

# **Westwood MUNC V**



## **War of the Roses**

Dear Delegates,

I hope this letter finds you in good health and spirits. My name is Annie Li, and I will be your chair for the War of the Roses historical crisis committee at Westwood MUNC V. I am currently a senior at Westwood High School, and this is my fourth year as a member of Model UN. MUN has been an invaluable opportunity to develop a passion for debate, understand the intricacies of compromise, and practice problem-solving with an open mind.

The committee engages a centuries-old conflict but maintains its relevance by encouraging delegates to confront multifaceted conflicts with no black-and-white morals and simple divisions. Although we will spend a portion of the conference time in breakout rooms corresponding to the Red and White Roses, there will be ample opportunity to debate as a group. I encourage you to be knowledgeable of the history, your role within it, your allies and foes, but also aware of the potential for change. Betrayals were not uncommon given the complexities of court politics and are welcome in committee when appropriate.

Finally, I would like to inform delegates that, in order to be eligible for awards, position papers must be submitted no later than April 24th at midnight. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions regarding the committee or your research and preparation. I look forward to serving as your chair for the War of the Roses committee, and I hope your Westwood MUNC V experience is as enjoyable and successful as possible!

Best,

Annie Li

Chair: War of the Roses (White Roses)

Westwood High School '21

[21ali@wpsstudents.org](mailto:21ali@wpsstudents.org)

Dear Delegates,

My name is Diya Gopal and I will be co-chairing the War of the Roses Committee at Westwood MUNC V. I will be specifically chairing the Red Roses in their initial room. I have been a part of the Westwood High MUN club since I was a freshman! Model UN has helped me grow as a public speaker and has given me insight into our world that I didn't have before.

This committee is meant to allow for entertaining and involved discourse as we attempt to rewrite the history of the War of the Roses. We chose this war to build a committee around because of the sheer amount of drama and politics being exchanged between the 2 rival houses. Through this committee, you will be able to alter the course of the war through betrayal, new alliances, and even communication beyond the grave. We will begin the conference with the 2 houses separated, I will chair the Red Roses, and my co-chair will chair the White Roses. Eventually, we will reunite the 2 houses for heated discussion that will eventually lead to the crowning of a new King of England. I encourage you, the delegates, to depart from the original history of the war, and instead try to come to a new conclusion of the War of the Roses.

To reiterate what Annie said, in order to be considered for committee awards, all delegates must have their position papers turned in at midnight on April 24th. I encourage you to reach out with any questions you may have about the committee! I look forward to seeing and meeting you all during Westwood MUNC V!

Best,

Diya Gopal

Chair: War of the Roses (Red Roses)

[21dgopal@wpsstudents.org](mailto:21dgopal@wpsstudents.org)

## **Introduction**

The War of the Roses (1455-1485) was a bloody 30-year long civil war between two houses of English nobles, the Lancasters and the Yorks. The war's name is derived from the white rose crest of the Yorks and the red rose crest of the Lancasters. Vying for the throne, the two noble houses collectively belonged to the royal Plantagenet family, both claiming the right to rule through their relations to King Edward III (1312-1377). The vicious conflict would only come to an end with the ascension of Henry Tudor, or King Henry VII, in 1487, establishing the Tudor dynasty.

## **History**

### ***Prelude to War:***

Since 1399, the royal family of the Lancasters had been on the English throne. In 1422, King Henry V passed away, and his infant son Henry VI, ascended the throne, marking the beginning of a long and chaotic reign. At that point, England was still involved in the Hundred Years War (1337-1453) with France, struggling with the massive expense of military campaigns abroad and contentions within aristocratic circles over continuing aggressions or seeking peace. In 1445, King Henry VI, seemingly unenthusiastic about continuing the conflict, married Margaret of Anjou—a French noblewoman, and the niece of the King of France, Charles VII.<sup>1</sup> This move was one out of many of his profoundly unpopular decisions. Queen Margaret outshone him in ambition, willpower, and political savvy, as he was an indecisive and ineffective

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<sup>1</sup> Mark Cartwright, "Hundred Years' War," Ancient History Encyclopedia (Ancient History Encyclopedia, March 17, 2020), [https://www.ancient.eu/Hundred\\_Years'\\_War/](https://www.ancient.eu/Hundred_Years'_War/).

ruler, coping with mental instability as well.<sup>2</sup> By 1453, England had lost several battles and all of their territory in France, save for Calais, deepening the dislike for King Henry VI.<sup>3</sup> In the same year, he would lapse into insanity.

