

LANCASTRIANS AND YORKS

1340 TO 1485

HUNDRED YEARS WAR TO BATTLE OF BOSWORTH FIELD

ERA SUMMARY – LANCASTRIANS AND YORKS

Plantagenet Wars—The second half of the Plantagenet era was dominated by two long conflicts. The [Hundred Years War](#), fought between England and France lasted, on and off, from 1340 until 1453.

The war is often broken up into three phases: The first campaign was led by Edward III and his son, the [Black Prince](#) and went well for the English. The second phase of the war lasted from 1369 until 1389 but was mixed up with several other wars in the region and resulted in a loss of



THE MORNING OF AGINCOURT

much of the territory previously gained by the English. A long peace followed, until it was interrupted in 1415 by Henry V's highly successful campaign beginning at Agincourt. This third phase of the war, called the "Lancastrian" war, was tied up with an ongoing war between the Armagnacs and the Burgundians in France. It went badly for the French until they were miraculously saved by the exploits of [Joan of Arc](#). Her victories turned the momentum in France's favor, and England was finally driven out of France by 1453.

Shortly after the tide turned against England in the Hundred Years war, a conflict between two rival fractions of the Plantagenet line evolved into a full blown civil war. The [War of the Roses](#), fought between the Yorks and Lancastrians, families with rival claims to the throne, killed off almost all the direct claimants to the throne on both sides of the royal family. Over a period of almost thirty years, the conflict wreaked havoc on the kingdom, turned long term resentments into blood-feuds, and brought the entire Plantagenet line to a calamitous end.

The Lancastrians: Henrys IV, V, VI—The [Black Prince](#), the presumed heir to the throne, achieved great victories during the Hundred Years war and was very popular with the people. He never became king, however, because he died before his long long-lived father, Edward III. The crown then passed to the Black Prince's son [Richard II](#), who is best known for his role in negotiating an end to Wat Tyler's rebellion. He was not a popular monarch and was eventually deposed in favor of his cousin [Henry IV](#) (a.k.a

Henry Bolingbroke). Other cousins had a somewhat better claim to the throne, but Henry's selection was not resisted because his father, John of Gaunt had been regent during most of Richard II's reign and was the most powerful man in England. The issue was not pressed for two generations but later became the basis for the Yorkist claim to the throne.

Henry Bolingbroke's son was [Henry V](#), famous for his victory over the French at Agincourt. Henry V reopened the Hundred Years War and came close to gaining the French crown but he died only a few years after his great victory. He left a young son, [Henry VI](#), who was a peace-loving and studious man, but a weak leader. During his reign the French rallied under [Joan of Arc](#) and reclaimed all of the land England had won, bringing an end to the hundred year war, and the king became extremely unpopular.

Yorks and the War of the Roses— Seeing his opportunity, his cousin the [Duke of York](#) made a claim for the throne. He denied Henry Bolingbroke's claim three generations back, which led to the disastrous [War of the Roses](#), in which the Lancaster and the York lines vied for the throne. The plots turns and reverses of this war are difficult to follow, but the main contenders were not the monarchs themselves, but rather the [Earl of Warwick](#), cousin to the Duke of York, and [Margaret of Anjou](#), Henry VI's wife. The war proved bitter and deadly, and many great nobles lost their lives.

It also greatly enhanced the power of the king, since the king was allowed to confiscate the estates of any noble that rose in rebellion to him; as the kingship passed back and forth between the Lancasters and Yorks almost every house was at some point in alliance with a "rebel".

The Yorks were finally victorious, but they came to a bad end. Edward IV ruled for 22 years, but when he died, his brother [Richard III](#) plotted to usurp the throne by killing his Edward's young sons. This accomplished, he found he had made many enemies, and when [Henry VII](#), a distant relative on the Lancaster side brought an army against him, several of his generals deserted him. Richard III, the last of the Plantagenet kings was killed on the battlefield of *Bosworth*, bringing the noble line that had ruled England for three centuries to an inglorious end.

CHARACTERS – LANCASTRIANS AND YORKS

The Black Prince

1330–1376

Excellent general and leader who ruled alongside his father, Edward III. Victor at the *Battle of Poitiers*.

Edward III

1312–1377

Reigned for nearly 50 years. Invaded France, and won the *Battles of Crecy* and *Calias*.

Wat Tyler

d. 1381

Leader of a peasant rebellion during reign of Richard II. He was killed during talks.

John Wycliffe

1335–1384

Early proponent of reform in the Catholic Church. Favored power of state over church.

Geoffrey Chaucer

1340–1400

Wrote the first widely read epic poem in the English language, *Canterbury Tales*.

Richard II

1367–1400

Son of the Black Prince. Reigned after Edward III. Deposed by Henry Bolingbroke.

Henry IV

1367–1413

Son of John of Gaunt. Assumed the throne after Richard II was deposed.

Owen Glendower

1359–1416

Last Welshman to be crowned Prince of Wales. He led an unsuccessful Welsh revolt.

