Dear Educator,

Welcome to Southwest Shakespeare Company’s 24th season! We are thrilled to continue providing Arizona’s students with quality matinee productions, and we are excited that you have chosen to bring your students to our performance of *King Henry IV, Part 1*, one of Shakespeare’s finest English history plays.

Experiencing a play on stage opens students to the full range of the dramatic arts and brings literary elements to life right before their eyes. You are providing your students with another crucial means of analyzing and assessing as well as giving lasting memories and helping to create a new generation of theatregoers and lovers of Shakespeare. We applaud your efforts to keep the learning process meaningful and memorable for your students.

This year, we bring you new study guides to use as you and your class embark upon the journey to discover classical theatre. We’ve designed our curriculum guides into three sections:

1) information about the play itself and its genre,

2) information on ways to analyze the play’s elements and how to prepare your students for the theatrical experience,

3) discussion questions and activities you can use in the classroom before and/or after the performance—all designed with the Arizona Common Core in mind.

It is our sincere hope that you find our resources helpful and entertaining. If you have any suggestions for activities or topics not already found in this study guide, please feel free to contact us at education@swshakespeare.org or at swilllis@asf.net. We are always interested in hearing new ways to excite your students—and you—about Shakespeare and live theatre.

Happy Teaching!

Falstaff recounts how eleven men attacked him to Hal and Poins, the two men who did it as a joke to hear his lies (Sir John Gilbert illustrating *1 Henry IV*, 2.4)
Welcome to Henry IV, Part 1

In modern business, it's a common story—the Board of Directors backs a CEO wannabe for an insider hostile takeover, removing the current, long-serving CEO from office. Things don't progress quite as expected, however; the financial situation is still serious, and now the guy set to take over when the new CEO steps down seems to be messing up. A new crisis looms, so perhaps someone else needs to take charge.

But when the "business" is ruling England, the Board nobility, the CEOs royal kin, and there is a long-standing protocol for inheriting the throne, the twists and turns of changing monarchs gets more involved, more tense, and much more interesting because now everyone is a stakeholder. Does it matter who rules the country? For Shakespeare, in Renaissance England, yes. Do the backroom machinations for power matter? For Shakespeare, yes. And in eight powerful history plays in two tetralogies he writes about 15th-century England to discuss these issues, one of the greatest of which is Henry IV, Part 1 (1 Henry IV).

From another angle, 1 Henry IV, like all Shakespeare’s English history plays, is a compelling father/son drama. Where is the heir to the throne? In council? No, in a tavern. Should a king put the results of his hard work in his son's seemingly dissolute hands? Will the country judge his competency by his son's? For his part, does the son think Dad has all the right answers? That, too, is the story of 1 Henry IV, for all the history plays are compelling growing up tales that hit very familiar issues across cultures and eras.

Plus there's Falstaff—the longest role in the play, the largest character by girth and mirth in the canon (just ask Harold Bloom, who claims he's the greatest character ever created), a wild child of 60 who makes satiric jests and takes whatever money he can get his hands on. As a commentator on any political scene or society, Falstaff is a comic loose cannon and a brilliant wit.

Shakespeare uses him to turn the issues upside down and to look at ruling and power as hedonism, all the world as a tavern full of highwaymen— and the more we look, the less difference between the worlds there may be, though the tavern is infinitely more fun.

Young men trying to make their mark on the world, father/son tensions, a firebrand rivalry, a cameo of a spunky wife, a national challenge, a charismatic no-good, both laughter and slaughter: 1 Henry IV has all the makings of a great theatre experience.
Fact Sheet about *1 Henry IV*

**Genre:** English history play

**Date Written and First Played:** c. 1596-7

**Setting:** London, Warkworth Castle, Wales, Gloucestershire, York, Shrewsbury— the farflung settings show the extent of the rebels' alliance

**Length:** almost 3000 lines; 57% verse, 43% prose

**Longest Roles:** Falstaff, Hotspur, Prince Hal (all three with over 500 lines)

**Sources:** Shakespeare used several chronicle histories in writing his English plays. For *1 Henry IV* in the second tetralogy, Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles* (2nd edition, 1587) was the primary source along with Samuel Daniel's *Civil Wars* (1595). The subplot adapts ideas from an earlier Prince Hal play, *The Famous Victories of Henry V* (c. 1587-8), which enacts Hal as immoral youth suddenly or self-interestedly changed by the crown. In that play and apparently in early versions of *Henry IV, Part 1*, Falstaff is called Sir John Oldcastle, who served with the prince in Wales and was later martyred as a Lollard. Shakespeare apparently changed the name to Falstaff when a powerful Oldcastle descendant, Lord Cobham—the current Lord Chamberlain who had to approve plays for performance—protested.

**Imagery:**
- robbery
- being on horseback vs. on foot
- role-playing, especially "playing" the king
- sun vs. moon (an extension of R2's day/night image pattern)
- counterfeit

**Plot:** Having taken the crown from his cousin, Richard II, Henry IV (Bolingbroke) now has to keep it. His problems are that his once closest allies are now planning a formidable rebellion along with the Welsh and Scots while his son and heir, Prince Harry (Hal), seems unworthy of the crown and is hanging out with thieves in a tavern. Prince Hal loves Sir John Falstaff's open irreverence toward the Establishment, and even goes along on a robbery—but only to rob the robbers for a joke. Yet as Hal says in soliloquy and later tells his father when called to court, he intends to fulfill his royal responsibilities, though he still must prove the trust put in him as the royals head to the battlefield. Hal even enlists Falstaff in the cause, giving him a troop of infantry. Among the rebels, dissension creeps in when a recruited lord refuses Hotspur, the rebellion's military leader; then Hotspur taunts Glendower, his powerful Welsh ally, and tries to claim more than his third in the proposed division of the yet-to-be-won spoils. Nonetheless, all rebels pledge allegiance to the cause and seem to head to the battlefield. Yet at Shrewsbury, the rebels end up short—the suddenly sick Northumberland, Hotspur's father, sends neither troops nor supplies. Neither Glendower nor Mortimer, the ostensible heir to the throne, shows up. Hotspur's uncle, Worcester, does not convey the king's peace proposal to the other rebels, so the battle goes forward. The rebel leaders target the king and kill several lords dressed in the king's crest as decoys. When the king is attacked, Hal defends him and then takes on Hotspur in the play's showdown. Falstaff sees the encounter but plays dead rather than fight. Hal kills Hotspur, the royals win the day, Falstaff claims the Hotspur kill to get the reward, and the king divides the army to confront the outlying pockets of rebels in Wales and the north of England.

**Things to Look and Listen For:**
- how the robbery subplot parallels the rebellion in the main plot
- clarifying loyalties in Prince Hal and among thieves or rebels
- fathers and sons
- the role playing (apparent allies/friends)

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**Why would anyone living in the 1590s write plays about the late 14th and early 15th centuries? And why would we care?**

An excellent question, and we all know the answer. Why do we buy tickets to see *Hamilton* or watch *Star Wars* prequels and sequels? Because they tell great stories with vibrant characters about other places and/or times that also let us look at ourselves and our place and time from new angles. The issues “time-travel” and are relevant.
About Teaching and/or Attending a Shakespeare History Play

- While it should not need saying, it is wise to remind everyone that this is a play, someone's artistic version of events and people, and not necessarily the facts (even if we were sure what they were). We run into the same issues with modern biopics and TV specials; we assume it's true because we saw it. No.
- I offer you the oath I make all my students take before studying a Shakespeare history play, "I will not learn history from Shakespeare."

Great art is powerful, and our views of Richard III, Richard II, Prince Hal, Brutus, Cleopatra, Macbeth (who, as any Scottish historian will tell you, was a very good king!) and others have all been altered by the power of Shakespeare's memorable portrayals shaped to his own dramatic ends. Sometimes we know Shakespeare better than we know history.

But Shakespeare was not an historian; he was a poet and playwright. He was not seeking truth—though he may have been questioning "truths"; in fact, not even the chroniclers of the Middle Ages and Renaissance were seeking truth. Chroniclers were usually expected to tell a moral tale, not a true one, and very often a tale making the sponsor look good, a result of the patronage system. Their history was as shaped as plays were—they added characters, changed action, altered numbers.

Shakespeare's history plays, English and Roman, compress time. Traditions, laws, details, get minimized. Events seem to happen quickly implying cause and effect. But in Henry VI, Part 1, the new king is 9 months old in the first scene but a young man getting engaged at the end; the play encompasses 22 years. Shakespeare extracts all the time and tightly connects selected events. Even 1 Henry IV covers several years (1402-1403, with an event from 1405 added; Part 2 covers 1406-1413), though we don't feel the months passing. It's all jump cuts.

