

**Task 3 – Student A**

Read this extract from a history book.

Can you find any of the answers to the quiz questions (Task 1) in your text?

***Propaganda in Shakespeare's times***

In Shakespeare's time, plays were not just written and performed for entertainment: they were also seen as a way of teaching audiences and reinforcing Queen Elizabeth's power for the benefit of the masses.

When he was a boy, Shakespeare acted in school plays which always ended with a song about the Queen's wisdom and goodness. In 1587, the Queen's theatre company arrived in Shakespeare's hometown of Stratford. This theatre company was a Protestant acting group which promoted Protestantism and warned audiences against the dangers of Catholicism. The plays this company put on also aimed to prepare the public for the forthcoming war against Catholics in Europe. Shakespeare joined the Queen's company, even although he himself came from a Catholic family. It was while touring with the Queen's company that Shakespeare first put on plays such as *King Lear* and acted out the cartoon villainy of Richard III.

Later, when Shakespeare wrote *Richard III*, he continued to portray Richard III as a wholly evil character. Why did he do this? Well, Elizabeth was a Tudor queen: it was her ancestors who had killed Richard III (who was from the House of York) at the Battle of Bosworth in 1485. If Shakespeare had portrayed Richard III as a good king, Queen Elizabeth would be displeased and Shakespeare might have been accused of being subversive or even of committing treason.

**Questions**

- a. Why were plays written in Shakespeare's times?
- b. How did plays usually finish?
- c. What did the Queen's theatre company want to teach its audience?
- d. What kind of man was King Richard III in Shakespeare's play?
- e. Why did Shakespeare portray him as being an evil man?

**Task 3 – Student B’s text and questions**

Read this book review.

Can you find any of the answers to the quiz questions (Task 1) in your text?

**Richard III: goody, baddy or somewhere in between?**

The recent discovery of Richard III’s body has inspired an exciting new book, *The King’s Grave* by Philippa Langley and Michael Jones. The two authors explore the complex man behind Shakespeare’s propaganda.

Richard III is one Shakespearean baddy we all love to hate. The hunchbacked megalomaniac who murdered his own small nephews has been a favourite villain in British theatres for hundreds of years, but Langley and Jones hope to set the record straight – by showing that there was more than one side to the famous king.

Shakespeare’s portrayal of Richard III has become the way we all like to imagine the historical figure. Yet Shakespeare’s Richard was inspired by sixteenth-century writer Thomas More – who described the king as ‘malicious’, ‘wrathful’, small, crooked and hunchbacked.

Langley hopes that the discovery of Richard III’s grave (underneath a car park in Leicester) will help people to begin to uncover the historical truth about Richard III. She believes that Richard III has been a victim of propaganda and that he is innocent of the deaths of his nephews. Jones, on the other hand, believes that while Richard III probably did kill his young nephews he was, nevertheless, intelligent and brave.

**Questions**

- a. What is the name of Langley and Jones’s book?
- b. Why did they decide to write this book?
- c. Where did Shakespeare get the idea that Richard III was evil and hunchbacked?
- d. Where was King Richard III’s body discovered?
- e. What do Langley and Jones disagree on?
- f. Look at the pictures in Task 2 again. Which belong to your text?