Henry V

1387–1422

Led a victorious army of longbowmen against France at Agincourt.

Jack Cade

d. 1450

Led a rebellion against Henry VI's government. Rebels looted London and many were killed.

Duke of York

1411–1460

Aspirant to the throne in the early years of War of the Roses. Killed in action with eldest son.

Earl of Warwick

1428–1471

Primary figure in war of the Roses. Changed sides from York to Lancaster. Killed at Barnet.

Margaret of Anjou

1429–1482

Ruled instead of her weak husband, Henry VI. Led armies against Yorks. Deposed after the York victory at Hexham.

Edward IV

1442–1483

Son of the Duke of York. Became king of England when other aspirants were dead or deposed.

Richard III

1432–1485

On death of his brother Edward IV, he killed his nephews and usurped the throne.

Margaret Beaufort

1441–1509

Mother of Henry Tudor. Benefactor of Cambridge University.

TIMELINE – LANCASTRIANS AND YORKS

- 1151 [Henry Plantagenet](#) marries [Eleanor of Aquitaine](#), heir in France.
- 1154 [Henry Plantagenet](#) assumes the throne on the death of Stephen.
- 1170 [Saint Thomas a Becket](#) is murdered after he defies Henry II.
- 1172 [Henry II](#) [Conquers Ireland](#).
- 1190 [Richard Coeur de Leon](#) goes on [Third Crusade](#).
- 1215 [John Lackland](#) signs Magna Carta.
- 1265 Meeting of first Parliament arranged by [Simon de Montfort](#) .
- 1284 [Edward I](#) conquers Wales.
- 1291 Edward I [Conquers Scotland](#).
- 1314 Scots, under [Robert the Bruce](#) [Win their Independence](#) at the *Battle of Bannockburn*.
- 1348-1349 Black Plague devastates all of Europe.
- 1337-1453 [Hundred Years War](#): England vs. France.
- 1346 [Edward III](#), victor at the *Battle of Crecy*.
- 1356 [The Black Prince](#), victor at the *Battle of Poitiers*.
- 1415 [Henry V](#), victor at the *Battle of Agincourt*.
- 1428 [Joan of Arc](#), victor at the *Siege of Orleans*.
- 1362 English becomes official legal language, displacing French.
- 1381 The government of Richard II puts down [Wat Tyler's Rebellion](#).
- 1399 [Richard II](#) deposed by [Henry Bolingbroke](#).
- 1400 Death of [Geoffrey Chaucer](#), author of *The Canterbury Tales*
- 1403 Henry IV [puts down a rebellion](#) at the *Battle of Shrewsbury*.
- 1415-1453 [Henry V](#) invades France and re-opens the [Hundred Years War](#).
- 1415 [Henry V](#), victor at the *Battle of Agincourt*.
- 1428 [Joan of Arc](#), victor at the *Siege of Orleans*. Tide turns in favor of France.
- 1455-1485 [War of the Roses](#)
- 1461 Yorkists prevail at *Battle of Towton*; Lancastrians exiled.
- 1469 Lancastrians regain throne thanks to the machinations of [Earl of Warwick](#).

- 1471 Yorkists again prevail at *Battle of Barnet*.
- 1483 [Richard III](#) usurps throne at death of [Edward IV](#).
- 1484 [Henry Tudor](#) defeats Richard III at *Battle of Bosworth Field*.
- 1476 [William Caxton](#) bring a printing press to England. Publishes first book.

READING – LANCASTRIANS AND YORKS

CORE READING ASSIGNMENTS

- Guerber - [The Story of the English](#) [The Battle of Crecy](#) to [Richard's Punishment](#) (16)
- Marshall - [Our Island Story](#) [The Battle of Sluys](#) to [Two Princes in the Tower](#) (15)

SUPPLEMENTAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Harding - [The Story of England](#) [Henry II, First Plantagenet King](#) to [The War of the Roses](#) (10)
- Church - [Stories From English History, Part Second](#) [Wat Tyler](#) to [Bosworth Field](#) (11)
- Morris - [Historical Tales: English](#) [The Siege of Calais](#) to [The White Rose of England](#) (4)
- Abbott - [Margaret of Anjou](#) *entire book*
- Abbott - [Richard II](#) *entire book*
- Abbott - [Richard III](#) *entire book*
- Church - [The Chantry Priest of Barnet](#) *entire book*
- Marshall - [English Literature for Boys and Girls](#) [About some Song Stories](#) to [The Story of Everyman](#) (17)

EASY READING SELECTIONS

- Cambridge Press - [Cambridge Historical Reader --Primary](#) [Richard the Lion-Heart](#) to [Little Princes in the Tower](#) (10)
- Haaren - [Famous Men of the Middle Ages](#) [Henry the Second and His Sons](#) to [Warwick the Kingmaker](#) (5)
- Skae - [Stories from English History](#) [Boy Who Would be a King](#) to [The Black Prince](#) (2)
- Marshall - [Stories of Guy of Warwick Told to the Children](#) *entire book*