About Life in the Middle Ages (Since We Didn't Live Then)

Relationships, especially family and marital relationships, are crucial bits of information in a Shakespeare history play.

In the Middle Ages and Renaissance, noble families arranged marriages to enhance power and gain holdings. An example here is how the Percy family has allied with a branch of the royal family when Northumberland's son Henry Percy, our Hotspur, married Elizabeth Mortimer, whom Shakespeare calls Kate.

The Percies were northern "lords of the March," that is, defenders of the English border, which is why Hotspur is fighting with the Scots at Holmedon, as discussed in the first scene of 1 Henry IV. (One reason he keeps his prisoner for ransom is that he hasn't been reimbursed for expenses while fighting.) Sir Edmund Mortimer was a lord of the March for the western border, so he was fighting Glendower, who is leading a Welsh rebellion.

There was no standing national army. Every nobleman contributed forces when the king needed troops—which is why Richard II is so isolated once the nobles side with Bolingbroke in Richard II; Bolingbroke ends up with a huge army and Richard has none. The army issue affects 1 Henry IV as well, because Northumberland's, Mortimer's, and Glendower's armies are crucial for the success of the rebels' cause. Their plan was to have an overwhelming force on that battlefield.

In history, when Bolingbroke took the crown, his oldest son Henry became Prince of Wales, which was more just than a title; it meant administering Wales, which was in revolt. So through his teens Hal spent six or more months a year studying military strategy and leading troops there. And in the Middle Ages there was a "fighting season"; no one fought in the winter. If Hal's in London, he's not on Welsh duty—and how do many soldiers approach R-and-R? (The king would say court duty.)

The nobleman whom Henry IV entrusted with teaching the Prince in Wales was Henry Percy, Hotspur, a famous warrior who was historically slightly older than King Henry. Shakespeare makes Hotspur Hal's contemporary to create a rivalry.
The Genre of History Play and the Second Tetralogy

**The Tudor Context**

Playwrights entertaining the early Tudor monarchs adapted the late medieval morality play to the subject of politics and just rule in plays using allegorical characters and topics. Then as contemporary history made England a major force in Europe—especially after the 1587 defeat of the invading Spanish Armada—playwrights began writing plays on incidents from English chronicles to celebrate England's greatness.

The history play as we know it—a play that considers serious issues of state and monarchies, the uses and abuses of power, those on the throne and those ambitiously behind it—is often said to originate with Shakespeare, who moves the use of chronicle materials to a new and more profound level. Some are called tragedies, but not all; as a group they work distinctively.

Criticism through the 20th century first argued that Shakespeare was a law-and-order man who sanctioned the ruler and "order" above all else (Tillyard), and later took the view that Shakespeare was, in fact, subversive and questioned the use of power by the powerful for the powerful (Dollimore and others)—so there is no one way to read the plays. Any play that includes Falstaff, however, has a healthy dose of subversion built in, and 1 Henry IV actually lets us consider several subversions, each trying to justify itself as order.

**Shakespeare's Tetralogies**

Shakespeare may well have begun his career as a playwright with history plays; they are certainly among his earliest creations. What better way to make one's mark on the theatre scene than to author big, showy, dynamic plays with intrigue, wars, and ambition aplenty in glorious blank verse, all of it drawn from history that was as close to his audience as the American Civil War is to us. And he didn’t just write one play when he started—he wrote four that work together as a unit, a mini-series, a tetralogy.

In fact, between about 1590 and 1599 Shakespeare wrote nine English history plays as well as a bevy of comedies and three tragedies (two of which are often read in high school, Romeo and Juliet and Julius Caesar; 1 Henry IV is written between those plays).

One of these nine plays deals with 13th-century King John, but the other eight treat almost all of the 15th century, which was quite a lively political era for England. What first attracted Shakespeare's creative interest was the end of the Hundred Years’ War (1422-45) which led to the long monarchical crisis known as the Wars of the Roses, 1459-1485. These four plays, the first tetralogy, are now known as Henry VI, Parts 1, 2, and 3, and Richard III, the last Shakespeare's first knockout success with its unscrupulous, hunchbacked villain-king.

The way Shakespeare approached the historical story is like George Lucas's Star Wars concept: he picks one big, splashy conflict and tells it across several works and then goes back and does the prequels. The second tetralogy explores the event that caused the later Wars, the abdication/usurpation of Richard II by his cousin Henry Bolingbroke and its aftermath, so Shakespeare goes back to 1397 and explores these deep roots in Richard II, Henry IV Parts 1 and 2, and Henry V, the second tetralogy.

In historical order of events, the tetralogies start with Richard II's tragedy and end with Richard III's tragedy, but in the order Shakespeare wrote the plays, he starts with the aftermath of Henry V's death, leaving an infant king, and moves to the glorious career of England's epic monarch Henry V. The Epilogue of Shakespeare's Henry V states: "Small time, but in that small most greatly lived / This star of England." Henry V was one of the three new Shakespeare plays performed in the season that the Globe Theatre opened.

There is also one very late history play in the Shakespeare canon, All Is True, more often called Henry VIII, which he co-wrote some ten years after the end of the Tudor dynasty. It ends by celebrating the birth of Elizabeth with a prophecy of her greatness, a fine strategic move.

**Shakespeare's History Plays (rough order of composition and dates)**

1, 2, 3 Henry VI (c. 1590-92)
Richard III (c. 1593)
King John (c. 1593-4)
Richard II (c. 1595)
1 Henry IV (c. 1597) *< you are here!*
2 Henry IV (c. 1598)
Henry V (c. 1599)
Henry VIII (c. 1613)
The Royal Genealogy: A Who's Who for Shakespeare's 1H4

Edward III  
(r. 1322-77)

John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster,  
d. 1399

Edmund, Duke of York  
(r. 1365-89)

Thomas, Duke of Gloucester,  
k. 1397

Richard II  
r. 1377-99

Sir Edmund Mortimer, taken  
by Glendower

Henry Bolingbroke,  
later Henry IV  
r. 1399-1413

Henry, Prince of Wales (Hal),  
later Henry V,  
r. 1413-22

Roger Mortimer,  
decl. heir-apparent  
by Richard II, 1386

Edmund Mortimer,  
decl. heir-apparent  
by Richard II, 1398

Lionel, Duke of Clarence  
(k. 1368)

Philippa = Edmund Mortimer

“Kate” = Henry Percy (Hotspur)

Reign of Richard II / Bolingbroke Crowned  
(events affecting 1 Henry IV in red)

- 1387: control of government taken over by the five Lords Appellant [i.e. Accusers]; Bolingbroke is one of them.
- 1389: Richard II regains control
- 1397: Richard moves against Lords Appellant
- 1398: Bolingbroke accuses Mowbray of treason, setting up a trial by combat which is cancelled when king banishes both, promising to honor their inheritances
- 1399: John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, Bolingbroke's father, dies; Richard seizes the estate, leaves to fight rebels in Ireland. Bolingbroke returns to England proclaiming himself Duke of Lancaster; barons back him, especially Percies. Richard grants him the dukedom. Bolingbroke claims crown and forces Richard to abdicate, Henry IV crowned
- 1400: rebellion/assassination plot against Henry quashed; Richard dies in captivity (suspiciously)

Reign of Henry IV / Tries to Keep Crown  
(events in 1 Henry IV in red)

- 1400-1405: Welsh rebellion
- 1402: Glyndwr, leader of Welsh rebellion, captures Mortimer in battle and allies with Percies
- Henry Percy (Hotspur) defeats Scots at Holmedon, taking Earl of Douglas prisoner; refuses to give him to king
- 1403: Percy-led revolt; Battle of Shrewsbury; Hotspur killed
- 1405: tripartite agreement between rebels dividing kingdom between Glyndwr, Northumberland, and Mortimer
- Battle of Gautree Forest; Archbishop and other rebels killed. Northumberland escapes to Scotland
- 1408: Northumberland invades and is defeated, dies in battle
- Welsh revolt collapses; Glyndwr vanishes
- 1406-1411: Prince Hal dominates council
- 1413: Henry IV dies; Henry V crowned

What Shakespeare Changes in the Play
- Hotspur's age (he was actually older than Henry IV) and how he died in battle (no one knows)
- as in Holinshed’s Chronicles, tripartite agreement moved before Battle of Shrewsbury to include Hotspur
The Big Picture of the 15th Century

The 15th century in England was a playwright's dream of dramatic action—conflict between arch-rivals England and France, within the royal family, and between political rivals or noble spouses. One dynastic irregularity spiraled through the decades into the Wars of the Roses, 1459-85, an internecine fight for the crown between the Houses of York and Lancaster, each claiming the legitimate right to the throne—like *Game of Thrones*.