Beyond the walls of the castle, social strife also set the stage for the Yorks to contest Lancastrian rule. Lawlessness was widespread in the countryside, which was dominated by various barons with private armies.<sup>4</sup> As the Crown's control weakened, these barons accumulated incredible wealth, political power, and land. Throughout the 1450s, Richard, 3rd Duke of York, amassed power as the leader of a league of barons, supported by his nephew Richard Neville, the earl of Warwick. With veritable wealth to his name, a real claim to the throne, ambition, and laudable military prowess, he would pose a great challenge to King Henry VI's rule.<sup>5</sup> On a larger scale, the economy was suffering, the chaotic system of taxation an overwhelming burden.<sup>6</sup> In 1450, the commoners, led by a man named Jack Cade, rebelled, protesting the high taxes, injustice, and corruption in the judiciary.<sup>7</sup> The government was ultimately able to suppress Cade's rebellion, but it would contribute to the steady breakdown of King Henry VI's power.<sup>8</sup> In 1453, after King Henry VI became unfit to rule, the Duke of York was named the "Protector of the Realm."

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2 The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Wars of the Roses," Encyclopædia Britannica (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., October 15, 2020), <https://www.britannica.com/event/Wars-of-the-Roses>.

3 Kody E. Whittington, "UCF Theses and Dissertations at STARS," UCF Theses and Dissertations at STARS (University of Central Florida, 2016), <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1116&context=honorsthesis>, 11.

4 The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Wars of the Roses"

5 Mark Cartwright, "Wars of the Roses," Ancient History Encyclopedia (Ancient History Encyclopedia, February 24, 2020), [https://www.ancient.eu/Wars\\_of\\_the\\_Roses/](https://www.ancient.eu/Wars_of_the_Roses/).

6 Cartwright, "Wars of the Roses"

7 Cartwright, "Wars of the Roses"

8 The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Cade's Rebellion," Encyclopædia Britannica (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc.), accessed February 23, 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Cades-Rebellion>.

**1455-1459:**

By 1455, Henry VI had recovered and, with the help of Queen Margaret, was restored to the throne.<sup>9</sup> The Duke of York could only retreat. Believing that the queen and Henry's cousin, the Duke of Somerset, were plotting his destruction, York took up arms to protect himself.<sup>10</sup> Not long after, the first battle of the war took place at St. Albans on May 22, 1455. York's forces achieved a swift victory, killing the Duke of Somerset and securing York's ascendancy.<sup>11</sup> This victory was short-lived, as Queen Margaret reinstated herself and her party in the prime position of power in 1456.<sup>12</sup> The next three years were defined by an uneasy truce between the two houses.<sup>13</sup>

**1459-1465:**

In 1459, York would rebel again, galvanized by the Queen's clear plans to attack once more. The Lancasters and Yorks clashed at Blore Heath in September of that year, and the White Roses achieved another victory. However, after the Battle of Ludford Bridge in October, the White Roses' forces were scattered, and the Duke of York fled to Ireland.<sup>14</sup> At Coventry in November 1459, the Lancasters "obtained a judicial condemnation of their opponents"<sup>15</sup> and executed whomever they could. This moment marked a change in the character of the war: From 1459 on, conflicts were sorted out with merciless, coldblooded, and vicious tactics.<sup>16</sup>

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9 The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Wars of the Roses"

10 The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Wars of the Roses"

11 The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Wars of the Roses"

12 The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Margaret of Anjou," Encyclopædia Britannica (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., August 21, 2020), <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Margaret-of-Anjou-queen-of-England>.

13 The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Wars of the Roses"

14 Cartwright, "Wars of the Roses"

15 The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Wars of the Roses"

16 The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Wars of the Roses"

In the summer of 1460, the Yorks regrouped and scored a decisive victory at the Battle of Northampton on July 10. Although the Duke of York attempted to take the throne, he decided to wait for King Henry VI to die and then succeed him.<sup>17</sup> Queen Margaret, who had given birth to a son in 1453, was enraged, as the Duke of York had disinherited her child.<sup>18</sup> However, before York could ascend to the throne, he was killed in the Battle of Wakefield in December 1460. Following the Duke's death, his head would be displayed on a pike with a paper crown, a gruesome reminder of his ultimate fate of being "a mere usurper."<sup>19</sup>

