



# Views of Historians



## YOUR TASK:

- Read the two historians views of Richard III.
- What is your interpretation?



A J Pollard, <i>Richard III and the Princes in the Tower</i> (1991)	M A Hicks, <i>Richard III: The Man Behind The Myth</i> (1991)
<p>“Richard III was a man of considerable ability, energy and attractiveness. His chivalry, in particular, in an age which valued such martial qualities in a young nobleman, warmly commended him to his contemporaries...It was his tragedy that his ambition, and his sense of his own worth and importance, led him to disregard all law and right in the pursuit of his own interests. He did not hesitate to kill to make himself king. What he did in 1483 both surprised and horrified contemporaries not only because it was unexpected of him, but also because it went beyond the bounds of contemporary political ethics...he was not one dimensional. He was neither a hateful child-murderer, nor a paragon of contemporary virtue. He was a man who lived up to several of the ideals of contemporary nobility, yet one who when tested was found wanting. It is possible that he himself came to understand this and that the realization was the cause of great anguish.”</p>	<p>“It does not seem that Richard changed greatly when he ceased to be subject and became a sovereign. The intellectual depth and political ability was always there. So too were the gentler qualities of piety and generosity. The charm, persuasiveness and self-advertisement are constant features. The aggression, ambition, opportunism, foresight, dissimulation, and ruthlessness of the acquisitive duke are present also in the usurpation story...Ultimately his own interests came first: above his family; above also his obligations as a subject, a knight, a guardian and as a king towards his people.”</p> <div data-bbox="1094 1068 1948 1474"> <p><b><u>YOUR TASK:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read the two historians views of Richard III.</li> <li>• What is your interpretation?</li> </ul> </div>

## **Enquiry Question:**

**How has the reign of Richard III been distorted by Tudor propaganda?**



# Why did the Tudors use propaganda to discredit Richard III?

- The old ideas about the War of the Roses and Richard III are very strong, particularly as they were enshrined in Shakespeare's plays.
- Throughout his reign Henry VII and his councillors had to work long and hard to ensure his security and this meant persuading the country that Henry was both the rightful heir and successful king.
- One way people were persuaded of Henry's virtues was by propaganda which showed how past events of history justified Henry's actions and his right to be king.
- This use of propaganda continued under every Tudor monarch.

Source 1



Richard III with a broken sword. Painted during the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Infra-red photography has shown that it was originally painted with 'a very exaggerated left shoulder and a very deformed left arm'.

Source 2



A portrait of Richard III from the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Recent cleaning has shown portraits were retouched to make one of his shoulders higher than the other.

Source 3

"Richard, without the assent of the common people and by the might of certain noblemen gained the realm, contrary to the law of God and man...[but] the guilt of a wicked conscience did so frighten him that he lived in continual fear. To end this he determined to have his nephews killed, because as long as they lived he could never be out of hazard...When Richard heard that the Lieutenant of the Tower had not followed his orders he committed the task of slaughter to James Tyrell who, being forced to do the king's commandment, rode sorrowfully to London and murdered those royal babes."

***Polydore Vergil, Anglica Historica (1534) – invited to write a history of England by Henry VII***

Source 4

"[Richard] was of little stature, deformed of body, one shoulder being higher than the other, a short and sour countenance which seemed to savour of mischief, craft and deceit. While he was thinking of any matter he continually bit his nether lip, as though that cruel nature of his did rage against itself in that little body. Truly he had a sharp mind, subtle but apt to dissemble. His courage was high and failed him not even at his death."

***Polydore Vergil, Anglica Historica (1534) – invited to write a history of England by Henry VII***

Source 5



Tudor badges on a door at Westminster Abbey, these badges included the Tudor rose, the Portcullis of the Beaufort family, and the Crown in the thorn bush which suggests that the story of Richard III's crown rolling into a bush at Bosworth was true.

Source 6

"I, that am curtail'd of this fair proportion,  
Cheated of feature by dissembling nature,  
Deform'd, unfinish'd, sent before my time  
Into this breathing world scarce half made up,  
And that so lamely and unfashionable,  
That dogs bark at me as I halt by them.....  
....I am determined to prove a villain..."

***King Richard III, Act 1 Scene 1, The opening scene of the play by William Shakespeare***



# Who was the “real” Richard III?



## YOUR TASK:

- Place the title in the middle of the sugar paper:
- Cut out the 6 sources and stick them around the sugar paper – spread them out so there is space to annotate around them.
- Read each source carefully – remember to look up any words you do not know!
- Use the questions on the following slide, to highlight and annotate the key things we can learn from these sources about Richard III.



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# Source Analysis



1. What do sources 1 and 2 tell you about Richard's appearance?
2. Vergil did not create an entirely evil picture of Richard III.
  - a) What examples can you find in Sources 3 and 4?
  - b) Why might Vergil have avoided a totally evil portrayal of Richard?
3. Do Sources 3 and 4 have any value for historians of the period? Explain your answer.
4. What does Source 5 tell you about Tudor propaganda?
5. How far does the description of Richard in Source 6 corroborate other descriptions of Richard in the sources?
6. In what ways might Shakespeare's play be a more effective piece of propaganda than others?
7. To what extent do the sources support the argument that there was a deliberate attempt by the Tudor monarchs and governments to secure the dynasty through propaganda?



# Examining Modern Interpretations of Richard III



## YOUR TASK:

- Read through it and highlight/annotate key points.
- Add the arguments that support and challenge descriptions of Richard to the sugar paper.





# Explaining your interpretation



## Who was the “real” Richard III?

### YOUR TASK:

- Using the sources and articles you have analysed, construct an explanation as to what your interpretation of Richard III is.
  - What is your interpretation?
  - What evidence is there to support this?
  - Why is the supporting evidence strong?
  - What evidence is there to challenge this?
  - Why is the challenging evidence weak?

## **Revision**

Richard III FACT TEST

## **Further Reading**

[BBC History – Richard III \(links to programmes and podcasts\)](#)

## **Extra Credit**

[Richard III, William Shakespeare \(Full Text of Play\)](#)

## **Britain Transformed:**

Complete an A4 fact file about the following political parties throughout the 20th century (one page per party).

- The Conservatives
- The Liberal Party
- The Labour Party

You should include information such as:

- When they were founded and by whom
- Key policies
- Key events that affected their position
- Key leaders and members
- Colour/Logo/Propaganda
- Prominent followers