Claiming the crown—first of France, then of England—and bloodshed began in 1397 in the reign of Richard II, a childless, self-indulgent, fiscally improvident monarch tolerated only because he was king until he crossed his first cousin Henry Bolingbroke, ironically over inheritance.

Richard II

From the royal genealogy, it is obvious Henry Bolingbroke could never have been king of England by primogeniture (birth-order inheritance with males first). Though Richard II had no children yet, there were plenty of heirs in the extant line between Richard and the Lancasters.

Richard II came to the English throne as a child, inheriting by primogeniture from his grandfather, Edward III, a year after his own father died. As a teen, he played a courageous role in the Peasant's Revolt, but during his minority a council governed. Meanwhile his friends promoted his lavish and costly lifestyle. Five nobles, the Lords Appellant, objected to these friends and with Parliament's permission arranged to arrest and either kill or exile them as traitors.

Richard II and Henry IV

Richard waited but did not forget. In 1397, with new friends—now including Mowbray, one of the former accusers—he systematically began attacking the four remaining accusers, killing or exiling three of them; one of these was the youngest of his ambitious royal uncles, the Duke of Gloucester. The fifth accuser was Richard's first cousin, Henry Bolingbroke, son of the wealthiest noble in England, John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, both father and son being very ambitious men.

Bolingbroke then boldly accused Mowbray of treason for aiding in the death of Gloucester. In fact, he was indirectly accusing the king on these charges, for no murder of a royal could occur unless by his order. When Richard could not make peace between the former allies, now rivals, he set a trial by combat. But Bolingbroke was the equivalent of an Olympic-level jouster, and Richard dared not let him win or seem right, so he called off the joust and exiled both men.

Meanwhile, John of Gaunt died, and Richard simply seized his estate (he had earlier seized Gloucester's and another appellant's estates), leaving Bolingbroke without an inheritance, then left to fight the rebels in Ireland.

But Bolingbroke stormed back to claim his title and lands, and along the way gained the backing of other nobles, especially the Percy brothers, earls of Northumberland and Worcester. He succeeded in wresting not only his duchy but the crown from Richard, justifying his act first by right of inheritance and conquest, then by act of (an illegal) Parliament. Henry faced and put down an immediate rebellion from Richard loyalists; then Richard "died" while in captivity, it was rumored by Henry's wish. Thus Henry became king with an insolvent economy and seemed to have his predecessor's blood on his hands as well as the messy issue of how he got the crown. Now that he had it, however, he meant to keep it as legitimate king.

History says good luck with that. His rule faced a long series of rebellions within England and on its borders. Henry was a consummate politician, but he had to fight both rebels and ill health. He also had a contentious relationship with his oldest son. He died in 1413, bequeathing the royal legitimacy debate to future generations.
Why Portray Henry IV in the Late 16th Century?

The entire Wars of the Roses stem from the issue of who has rightful claim to the crown—the Yorks or Lancasters, Richard II’s heir or Henry IV’s. At the end of Richard III’s reign in 1485, the final historical action of the Wars, the last man standing was Henry Tudor, a Welshman, who became Henry VII.

And what’s the link to the 1590s?

Those Tudors who supposedly “resolved” the Wars of the Roses question were still on the throne in Shakespeare’s time—Elizabeth I, current queen of England, was a Tudor, granddaughter of Henry VII. Her monarchial issues are surprisingly similar to the Wars’: she faced two separate questions of legitimacy, the Tudor issue and a marriage/birth issue.

Is Your Line Legitimate?

Henry Tudor declared himself legitimate king of England (by combat) after killing Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth in 1485. Actually, his link to the royal family through his mother, a Lancastrian, was by an illegitimate branch (back legitimated with the caveat that they had no claim to the crown). To cement his claim, he also married the York heir, thus combining the two contending houses/roases, then murdered other York heirs. He commissioned historians to write denigratingly of Richard III. He was a political wizard of spin, naming his eldest son Arthur (so he would be King Arthur) and maneuvering an advantageous marriage for him to a Spanish princess, Catherine of Aragon.

Are You Legitimate?

Arthur died young, supposedly without consummating his marriage, so Henry VII just married Catherine to his second son, Henry, soon to be Henry VIII. Years later, once Catherine was past childbearing, having given him only one living daughter and several sons who died at birth, Henry had a pregnant mistress, the Protestant Anne Boleyn, so he divorced his wife and married Anne to legitimize the hoped-for son. To do so he had to institute the English Reformation and leave the Catholic Church. Anne bore him a daughter, Elizabeth. The child was legitimate if marriage of a divorced man in a new denomination can legitimate her.

Elizabeth inherited the crown in 1558 after her younger brother and older sister had ruled and died. The Catholic Church, not recognizing the divorce, declared her illegitimate as both child and monarch, favoring instead her Catholic-convert cousin, Mary Queen of Scots, whom Elizabeth had to behead in 1587 to stop the many assassination attempts against her aimed at putting Mary on the throne. Another attempted overthrow was brewing in 1597, manifesting in 1601 with the Earl of Essex’s failed coup. The issue of legitimacy was a constant issue through childless Elizabeth’s reign.

All the issues surrounding Elizabeth’s crown intensified in the 1590s when she was unmarried, childless, and past childbearing; moreover, with no named heir the situation threatened to become a state crisis. It bred instability because her death could start an internal and external fight for the throne not unlike the Wars of the Roses—the Elizabethans’ great fear. So Shakespeare wrote a series of history plays discussing the topic that was on everyone’s mind.

Legitimacy, right to rule, rebellion, betrayals—great parallels of past and present.

Why not just write about the Tudors?

There was state censorship, and if you wrote about the monarch you’d get your head cut off or at least be imprisoned, neither a desirable outcome for art.
When it comes to Renaissance interstitching—weaving scenes and acts and plays together so the pieces link and play off one another—Shakespeare is a master. The four plays of the second tetralogy tell four individual stories and also present one large tale. Henry Bolingbroke/Henry IV is in three of the plays, and his son Prince Harry (Hal) in three; they share the middle two plays. The tetralogy treats how each gets the crown and the conflicts each faces and strategies each uses in keeping it.

Overall, the second tetralogy moves from a self-indulgent king to a warrior hero. After all, at the Battle of Agincourt (1415) Henry V gives England its greatest military victory up to and perhaps including D-Day.

To fully appreciate 1 Henry IV requires a knowledge of Richard II; earlier pages describe its essentials. The issues are how Henry IV got the crown and whether he can be legitimate ruler when he was not the next in line to the throne by primogeniture. Do you win the Super Bowl if both feet are out of bounds when you catch the "winning" pass? Do you win the lottery if one digit on your ticket is wrong?

When he left for Ireland, Richard II named as his heir Edmund Mortimer, the oldest direct male heir in the next surviving branch of the royal family. At this point Shakespeare’s sources give him bad information, because there are two Edmund Mortimers in that family, an uncle and nephew, but both Holinshed and Daniel conflate them into one figure. The nephew, not yet ten, is the heir; the uncle is the man who marries Glendower’s daughter and who is Hotspur’s brother-in-law. Yes, Bolingbroke/Henry IV is in line for the throne, but not until that entire previous line is exhausted.

The Issues for 1 Henry IV

- Henry asserts that he is legitimate king of England and behaves accordingly.
- When he learns of the former king’s murder at the end of Richard II, Henry IV pledges, "I'll make a voyage to the Holy Land / To wash this blood off from my guilty hand" (5.5). Thus, even though he did not himself kill Richard, he accepts responsibility for the deed's expiation.

Look at Henry’s very first speech in 1 Henry IV; it's a few years later and he talks about wanting to lead a crusade to the Holy Land, thus militarizing his pilgrimage.

Another piece of Henry’s political strategy does not appear until his dying advice to Hal in 2 Henry IV: "Busy giddy minds with foreign quarrels" (4.5). Henry is the supreme politician and understands how to deflect dissent—go to war.

- But England is being attacked by the Welsh and the Scots. In the battles the heir, Mortimer, is taken prisoner, while Hotspur wins over the Scots at Holmedon but fails to give the king his prisoners (for the ransom money).

Problems on all sides are exacerbated until there is a full-blown rebellion underway, led by the very men who helped make Henry king, Worcester and his brother, Henry’s loyal friend, Northumberland, and his son Hotspur, now allying with the Scots and Welsh. In their new view, Henry stole the throne from its rightful owner, so Mortimer (now kin by marriage) should be king; we’ll take the crown off the head we put it on and give it to our kinsman/ally, Mortimer—and we will get a cut of the action this time.

