (M)**    **Challenging (C)**

King Richard II (C)

John of Gaunt (C)

Aumerle (M)

Bushy (E)

Duke of York (C)

Sir Stephen Scroop (E)

Northumberland (E)

Narrator (M)

Henry Bolingbroke, Duke of Hereford (C)

Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk (C)

Green (E)

Bagot (NS)

Earl of Salisbury (E)

Henry Percy, or Hotspur (NS)

Sir Pierce of Exton (M)

## Pronunciation Guide

**Aumerle** (ah-murl or oh-murl)

## Staging & Costumes

The staging can be accomplished very simply. Props are very simple: a crown, and a throne for the king. Weapons are mimed. Northumberland must read from a scrolled sheet of paper. At the beginning of the play, have King Richard wear bright colors, such as red or royal blue, but after he gives up his throne, to emphasize his reduced position and sadness, have him change into a darker colored costume prior to him greeting Bolingbroke at Flint castle. King Richard should also be portrayed as a more sympathetic character after he abdicates, and those around Bolingbroke as very eager to have achieved power. Have the student playing Richard try to appear calm yet regal in the face of his changed position, and the student playing Bolingbroke to appear ashamed by his supporters' actions.

## Teaching Tips

- Discuss what is meant by a history play.
- Discuss briefly the constant struggle for the throne of England during the Middle Ages.
- Brainstorm ideas about "What is a hero?". Who is the hero in this play? Is there one?

## Extension Activities

- Retell the story as a newspaper article or as a TV news report, highlighting the major events.
- Draw a picture of your favorite scene in the play/write a paragraph telling why you chose it.
- Complete a survey: Do you feel sorry for King Richard? Ask for reasons. Present your information and findings to the class.



**King Richard:** How now? What means death in this rude assault? Villain, thine own hand yields thy death's instrument. *(King Richard takes one of the men's knives and stabs him. The man falls, but as King Richard watches, Exton stabs him. King Richard points to Exton's knife.)* That hand shall burn in never-quenching fire. Mount, mount my soul, while my flesh sinks down, here to die. *(He dies.)*

Later, as Bolingbroke, now King Henry sat in his throne room, Exton came in bearing the dead body of King Richard.

**Bolingbroke:** What is this?

**Sir Pierce of Exton:** Great king, within this coffin I present thy buried fear: Richard of Bordeaux, thy greatest enemy.

**Bolingbroke:** Exton, I thank thee not. This is a deed of slander on my head. My guilt is great, because I wished him dead. Lords, I protest my soul is full of woe. I'll make a voyage to the Holy Land, to wash this blood off from my guilty hand. March sadly after, grace my mournings here, in weeping after this untimely bier.

# Richard II

## Dramatis Personae



King Richard II – \_\_\_\_\_

Henry Bolingbroke, \_\_\_\_\_

Duke of Hereford – \_\_\_\_\_

John of Gaunt – \_\_\_\_\_

Thomas Mowbray, \_\_\_\_\_

Duke of Norfolk – \_\_\_\_\_

Aumerle – \_\_\_\_\_

Green – \_\_\_\_\_

Bushy – \_\_\_\_\_

Bagot – \_\_\_\_\_

Duke of York – \_\_\_\_\_

Earl of Salisbury – \_\_\_\_\_

Sir Stephen Scroop – \_\_\_\_\_

Henry Percy, or Hotspur – \_\_\_\_\_

Northumberland – \_\_\_\_\_

Sir Pierce of Exton – \_\_\_\_\_

Narrator – \_\_\_\_\_



Long ago, in England, the young king, Richard II, often ruled in an arrogant way. Unlike his father, King Edward, Richard did not always take the advice of wiser men around him, and so he often made decisions that would come back to haunt him.

**King Richard:** Old John of Gaunt, call them to our presence, Bolingbroke and Norfolk, and face to face, frowning brow to frowning brow, we will hear them.

**John of Gaunt:** Bring them in.

*(Enter Bolingbroke and Norfolk.)*

**Bolingbroke:** *(Bows.)* Many happy days befall my gracious sovereign.

**Norfolk:** *(Bows.)* Each day still better other's happiness.

**King Richard:** We thank you both. Cousin Bolingbroke, what dost thou object against the Duke of Norfolk, Thomas Mowbray?

**Bolingbroke:** Free from misbegotten hate, come I before your princely presence. Thomas Mowbray is a traitor. He took your money and did wrongly use it, and plotted the Duke of Gloucester's death.



**Bolingbroke:** Are you contented to resign the crown?

**King Richard:** Ay, no. No, ay. I give this heavy weight from off my head, and this unwieldy scepter from my hand. God save King Henry, unkinged Richard says. What more remains?

**Northumberland:** No more, but read over these accusations, and these grievous crimes committed by your person.

**King Richard:** Must I do so? Mine eyes are full of tears.

**Northumberland:** My lord, read over these articles.

**King Richard:** Fiend! Thou tormentest me ere I come.

**Bolingbroke:** Enough, Northumberland. Convey him to the Tower. *(Exit Richard and Northumberland.)* On Wednesday next, we solemnly set down our coronation.

As he was taken to prison in the Tower, Richard sent his wife to France to save her life, but she was very unhappy to leave him. Unknown to Bolingbroke, now King Henry IV, a man named Sir Pierce of Exton, a loyal servant of his, had decided to kill King Richard in his Tower prison cell, because he had once heard Bolingbroke say that he wished King Richard dead. As King Richard sat in his cell, Exton and two men entered with knives drawn.



Richard is resigned to losing his crown. He should sigh, and should have slumped shoulders.



As they neared Flint Castle, Bolingbroke and his supporters were surprised to find that the king was inside. After a brief wait, King Richard came down to see Bolingbroke, knowing he was going to lose his kingdom to him.

**King Richard:** Your heart is up, although your knee be low.

**Bolingbroke:** My gracious lord, I come but for my own.

**King Richard:** Your own is yours, and I am yours, and all. What thou will have, I'll give, and willing too. Are we going to London?

**Bolingbroke:** Yea, my good lord.

**King Richard:** Then I must not say no.

In London, King Richard willingly surrendered his crown to Bolingbroke.



**King Richard:** How high a pitch his resolution soars!  
Thomas Mowbray, what say'st thou to this?

**Norfolk:** Bolingbroke, thou liest! I defy you, and spit at you, and call you a slanderous coward and a villain. The money I used to go to France to fetch the queen, and as for Gloucester's death, I slew him not.

**King Richard:** Good uncle, let's end this where it begun, we'll calm the Duke of Norfolk, you, your son.

**John of Gaunt:** To be a peacemaker shall become my age. My son, end this argument.

**King Richard:** Norfolk, you do likewise.

**Norfolk:** My name is disgraced here, pierced to the soul. I cannot.

**King Richard:** Cousin Bolingbroke, do you begin?

**Bolingbroke:** I cannot.

**King Richard:** We were not born to sue, but to command. Our kingdom's earth shall not be soiled with blood. Therefore, we banish you both from our territories. You, cousin Bolingbroke, upon pain of death, twice five summers must you stay away.