York was survived by his son Edward, Earl of March. After arriving in London with his forces, the Earl was crowned at Westminster, becoming King Edward IV on March 4, 1461.<sup>20</sup> He would then lead the White Roses in the bloodiest one-day battle in English history at Towton, a conflict that involved 50,000 men, of which 28,000 died.<sup>21</sup> The Yorks were victorious, and Henry VI and Margaret of Anjou fled to Scotland with their son.<sup>22</sup> Henry VI made a brief return in 1464 to support a Lancastrian uprising, but the Earl of Warwick's steady campaign to eliminate all Lancastrian resistance was overwhelmingly successful.<sup>23</sup> Resistance efforts were crushed, most of the remaining Lancastrians were executed following the Battle of Hexham (May 1464).<sup>24</sup> In the following year, Henry VI was captured and placed in the Tower of London.<sup>25</sup>

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17 The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Wars of the Roses"

18 The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Wars of the Roses"

19 Cartwright, "Wars of the Roses"

20 The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Wars of the Roses"

21 The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Battle of Towton," Encyclopædia Britannica (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc.), accessed February 23, 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Battle-of-Towton>.

22 The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Margaret of Anjou"

23 The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Wars of the Roses"

24 The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Wars of the Roses"

25 The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Wars of the Roses"

## **Statement of the Issue**

1470 was quite the turning point for the War of the Roses. At this point, King Edward IV had been on the throne for nine years. However, turbulence within the house of the Yorks posed a challenge to the stability of his rule. Margaret enlisted help from her French allies and was able to return to England and reinstate her husband on the throne. Here is where we have chosen to let this committee step in to change history. Both the Red and White Roses must decide amongst themselves what the wisest decisions for their houses are. The Lancasters must find a way to keep the throne for themselves after Margaret's act to regain control. The Yorks, having just gained a taste of true power with their short-lived control of the Crown, must work to overthrow Margaret and Henry's fragile grip on the throne. Keep in mind there will be plenty of crisis in the process, so this won't be a black and white fight. Any members of this committee who are killed during the horrors of this war can and will remain vocal participants in the committee, as they will act as ghosts. They will lose the right to vote on any motions and/or directives, but will still remain a vital part of the committee!

## **Questions to Consider**

### ***For the White Roses (York):***

Who are the most well-suited individuals to be put on the throne?

What is the most effective way to remove the obstacle that Lancasters pose?

Why does the House of York have a direct claim to the throne?

Where could there be possible allies/manpower to fight the war?

***For the Red Roses (Lancaster):***

Other than the direct royal line, who would be an acceptable heir to the throne?

Where could there be possible allies/manpower to fight the war?

What advantages come with having the original claim to the throne?

What is to be done about whispers of the mental sanity of the King?

**Positions**

***The White Roses (York):***

**Earl of Warwick (Richard Neville)**, also known as Warwick the Kingmaker, was an indispensable ally of the Yorks and generally a key player in court politics since the 1450s.<sup>26</sup> Broadly-liked and skilled in politics, Warwick was essentially the leader of the government for four years during King Edward IV's reign, determining English policy and leading campaigns against the remains of Lancastrian resistance.<sup>27</sup> By 1470, his relationship with King Edward IV is fraught with tension and bitterness as he disrupts his plans for an alliance with the French.

**Earl of Northumberland (John Neville)** was the younger brother of the Earl of Warwick. Despite his close personal connections with Henry VI, he led the Nevilles in their feud against the Percy family in the early days of the war and would continue to be an essential component in efforts against the Lancastrians in the early 1460s.<sup>28</sup> As of 1470, he is hesitant to involve himself with the tension between the king and the Earl of Warwick, remaining relatively detached from

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<sup>26</sup> David Grummitt, *A Short History of the Wars of the Roses* (London, UK: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019), xxxii.

<sup>27</sup> The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Richard Neville, 16th Earl of Warwick," Encyclopædia Britannica (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc.), accessed February 24, 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Richard-Neville-16th-earl-of-Warwick>.

<sup>28</sup> The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "John Neville, Earl of Northumberland," Encyclopædia Britannica (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc.), accessed February 25, 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/John-Neville-earl-of-Northumberland-Lord-Montagu>.

his brother's plans.<sup>29</sup> However, Neville should be wary that as the king is considering giving Henry Percy the title of Earl of Northumberland and creating a new, landless title, Marquess of Montagu.

**George Plantagenet, 1st Duke of Clarence** at one point, switched to the Lancaster side. He eventually returned to the Yorks. At some point he was arrested for treason against Edward IV, and was eventually executed. As Edward IV's brother he had some control of the throne for brief moments, clearly adding to the leagues of nobles vying for the throne that instigated the war to begin with.