- Their portrayal of Henry as robber, a thief of the crown, is the key image for the play, linking all the plot lines, especially the main plot of rebellion to the subplot of highwaymen. Who’s a robber is the play’s major concern.
The Plot Lines of 1 Henry IV: Everyone's a Robber

1 Henry IV has three plot lines. Two are the main plot that bifurcates into a royals' line and a rebels' line in 1.3 when the rebellion emerges. We also have the excellent subplot of the play, the tavern world of Falstaff and his thieving cronies.

**So Who's a Thief?**

1. The royal plot line, of course, views the rebels as thieves, trying to steal the crown from the sitting and therefore legitimate king, Henry IV.
2. Richard II was asked to abdicate, to "give" Henry the crown. In Shakespeare, Richard's exact and carefully chosen words are, "Here, cousin, seize the crown" (R2, 4.1). Was that abdication or usurpation? Was the transfer voluntary or forced? Henry never actually said he wanted the crown; he said, "I come but for mine own," which Richard understood in one of his few moments of political clarity, "They well deserve to have / That know the strong'st and surest way to get" (R2, 3.3).
3. Henry now says the crown is legitimately his and the rebels want to rob him. The rebels argue he stole it from the legitimate king, ignoring the rights of the legitimate heir, Mortimer. They regret their part in the theft and now mean to rectify that error by taking the crown from the robber, Henry. They intend to rob the robber by means of rebellion. Thus, everyone in the main plot is a robber or an accessory to robbery. Everyone is now or has been some sort of rebel to the crown.

**The Subplot Version of Robbery**

Shakespeare uses subplots to reflect major actions and themes back to the main plot. Ideas bounce between the plot lines, gaining momentum or commentary as they ricochet, a crucial relationship.

The subplot of 1 Henry IV is peopled by thieves and its action is a series of robberies—a highway robbery, a pickpocketing, embezzling the king's impressment money. We meet the prince in this environment, amid thieves, and he seems to become one himself. No wonder the king seems to have given up on his son.

But 1.2 requires careful attention, for Hal insists that robbers be hanged and actually refuses to rob: "What? I, rob? I a thief? Not I, by my faith" (1H4, 1.2). He separates himself from thieves and only goes along when Poins enlists him in a joke to show what a coward Falstaff is by robbing the robbers. Hal not only gets the stolen money but pays it back—restoration or paying back being a major thematic element of his character. Is it "robbery" if you pay it back?

**Where's Hal?**

Hal, Prince Harry, the Prince of Wales, spends the first half of the play amid the tavern folk. He spends the last half of the play fighting to defend his father's crown. When he shows up, even the rebels notice; the issue is whether he knows what he's doing. Is he dissolute and clueless or does he have a plan?

At the end of 1.1, King Henry notably comments on the comparison between the victorious Hotspur and his own non-combatant son Harry, wishing Hotspur were his son and thus heir. Thus the larger question posed is who would make the better king—Hal or Hotspur. Henry needs a winner as heir, not the bad press of a barfly.

How well does the king know his son? Not well, because if we watch Hal's values in 1.2, he is all for law and order. When alone Hal switches to blank verse for his soliloquy, the clearest of all indicators that he is royal at heart. Here we realize he knows his father's disdain and see that he is a pitch for power, his own p.r. scheme. Then the play lets us see if he can achieve them.

The first half of the play is dominated by the subplot robbery—its planning, execution, and aftermath (1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 2.4)—which parallels the planning of the rebellion. Once the king sets up that Hal/Hotspur comparison it's like a western—before it's over there's going to be a showdown. Which set of robbers will win? And is Prince Hal a "thief" of the crown?
Analyzing Structure in 1 Henry IV—the First Half

The Major Action and Characters, 1.1-1.3
• 1.1 sets King Henry’s preference for combat abroad, but shows all the combat will be defensive at home. He also establishes the essential comparison/contrast between Prince Harry and Hotspur as leaders and men—asking who has “the right stuff.” The king thinks it’s Hotspur; Shakespeare thinks it’s Prince Harry.
• 1.2 introduces the subplot and the major theme/image of robbery. Falstaff wants the future king to protect thieves and seeks the Prince’s approbation of his self-interested values. The Prince never promises him what he wants, refuses to join the robbery, agrees to a joke, and then gives us a soliloquy of his master plan for becoming king and gaining acclaim when it’s his time. Study the Prince’s soliloquy at the end of 1.2 in detail, watching his claims and especially the words and images he uses, because they echo through his and others’ expressions and values in the play.
• 1.3 complicates the main plot by denying Henry what he wants—Hotspur’s prisoners—and denying Hotspur what he wants—ransom of Mortimer. Neither one is happy, so Henry barks an order, and Hotspur joins his uncle’s plan for rebellion. Once the rebellion emerges, Hotspur shows his eagerness, courage, sense of honor, and inability to listen to others. Worcester lays out his plans, while Hotspur recalls his family’s role in past events. Study the details of Hotspur’s speech at 1.3.158, “Nay, then I cannot blame his cousin king,” for its rhetorical build, its description of past events, and its echoes of the Prince’s 1.2 soliloquy.

Planning Robberies: 2.1-3.1
• 2.1 and 2.2 are subplot scenes setting up the robbery. We learn in 2.1 that the robbers have inside help at the inn.
2.2 takes us to the site, where jokes begin by moving Falstaff’s horse, leaving him on foot. He rages, “A plague upon it when thieves cannot be true one to another!”—the play’s mantra for all thieves and rebels. When both robberies succeed—Falstaff’s and then Poins’s joke—we await the payoff.
• 2.3 returns us to the rebellion as Hotspur tries to garner allies, but fails when the letter writer refuses to join. Hotspur responds defensively, exalting his side and insulting the writer. His wife seeks information (the very info he freely gave the letter writer) but Hotspur only teases her.
• 2.4—one of the great scenes in the Shakespeare canon, the wit flying, Falstaff’s excuses outrageous, his self-justification amazing (he proves hard to entrap; compare 5.4). Then when Hal is called to court, the scene pivots to his need for an excuse, so Falstaff has him “practice an answer” with Falstaff playing the king but pleading only for himself until the prince “deposes” him (echo of R2) and reverses the roles. What do we learn about the Hal/Falstaff relationship in the king/prince role-playing? About Hal’s values? Is “I do, I will” a joke?
• 3.1 is the major rebel meeting and full of stress fractures. Hotspur taunts Glendower, a major and necessary ally, and is reprimanded for it by his uncle. Thus we learn his political skills: can he rule? will people follow him? is he insightful, open, politic? (No.) Also the rebels divide up the kingdom before they’ve won it; is that chutzpah or tempting fate?
Analyzing Structure in 1 Henry IV—the Second Half

Heading into Battle. 3.2-4.4

- 3.2, the play's pivotal scene, is the first scene in which Prince Harry joins the main plot and his first scene with his father, the king. In a major tongue-lashing, the king barely acknowledges Harry as he vents (like Hotspur in 1.3). He has political points to make, and in this private/political scene for the first time he acknowledges how he shaped the events in Richard II to get the crown—that he wanted it, that he angled for it, that he worked the public to get it by playing appearances. He’s a p.r. maven, and in his eyes Harry is just like Richard, ready to be out-imaged by Hotspur, the golden boy. Note that Harry does apologize and then gets only ten words in amid the king's ranting comparison of the prince to Richard, to the prince's detriment. The prince stays controlled until the king calls him a rebel, and then he clarifies his intent to beat Hotspur, redeem his name, and show what kind of son and heir he is, and what the future of England will be. The king sends him toward the battlefield, planning to follow close behind.

Watch how many terms from the prince's 1.2 soliloquy he uses in this 3.2 speech. What is the effect? Also consider the effect of the king's taunts and lecture. Is the king in total control, manipulating the prince to get the response he wants, or is he angry and just blasting him? He brags how he manipulates appearance to gain his goals; is he doing that here? How can we tell? Is Hal aware of his father's methods?

Blunt's comment about the rebels, "A mighty and a fearful head they are, / If promises be kept on every hand" establishes the coming pattern for the rebels, the big "if."

3.3 and 4.2—The subplot crew changes into soldiers, or should. In fact, for Falstaff the war is just another chance to rob. Given a company of foot soldiers and money to recruit and equip them, Falstaff instead pockets that money and works the system to pick men who will buy out their service. He brags about his profit; then the prince lambasts him for the troops he brings to defend his father's crown. Preserving the crown means nothing to Falstaff; self-interest rules Falstaff and other thieves/rebels.

