

Henriad

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In Shakespearean scholarship, Henriad refers to a group of William Shakespeare's history plays. It is sometimes used to refer to a group of four plays (a tetralogy), but some sources and scholars use the term to refer to eight plays.

In the more inclusive meaning, Henriad refers to eight plays: the tetralogy mentioned above (*Richard II*, *Henry IV, Part 1*, *Henry IV, Part 2*, and *Henry V*), plus four plays that were written earlier, and are based on the civil wars known as The War of the Roses — *Henry VI, Part 1*, *Henry VI, Part 2*, *Henry VI, Part 3* and *Richard III*.

The action of the Henriad follows the dynastic, cultural and psychological journey that England traveled as it left the medieval world with Richard II and moved on to Henry V and the Renaissance. Politically and socially the Henriad represents a movement from feudalism and hierarchy to the national state and individualism.



King Henry VI

The character of Falstaff is introduced in *Henry IV, pt. 1*, he returns in *Henry IV, pt. 2*, and he dies early in *Henry V*. Falstaff represents the tavern world, a world which Prince Hal will leave behind. (This group of three plays is occasionally dubbed the "Falstaffiad" by Harold Bloom and others.)