

## Planning a fantastic answer to the Shakespeare question

Richard, Duke of Gloucester, is a duplicitous man who uses a variety of ways to manipulate and control those around him.

**Imagine you are directing the scene for a class performance. Explain what advice you would give the actors playing Richard, Anne and Elizabeth in Act 1, Scene 2 (lines 33-186) and Act 4, Scene 4 (lines 199-342)**

Firstly, underline the key words in the question and decide whether the task asks you to focus on: character; language; themes or performance.

Now spend some time writing a plan so that your answer is focused throughout the time you are writing. Spending about 5-10 minutes writing a plan is good use of your time.

Write out your plan like this:

Introduction

Paragraph 1

Paragraph 2

Paragraph 3

Paragraph 4

Paragraph 5

Conclusion

or as a spider diagram. If you prefer to make a spider diagram make sure you number your points so that you can identify the order in which you are going to write up your ideas.

Go through the scenes you have been given for the test and choose 5 quotations for which you can make strong points. Each point should be slightly different; there is no point telling the examiner five times that you will make Richard seem clever by twisting Anne and Elizabeth's words.

In the test highlight or underline the (short) quotations that you are going to use.

Now decide what each point will be that will go with each quotation.

For example my first **point** might be that at the beginning of both scenes I want to emphasise that Richard asserts his control at the outset of his meeting with these women so that they are forced to react to him. My **evidence** will therefore be when he says to Anne and the pall bearers, 'Stay, you that bear the corpse, and set it down,' and later to Elizabeth, 'Stay, madam. I must talk a word with you.' My **analysis** is going to be that as a director I would have the actor playing Richard walk purposefully across the stage to the other characters as if walking after them and put up his hand as he says, 'Stay,' to show that he is issuing a command and to illustrate that he is taking control from them and is unafraid of the response he will get. As Richard has appeared from behind both Anne and Elizabeth they will be forced to turn around in order to answer him; turning around might imply to the audience a very subtle surrender despite their contemptuous replies to him.

Now you choose the second quotation and make a point and analyse it. You can write in note form or bullet points for the plan. Remember each time to find the most appropriate quotation and to keep focused on the question.

Remember when you are writing your essay to keep your language formal. The examiner would far rather read:

‘Shakespeare might be suggesting Richard has already defeated Anne when she continues to argue with him after spitting rather than leaving after this revolting act of hatred.’

than:

‘William makes Anne stupid and Richard clever cause he chats her up and she doesn’t realise he hates her and is going to kill her and she’s part of his plan and he does kill her later on but we don’t see it we just know it.’

Remember to use connectives in your writing to draw comparisons and contrasts between the two set scenes.

Some useful words to know when writing your NCT Shakespeare essay:

clever	control	relinquish	manipulate	over-power	smile	highlight
	illustrate	suggest	audience	conquest	conquer	win
persuade	retort	contempt	condescending		patronise	
	question	pious	remorseful	regret	anguish	possibility
perhaps	Shakespeare	although	however	therefore	consequently	
	despite this	in contrast	in comparison		questionably	
sympathise	empathise	understand	shocked	realise	demonstrate	