- 4.1, 4.3, and 4.4 take us to the rebels. In 4.1 Hotspur learns how many promises are being broken, who will not come—his own father will not come or be sending troops or supplies, nor will Glendower or Mortimer join the battle. When the king offers clemency, Hotspur rehearses the history of Henry's outrages, then promises to consider it. Other rebels work as the Archbishop of York writes letters to mobilize friends in 4.4, like Hotspur in 2.3.

The Showdown, 5.1-5.5

- Act 5 is the carefully prepared climax, a battle for the crown. Speeches lead to the Prince's offer of single combat—is it generous, courageous, or foolhardy? Falstaff asks Hal for protection (again). Hal demurs, so in his own famous soliloquy Falstaff assesses honor as death, rejecting both.

Analyze Falstaff's 5.1 soliloquy for its values and whether his views parallel the royals' views. What is the value of honor? How do we assess Falstaff's values—pragmatic or cowardly?

- Worcester betrays Hotspur's trust out of self-interest just as Falstaff betrays Hal's by carrying booze, not a pistol.

- Loyalists wear the king's colors and are killed in his stead; Douglas calls them "counterfeits" to "borrow" the king's title—just as the rebels believe Henry has done. Falstaff "counterfeits" death to save his life, then claims Harry's kill of Hotspur for himself to get a reward. Harry sees his friend for what he is even as he grants his wish—this time.

"I shall hereafter, my thrice gracious lord, Be more myself."

—Prince Hal, 3.2
Choices: The Crux of Character in 1 Henry IV / 1

The core of character—one's identity, ethics, and morality—appears in one's choices, and 1 Henry IV is filled with confrontations and choices. Moreover, as a political play, the choices are challenging, balancing power against principle.

The Basic Issues and Cruxes in the Play
- the right to the English crown—who is the legitimate ruler and how that is decided. Have the "rules" changed?
- who would be the better man to rule England next, Prince Harry or Hotspur
- choosing between divided loyalties
- the role of political power/self-interest vs. the good of the country (how defined?) in a monarch's (or aspirant monarch's) decision-making
- the value of honor, duty, loyalty vs. self-interest, which is the "way of the world"
- the lure of the tavern (what it means)
- best role-model for a prince: Henry IV, Hotspur or Falstaff?
- how to solve a political crisis: fight or forgive/accept mercy, trust
- a monarch's due to a captive kinsman/rival

Questions hang over the opening and the action of 1 Henry IV; they are its "inheritance" from Richard II, how the tetralogy links and builds. In the entire tetralogy, only two private moments show Henry opening up to the Prince, one in 3.2 of this play about how he got the crown, and one on his deathbed late in 2 Henry IV about how to keep the crown.

Henry knows on some level that he fudged the rules to get the crown, but in order to keep it he must now make everyone else play by the established rules, unquestioned primogeniture, so his throne is secure and can pass to his son. But was it just a temporary change or is a change, once made, made forever—new rules now? That is the issue between the king and the nobles who become rebels. The only transfer of power ought to be "the king is dead; long live the king!" But that did not happen in Richard II, where "long live King Henry" preceded Richard's death.

- We should have our spin detectors turned on whenever Henry is on stage. In 1.3 Hotspur calls him "that vile politician," and he's right that Henry is always a politician. Every word of Henry's opening speech, every claim, regret, and desire is politically played to the group. When Henry speaks, ask what he's selling and how he is maneuvering someone.

The Royals: King Henry IV
- Henry IV is a remarkably taciturn character in terms of his actual motives. Through all of Richard II, no comment reveals what he really intends; he only says, "I come but for mine own." What does he think is "his"? Ostensibly it's the dukedom, but if we judge by results, it's the crown. On what basis, then, is that "his"? Because he has the larger army? Might makes right? Or tit for tat—Richard tried to take his patrimony so he'll take Richard's instead? Are there ethical grounds?
- Henry IV has only two public scenes in the first half of 1 Henry IV, and we should notice how much political maneuvering Shakespeare packs into them.

Sir John Gilbert shows Henry IV getting news and considering options in 1.1

Unit 3: Structure and Character
Assign groups of students one of the major characters to assess through the action. These pages can help spur their analysis and questions.
The Royals: King Henry IV (continued)

- Is the king's envy of Northumberland's son sudden and heartfelt, or is it as considered as many of his other comments? Is he distancing himself from the Prince?
- In 1.3 issues are already in discussion. Henry implies, 'you're not respecting your king, so I'll use my power now.' "Mighty and to be feared" are his words—addressed to his "friends" (his term in R2) who championed his effort to "get his own." Worcester addresses the change: we don't deserve to be treated this way; you owe us. The political issue: Henry cannot afford to owe anyone yet he does. But his R2 promises are out the window now he's gotten what he wanted, so he tosses Worcester out of the meeting, a move not to be misunderstood.
- The prisoner issues in 1.3 open Henry to several choices. Hotspur must explain why he didn't send the prisoners as requested, and Henry must decide whether to push the matter since Hotspur will not give them up unless Henry ransoms Mortimer—the man (at least in Shakespeare's version) whom Richard II named heir to the throne, who also just happens to be Hotspur's brother-in-law. Power issue: can or should Hotspur "demand" something of the king?
- Political issue: Mortimer was fighting for the crown and is now a POW; should he just be left in captivity (but he did marry his captor's daughter; has he changed "crown" allegiance? It's complicated)? Does Henry really want him back?
- Henry insists on having the prisoners and refuses to ransom Mortimer: he will get what he wants. But at a price—he alienates his former friends and closest allies, the Percies, and feeds right in to Worcester's secret rebellion. The second half of the scene re-defines the action, because now the main plot splits, one half wanting to challenge the other.
- By the middle of the play battle appears inevitable, and Henry mobilizes several armies, yet before the battle he offers the rebels mercy. It is a politic move—is it just a p.r. ploy or could it be genuine? Would he really prefer to work it out and have his "friends" back as allies? Deciding whether that move is genuine or not is revealing of his character.

Questions for Prompts or Discussion

- What difference does even a general knowledge of the action in Richard II make to your understanding of Henry IV's character and motivations here? How do you interpret his character if you only judge by his lines in this play, without any R2 information?
- What is behind each of his choices—about the crusade, about Hotspur's prisoners, about ransoming Mortimer? Are they three separate choices or a set of related choices? Why does he make the choices he does?
- Is not ransoming Mortimer a power-play against Hotspur, or is it about Mortimer himself, which actually means about Henry and his crown? Has Mortimer acted like a "traitor"? (Has anyone else acted like a traitor?)
- Late in the play, the night before the battle, Henry sends the rebels an offer of clemency and peace. If you were a rebel, would you credit that offer? What do we know about Henry that helps us "read" that offer? Does he mean it? What could he gain? What could he lose? What does he really want?
- Why are the three largest roles in the play Falstaff, Hotspur, and Hal? Why not the title character, the king?
Choices: The Crux of Character in 1 Henry IV / 3

The Royals: Prince Henry (Harry, Hal)

- First, his name. He is named after his father; in our world he'd be "Junior." Based on his attitudes and actions, do you think he is just "little Henry IV"?
- From the moment we meet him, Hal is with a (supposed) friend, a knight (someone of gentility, not a commoner) who is also an alcoholic and a thief. Falstaff is full of apparent contradictions, and arguably so is the Prince, given who he is and where he hangs out.

So the question arises: what defines Hal—where he is, "who" he is, or how he acts? The king certainly judges the prince for frequenting the tavern; do we? Of course, we see him in action there; the king does not. How do his behavior and values feed or contradict the view of the prince as just a barfly?

- In 1.2 Hal seems to awaken Falstaff (is Falstaff also trying to "awaken" something in Hal?) and Falstaff is instantly focused on Hal's future role and its potential advantage for himself. Falstaff wants Hal to assure him that in the future the laws will be ignored. Law is a focus for both Henry IV plays; in 2 Henry IV the Lord Chief Justice appears.

  So Falstaff is an unrepentant crook who wants the system changed to make his life easier.

  What does Hal say? If he says "OK," does that seal his fate as a reprobate? He jokes along, but we should pay attention—the last word of his response is "gallows"; thieves are hanged. Later Falstaff thinks Hal may make him a judge, but Hal says no, maybe a hangman. We should sense the trend here; the laws will stay in place, and thieves will be punished if Hal gets to be king (notice "if" and not "when"; in this play there's a rebellion to confront before there could be any "when").

  The crucial thematic question Falstaff asks concerns the robbery: "Hal, wilt thou make one?"—you'll be a robber, too; we all are, right?

If Hal is as dissolute as the king believes, he'll say "sure." Yet in this play, given the thematic import of the robber motif, Hal declares he's not a thief, implying he will not rob anyone. But when Poins asks him to rob Falstaff as a joke, he says yes. How do we understand these two somewhat contradictory responses?

Scene 1.2 is arguably the key to Hal's character in our eyes; how we see him here affects our attitude for the play.

  Hal will not rob, but he will rob the robber. Watch what happens to the money. Robbing the robber is also what Hotspur believes he's doing in the rebellion—the plot lines parallel.

- 1.2 ends with a soliloquy, i.e. a peek into Hal's brain. The word choice and imagery are crucial. Is the speech a plan, an excuse, or temporizing?

For Prompts or Group Discussion

- What's in a name?: The king calls his son "Harry," while in the tavern Falstaff calls him "Hal." Are these different names for different personas, different aspects of his character, or just the nickname of choice for each speaker? Because we meet the Prince in the tavern and because Falstaff calls him by name much more than his father does, many critics always refer to the Prince as "Hal." Should we always think of him as Hal? Does that shade or skew our view of the character? Is he an integrated, consistent character in all environments and situations, or does he have "faces" or "masks"? If you're a Prince and heir to the throne, do you need "masks"?
Choices: The Crux of Character in *1 Henry IV* / 4

### The Royals: Prince Henry/Hal (cont’d)

- 2.4 provides more insight into Hal's character. Hal, fresh from drinking with the drawers (waiters), teases one of them, Francis, asking him if he'd run from his apprenticeship/job in the tavern, using doubletalk and not letting Francis answer. The parallels to Hal's own situation in 3.2, pulled in more than one direction and loyalties tested, are clear; so is Hal's adeptness with language.

Falstaff's account of the robbery is as hyperbolic as Hal and Poins could wish; he exaggerates anew with every sentence. When Hal bursts his bubble, they know they have Falstaff trapped as a coward. But the joy and torment of Falstaff is that you cannot trap him; he finds the only possible out: "By the lord, I knew ye as well as he that made ye"—I couldn't fight or kill the prince (implying his valor and prowess would have killed anyone else). But this witty response provokes another question: how well does the king know his son—if Falstaff only knows Hal that well, he may know very little of him indeed, as we suspect.

- The scene pivots when a lord calls to summon the prince to court. The news of the rebellion is out, and Falstaff conveys the information, asking Hal if he isn’t now "afeard." Hal says not a bit—it's destiny calling; the moment he foresaw in his 1.2 soliloquy is upon him. Hal chooses to embrace it.

- Falstaff advises Hal to practice an answer, an excuse to use with the king tomorrow, and they enact the interview—with Falstaff, of course, taking the "crown," a cushion. As usual, Falstaff brings the conversation around to himself, advising the prince, "there is virtue in that Falstaff. Him keep with, the rest banish." At that point, Hal takes over the role of his king—Falstaff responding "Depose me?" in a brilliant comic reminder of the key moment in *Richard II*. Hal proceeds to slice and dice Falstaff's character, moving from physical to moral description, ending, "Wherein worthy, but in nothing?" Falstaff makes one more plea: "banish plump Jack and banish all the world." Hal replies with four monosyllables: "I do, I will." Watch this key moment carefully for tone and emotion—is Hal serious or joking? It sets up more than just this moment in the tetralogy.

- The first big scene for Hal as prince is 3.2, when he joins the main plot and his father in the play. How does Hal play the moment? He accepts responsibility and apologizes, but the king ignores it, instead preaching the importance of appearance in politics (he's read his Machiavelli). Hal stays steady until the king calls him a rebel and "my nearest and dearest enemy." That gets a reaction; Hal explains his intent, his "soliloquy plan" for changing everyone's opinion of him, now with more specifics, targeting Hotspur, whom the king had just used as his poster boy for perfect behavior to gain public support (the king's own methods).

The king then says he gives Hal "sovereign trust." Does he mean it?

### Questions for Prompts or Discussion

- The play's center has Hal's "showdown" scenes with each of his father figures, Falstaff and the king, each seeking his loyalty. How does he respond to each? Can he be loyal to both? Must he choose? Does he?

- What do we learn about Falstaff and Hal's relationship in the king/prince enactment "play"? What does Falstaff want? Is this moment a change?

- What do we learn about the king and prince's relationship in 3.2? Does the king get what he wants? Does Hal?

- Compare Hal's eulogies to Hotspur and to Falstaff, in 5.4. What do we learn about his values? his view of each?
I thank thee, gentle Percy, and be sure I count myself in nothing else so happy As in a soul remembering my good friends; And as my fortune ripens with thy love, It shall be still thy true love’s recompense. My heart this covenant makes, my hand thus seals it.”

—Bolingbroke to Hotspur, responding to Hotspur’s pledge of service in Richard II, 2.3

The Rebels: Hotspur and the Percies

- In Richard II, Northumberland plays a major role, the foremost of the nobles backing Bolingbroke on his return. He is also the new Duke of Lancaster’s chief spokesman at Flint Castle, in Westminster Hall during the deposition/usurpation, and afterward. Yet the dominant and vigorously verbal Northumberland of Richard II is close-mouthed and taciturn in 1 Henry IV.
- We see him in only one scene with only a few lines. About his brother Worcester’s planned rebellion he only says, “We shall thrive, I trust,” while Hotspur’s firebrand rhetoric soars. So in terms of the tetralogy, we notice his absence long before Hotspur gets his letter in 4.1. How does he really feel about the rebellion? We don’t know.
- We first meet Worcester here. While other lords had plotted to assassinate the new king at the end of Richard II, he drives the new rebellion. He answers the king’s fiery rebuke with fire of his own and is sent away. That rejection makes public Henry’s changed relationship with his former “friends” and fuels the Percies’ rebellion. They clearly expect rewards and preferential treatment; Henry no longer feels the need for that.
- The Percies discuss rebellion, 1.3 (Sir John Gilbert)

Activity: Rhetorical Analysis

- Hotspur makes three long speeches in 1.3. Choose one and analyze his use of rhetoric—his sense of the issue, shaping of his own persona and portrayal of the listener, how he presents the goal, imagery he uses, how he tries to move the listener to his side. And what tone does he use? Is he actually the one being persuaded here?

Henry Percy (Hotspur)

- Northumberland’s son Hotspur also took part in Richard II, backing Bolingbroke and gaining his eloquent pledge of friendship for his support (see left). At the end, Hotspur takes part in quelling the assassins’ plot (ironically, given 1 Henry IV) and brings in a key conspirator as prisoner.
- "I thank thee, gentle Percy, and be sure I count myself in nothing else so happy As in a soul remembering my good friends; And as my fortune ripens with thy love, It shall be still thy true love’s recompense. My heart this covenant makes, my hand thus seals it.”

—Bolingbroke to Hotspur, responding to Hotspur’s pledge of service in Richard II, 2.3

- In 1 Henry IV, however, he surges to the fore; he is the dominant Percy here, a forceful military leader and a man of strong opinions but not someone politic of speech—he just speaks his mind, assuming he’s right. Little of the strategy and tactics he uses to succeed on the battlefield carries over to political negotiations or interpersonal discussion, though he has charisma and charm.
- The discussion of his character traits is the more important because at the end of 1.1 Henry all but declares Hotspur would be a better next king than Prince Harry, an assertion the play carefully examines in a well-developed dramatic comparison/contrast on the way to Shrewsbury. Track its development.
- In 1 Henry IV we see more distinctive traits in Hotspur the moment we see him in 1.3. His tale of the "popinjay" who asked for Hotspur’s prisoners is a study in his narrative ability and also his mistaking the messenger for the message. Whatever non-combatant behavior this messenger presented, he represented the king. But Hotspur brushed him off in exasperation and fatigue—politic kingly traits?

When Henry chastizes him for trying to negotiate Douglas for Mortimer (whom Henry calls foolish, a traitor, and revolted), Hotspur contradicts the king with a narration of noble Mortimer’s fight against Glendower. When denied, anger and defiance drive him the rest of the scene; he does not evaluate the idea of rebellion—he jumps in. Does he ever think about it?
The Rebels: Hotspur (continued)

2.3 is a revelation. We see Hotspur alone and frustrated, insulting a lord who by letter refuses to join the rebellion. Assess the lord's grounds of refusal and then check Hotspur's "hot" rebuttal. Having met with doubt and rejection, he's off to join his cohorts. Then we meet his wife, a perceptive, caring, and witty woman of royal blood. When Hotspur realizes his correspondent may alert the king to the still secret rebellion he wants to leave. Kate wants to know why he's distracted, guessing it's about her brother being heir to the throne. An actor playing Hotspur has several choices about performing this part of the scene, so we learn who he is by how he responds to Kate. Is he kidding or is he serious about not loving her? How does she deal with him, and what does it mean that he has not discussed this issue with her but does with his correspondent? Is this relationship like his others?

Hotspur in 3.1 meets his most important allies—two of them family, Worcester and Mortimer, and then there's Glendower, the powerful Welsh lord. Welsh fighters are always portrayed as formidable in Shakespeare's plays. So how does Hotspur choose to treat this powerful ally? He goads him, rejecting his claims of esteem and supernatural powers, causes serious friction, and finally cracks a joke. Then he starts up again about the map. A clergyman split the territory into three even pieces, but Hotspur thinks his piece needs emendation and plans to change the course of a river to get more land. Now consider that river as an image in terms of the larger action of the plays. The river flows a certain way, has always flowed so, but Hotspur wants to change that. Any other "rivers" have their direction changed recently? Any other changes of "rivers' courses" in the offing, related to Hotspur and power? Shakespeare is very deft with such imagery; watch for it.

Hotspur gets chastized by his uncle and Mortimer for his behavior, but Hotspur sees it as "bargaining" for profit, then says he'd give three times so much to any friend. So what is Glendower, who is about to fight on his side? What about Glendower annoys Hotspur? Should it get in the way of the larger objective? Does it?

At the battlefield Hotspur takes command, but there are many voices advising him. He and Douglas agree about strategy, but Worcester and the Percies' cousin Vernon are more cautious, and they are sent to negotiate with Henry. Hotspur also has to deal with more letters. The first letter he got in 2.3 was from someone not joining the rebellion. In 4.1 the letter is from his father, saying he's sick and so not joining them for the battle, nor does he send men or supplies. He does nothing to help. Throughout the tetralogy, Northumberland is a key ally, a key provider of supplies and men—yet only in Richard II does he provide them. Thereafter, it's no-show. How does Hotspur take his father's news? How does he take the news that Glendower and Mortimer are not coming either, men set to gain two-thirds of the divided kingdom if the battle succeeds. What conclusion do we draw?

When Sir Walter Blunt brings news of the king's offer of clemency, Hotspur's long reply outlines the Percy position in the rebellion. Analyze their view of events. Are they right or wrong?

Hotspur must and will fight with what he has. He and Douglas are formidable in battle. How does Hotspur confront Hal? What matters to him? How does he define honor in 1.3 and here, and what role does it play for him?
Choices: The Crux of Character in 1 Henry IV / 7

The Subplot: Irrepressible Falstaff

• Analyzing Falstaff and his arc takes us to the center of the play's values. Falstaff is "king" of his tavern world, a knight—of higher social status, though hardly a model—in a world of commoners, the people Henry IV says are to be manipulated to gain power.

• Falstaff, it would seem, just wants to be the center of attention, especially Prince Hal's. Through the lens of their relationship we judge Hal's character and development; it is called friendship—and in the tetralogy that is already a loaded term. Bolingbroke and Northumberland were "friends" in Richard II; what is their relationship now? Falstaff's friendship with Hal shows us motives, power, the changes wrought by responsibility or ambition, and what one becomes.

• Long before, Falstaff chose a life of service, but service to himself only—to indulge his appetites by drinking, eating, and whoring; to take what he wants rather than earning it, using robbery rather than managing an estate to fund his lifestyle. One must ask what kind of friend such a person can truly be.

• Critics divide on Falstaff. Some find Falstaff morally wanting: he is a crook, a self-indulgent no-good whose only redeeming social value is as a stand-up comic. Is being funny enough to redeem one, they ask. Yet Falstaff's incisive satire, his pungent and creative expression, his self-justifying hedonism as world view, his joyous escapism, his exuberance of "self" can only be admired, other critics assert. He's a rarity, and moral codes cannot and should not limit him. Which view seems more right to you? Why?

• Compare these ideas to Henry IV in Richard II and this play. Compare them to Hotspur. These, too, are powerful, engaging men, "kings" in their realms. Do we admire them and their actions and self-justifying motives? Who is "right"? Falstaff is an excellent reflector of issues and values. Is Hal like them in this way?

• So Falstaff chooses tavern, not court; responsibility to self, not others. How does he impact others? Has he made Bardolph, Peto, and Gadshill thieves? It doesn't seem so. Has he or is he corrupting Hal?

• Inversion or turnabout is Falstaff's favorite tactic. In 1.2, preceding Hal's soliloquy about "reformation" and "redeeming time," Falstaff tells Hal, "Thou hast done much harm upon me, Hal. … I must give over this life, and I will give it over," projecting future reformations. What comes of such pledges in the play? Does Falstaff ever "repent" or change? Compare Hal's plan to reform. Does he?

• In 1.2 Falstaff is eager to rob again and wants Hal to join in. Why? The entire scene has been an effort to weave a spell of values around Hal, to get him to agree to "go by the moon" and not the sun (which is why Hal's soliloquy statement "I will imitate the sun" is so crucial).

• The robbery itself, 2.1 and 2.2, shows us a well-established organization. The Gadshill/chamberlain scene shows the pervasiveness of "robbery" in the everyday world; the chamberlain is a spy and gets part of the take. Everyone seems to want more; who can one trust?—another vital question in the play, especially for the two young men.

• Falstaff, when annoyed or crossed, belittles his companions or "friends." He does it to Poins at the top of 2.2 and later in 3.3 he does the same about Hal, tellingly just before Hal enters the scene.

• In 2.2 Falstaff running away (Sir John Gilbert)

Who "runs away" and who "stands" in this play?

Fraying Bonds of Friendship

Consider the basis of the friendship bonds and their changing nature in 1 Henry IV between:
• Henry IV and the Percies
• the Percies and their other major allies in rebellion (is "friendship" part of this alliance?)
• Prince Hal and Falstaff
• Falstaff and his cronies

Blood Is Thicker? Family Bonds

Consider the basis of the family bonds, stresses, and their changing nature in 1 Henry IV between:
• Henry IV and Prince Harry
• kinship bonds within the Percy family

Henry IV, Part 1
by William Shakespeare

Unit 3: Structure and Character

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• the Percies and their other major allies in rebellion (is "friendship" part of this alliance?)
• Prince Hal and Falstaff
• Falstaff and his cronies

Blood Is Thicker? Family Bonds

Consider the basis of the family bonds, stresses, and their changing nature in 1 Henry IV between:
• Henry IV and Prince Harry
• kinship bonds within the Percy family

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"What is honor? A word…. What is that "honor"? Air. Who hath it? He that died o' Wednesday? Doth he feel it? No…. Therefore I'll none of it."

—Falstaff, 5.1

The Subplot: Falstaff (continued)

- The glorious display of all that is Falstaff, scene 2.4, culminates the subplot robbery with Falstaff's lies and brilliant verbal escape when cornered. A knock at the door then thrusts this world into the larger world of state and rebellion—"we must all to the wars." Hal will need excuses in that world, and excuses are one theme of this scene, nimble linguistic skill its means. So the men stage a skit, theatrically exploring the court world—therein capturing its actual theatrical nature of role-playing, appearance, and display.

- Falstaff plays both king and prince, but his only topic is himself—take me with you. Is Falstaff's power entirely tavern power? What happens when the prince moves into his father's sphere of influence? Is this a solid "friendship"; are Falstaff's hooks into Hal deeply enough?

- In his play-acting (his truth), Falstaff appeals to Hal: "him [Falstaff] keep with, the rest banish." Banishment seems an odd idea to introduce here, but Shakespeare's reason will only become clear in the larger shape of the tetralogy, when Hal must make the climactic transition from prince to king.

- Prophetically, the law also knocks on the tavern door at the end of the scene, and Hal makes the excuse while Falstaff falls asleep. He trusts that Hal has his back; is Hal his permanent "get out of jail free" card? While Falstaff sleeps, Hal tells the sheriff, "If he have robbed these men, / He shall be answerable," emphasizing responsibility. Then Poins searches Falstaff's pockets, full of IOUs for food and booze.

Hal tells Poins he'll "procure this fat rogue a charge of foot"; so Falstaff, too, must go to the wars, must be a knight, must serve his king (but who or what "rules" Falstaff?). What does Hal expect and what does he get? And lastly, crucially, Hal says, "The money shall be paid back again with advantage." This is Hal's mantra, a key theme to his character, and a real difference between him and Falstaff (IOUs) and between him and his father. Hal knows that what is taken must be paid back. Compare/contrast how this "pay back" ethic works with the taking/robbery ethic of both plots.

- Critics often describe the relationship between Falstaff and Hal as a second father/son relationship in the play. How true is this claim and what are its implications?

- Falstaff as "warrior" reveals not a new but a firmer commitment in Falstaff's character. His soldiers just afford him a means to fleece money from the king. Does he find the ablest-bodied fighting men to defend the crown? No, recruitment becomes a means of new profit, and profit he does.

Falstaff's first response to learning of his "charge of foot" is: "I would it had been of horse. Where shall I find one that can steal well?" Falstaff would rather ride than walk and rather steal than earn—his view of the world and its opportunities. Is that bad or just forthright, entrepreneurial spirit?

- On the battlefield, Falstaff gets his men killed and offers Hal in need not a weapon but booze. Then he saves himself yet again and steals claim for killing Hotspur, Hal's heroic accomplishment, the promise he made his father, for the reward. Does Hal now know exactly who Falstaff is? Is this a friend to trust? Why does Hal let him get away with this "theft"? Does it or will it affect their relationship? Is it just another joke?
Post-Show Activity: Analyzing Character in 1 Henry IV

Because the parallels between the plots are so rich, the character relationships abound with connective possibilities. A spectrum of values also emerges. Explore and compare/contrast these as post-show prompts or individual/group topics:

• Hal vs. Hotspur
  as leaders, as sons, as warriors, as loyal friends, in close relationships, as self-aware, as self-governing, as worthy of becoming king, as speakers

• Prince Hal vs. King Henry
  as royals, as leaders, as self-aware, as manipulators of appearance and people, as self-interested, as goal-oriented, as power-hungry or -interested, as political animals, as father/son

• Henry IV vs. Hotspur
  as warriors, as self-willed, a leaders, as users of power and authority

• Prince Hal vs. Falstaff
  as wits, as jokesters, as centers of attention, as self-permissive, as controlling, as needing to rule/dominant

• Falstaff vs. King Henry
  as needing respect and adherence, as subservive of established order, as parental/fatherly, as fostering, as giving values

• Falstaff vs. Hotspur
  as quick, as needy, as assertive, as self-centered, as leaders, as articulators, as critics of others and society

• Glendower vs. Hotspur, vs. King Henry, vs. Falstaff
  as leaders, as centers of power, as commanders, as egos, as negotiators, as politicians, as speakers

• Falstaff/Mistress Quickly vs. Hotspur/Kate
  affection? wit? self-interest? kindness or loving concern? relationship?

Some Critical Comments on FALSTAFF

• J. Dover Wilson: 1H4 is a Tudor morality play or allegory: “Youth abandons Charity and takes up with Riot, i.e. wantonness …[which] must be rejected to achieve salvation. Falstaff is the embodiment of Riot.” The play is a Prodigal Son story.

• W. H. Auden: “Of all the characters in the play, the one [Falstaff] will think he understands best is the least Falstaff-like of them all, Hotspur, for Hotspur, like himself, appears to obey the impulse of the moment and say exactly what he thinks without prudent calculation. Both conceal nothing from others, Falstaff because he has no mask to put on…. In [Falstaff’s] own eyes, he is perfectly truthful, for, to him, fact is subjective fact.”

• E. M. W. Tillyard: Falstaff is full of sheer vitality, childlike; a fool; “an active impostor and adventurer," a "miles gloriosus" [braggart soldier]; "a harmlessly comic Vice and epitome of Deadly Sins at war with law and order," and a social critic.

• Samuel Johnson on Falstaff: "no man is more dangerous than he that with a will to corrupt, hath the power to please."

• Harold Bloom: on his "splendor"—
  "The two parts of Henry IV do not belong to Hal, but to Falstaff...."
  "That which we are, that only can we teach. Falstaff, who is free, instructs us in freedom—not a freedom in society, but from society."
  "Courage in Falstaff finds expression as a refusal to acknowledge rejection.... Hal's displaced paternal love is Falstaff's vulnerability, his one weakness, and the origin of his destruction...."
About Productions of 1 Henry IV on DVD

Although Shakespeare’s company performed on an essentially bare stage, new influences of photography and archaeology swept the Victorian stage, which emphasized spectacle and wanted to suggest the scope of the “reality” of events (see bottom left image).

More recently, the history plays have enjoyed a number of fine stage performances since the 1960s began exploring the tetralogies, and television and film have given us yet more means to consider the plays.

1 Henry IV on DVD

• 1979 in BBC Shakespeare series, made for television, directed by David Giles, who did the entire second tetralogy with one company of actors. David Gwillim expresses Hal's thoughts well, Jon Finch captures Henry IV’s power and paranoia, Tim Pigott-Smith is a fiery Hotspur, and Anthony Quayle a superb Falstaff. Period setting.

• In Shakespeare’s Globe’s 2010 production directed by Domenic Dromgoole, Roger Allam won the Olivier Award for his Falstaff and Jamie Parker is a lively Hal. Falstaff owns this version.

• In 2012 the BBC offered a new series of the English history plays called The Hollow Crown. Jeremy Irons plays Henry IV and Tom Hiddleston Prince Hal, with Simon Russell Beale as a very dour Falstaff.

Two Other Productions on DVD

• The Chimes at Midnight, Orson Welles’s filmic conflation of the two Henry IV plays. He plays Falstaff as well as directs (1965-66)

• The English Shakespeare Company’s modern dress version with a very mature and irreverent Hal (Michael Pennington), 1990

Kevin Kline shows off the fat suit he wore under his costume to play Falstaff at Lincoln Center in 2003 (not on DVD)

Victorian stage spectacle for Shrewsbury at Drury Lane, 1864, building the “realism” from a painted drop rear to mannequins, extras, and principal actors front.

“Art thou not horribly afeard” by the rebellion, Falstaff (Anthony Quayle) asks, but Hal (David Gwillim) sees his moment has come in the 1979 BBC Shakespeare series 1 Henry IV

Best pals in the tavern—Roger Allam’s gregarious Falstaff cavorts with Jamie Parker’s Hal on the reproduction Globe stage in London in 2010

Setting his son straight—Jeremy Irons’s King Henry takes no prisoners in this interview, slapping his son (Tom Hiddleston) to attention in BBC’s 2012 “Hollow Crown” production
Worksheet for 1 Henry IV

1. **Pre-reading or pre-show:** How does one traditionally become monarch in a primogeniture-based monarchy? What are the “rules”? What happens politically (for the new ruler, for others in power) if someone changes or breaks the rules and takes power?

   **Post-show:** Now assess Henry IV’s position at the start of the play. What does he want or need? What is he trying to avoid? Why?

2. **Pre-reading or pre-show:** How would you respond if your father suddenly changed his own and your future expectations and you suddenly became not just a wealthy aristocrat but a prince/princess faced with ruling a country as monarch when he dies? New privileges? New responsibilities? New pressures? New opportunities?

   **Post-show:** Now assess how Hal responds to his new position. Everyone wants something from him now and for the future (especially for the future). What does he think and want? How does and should he respond to everyone else?

**POST-SHOW**

3. The image of robbery or of taking something that doesn’t belong to you runs through all the plotlines of the play. Where do you see robbery in the action and what are its implications for the major characters?

4. Is Falstaff a good friend or a bad influence for Prince Hal? Why do you think so?

5. Based on the action before the battle, who would make the better future king of England, Prince Henry or Hotspur? Explain your choice, analyzing both young men.

6. Examine one of the moments of character or action that struck you in the production and explain why it had that effect.
Additional Activities for 1 Henry IV

Heraldry
• Research medieval heraldry and design your own coat of arms based on your identity, associations, and interests. A traditional coat of arms has the family crest and also indicates birth order in the family. A coat of arms can describe who you are or what you stand for (compare Sir Gawain's shield with its five-pointed star and its symbolism if you've read Sir Gawain and the Green Knight).

Become A Chronicler!
• Take the persona of someone chronicling the events in the play and write your blog or Facebook posts of the events and issues (are our blogs a form of medieval chronicling?).
• OR take the persona of a major character in the play and write your blog or Facebook posts on the events and issues.
• What would be the best hashtags for your persona character in each act of the play?
• Do a Comedy Central or Saturday Night Live segment based on 1 Henry IV.

Popular Entertainment Then and Now
• Compare 1 Henry IV to Game of Thrones, House of Cards, or any other popular politically-based film or television series. Are their issues our issues? Is their behavior our behavior? Is their politics like our politics?

Design
• Design a poster for the show aimed at piquing the attention and interest of your fellow students.
• Design a poster for the show using only one graphic element—why choose that one? Why is it vital to the play?

It's a Sport
• Score the action as if it were a sport (you pick which sport and justify your choice). Who leads when? What earns points? Penalties? Who wins?

THE BATTLE OF SHREWSBURY