**Richard, Duke of Gloucester (later King Richard III)** was the last reigning York king and brother to Edward IV. After King Edward IV's unexpected death in 1483, he would rule as Protector of the Realm and ascend after the disappearance of his brother's two sons and heirs, Edward V and Richard.<sup>30</sup> It is rumored that he was responsible for the disappearances.<sup>31</sup> He would go on to be defeated at Bosworth field, the last battle of the War of the Roses. He was brothers with the Duke of Clarence, and they had many familial clashes. As another man claiming the throne, he was an addition to the conflict.

**William Hastings, 1st Baron Hastings** was a member of the House of York. He served as one of Edward IV's right hand men, during his reign as king. He was an English soldier and diplomat, as a member of a noble house. He benefited a lot from his status, making him a rich powerful man.

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29 The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "John Neville"

30 Cartwright, "Wars of the Roses"

31 Cartwright, "Wars of the Roses"

**Elizabeth Woodville** married King Edward IV in 1464, much to the displeasure of high ranking members of the court because she had not been of royal rank and was born and married into Lancastrian families.<sup>32</sup> Her popularity only decreased as she maneuvered her relatives into high offices and noble titles.<sup>33</sup> She had seven children with Edward IV, two sons and five daughters, and thus seemed to secure the Yorkist succession.<sup>34</sup>

**Anthony Woodville, 2nd Earl Rivers** was one of the leading members of the Woodville family, garnering importance throughout King Edward IV's reign. He was a Knight of the Garter, an esteemed order of knighthood.<sup>35</sup> Many nobles in the royal court resented his sister, Queen consort Elizabeth Woodville, and his family for the influence they had. In 1483, he was beheaded after being confronted and arrested by Richard, Duke of Gloucester while escorting Elizabeth's son and heir to the throne, Edward V, to London.<sup>36</sup>

**Francis Lovell, 1st Viscount Lovell** was an English nobleman very close ally of Richard III. Unfailingly loyal, he was considered Richard III's best friend. He remained aligned with the Yorkist forces during the early years of Henry VII's reign, but would disappear after the Battle of Stoke Field in 1487, never to be found.

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32 Amy Licence, "Marrying for Love: Edward IV and Elizabeth Woodville," HistoryExtra, November 26, 2020,

<https://www.historyextra.com/period/medieval/marrying-for-love-edward-iv-and-elizabeth-woodville/>.

33 The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Elizabeth Woodville," Encyclopædia Britannica (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc.), accessed February 25, 2021,

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Elizabeth-Woodville>.

34 The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Elizabeth Woodville"

35 "Anthony Woodville, 2nd Earl Rivers," Wikipedia (Wikimedia Foundation, January 4, 2021),

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthony\\_Woodville,\\_2nd\\_Earl\\_Rivers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthony_Woodville,_2nd_Earl_Rivers).

36"Anthony Woodville, 2nd Earl Rivers," Wikipedia

**John de la Pole, 1st Earl of Lincoln** played a central role in the Yorkist forces. He was faithful to the Yorks until the end of the war, but as the Tudors ascended to the throne, he reconciled with them. He would, however, go on to organize a Yorkist rebellion only two short years later.

**Isabel Neville, Duchess of Clarence** was the daughter of Richard Neville (Earl of Warwick). Her father betrothed her to George Plantagenet, 1st Duke of Clarence in the hopes of maneuvering himself even closer to the throne. King Edward IV feared that this marriage would give too much power to the already-powerful Earl of Warwick and opposed it. Nonetheless, Isabel Neville and the Duke of Clarence were wedded secretly in Calais, the Duke eager to have the immense wealth of the Nevilles on his side.<sup>37</sup>

**John Howard, First Duke of Norfolk** was a loyal ally to Richard III. He was considered to be in Richard III's close circle. He was a well known politician and nobleman at the time. He claimed that he would be a supporter to the House of York till death would part him from the House.

***The Red Roses (Lancaster):***

**Queen Margaret of Anjou** was the reigning queen of England with King Henry VI. Besides dealing with the responsibilities of being Queen Margaret had to work to make up for Henry's mental shortcomings. She was a French woman who had quite the mind for politics, even at one time pulling her family back to the English throne after her husband lost the throne in 1465. Her

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<sup>37</sup> "Isabel Neville, Duchess of Clarence," Wikipedia (Wikimedia Foundation, March 28, 2021), [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isabel\\_Neville,\\_Duchess\\_of\\_Clarence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isabel_Neville,_Duchess_of_Clarence).

ambition to secure the throne for her son makes her an exceptional player in the War of the Roses.

**Edward of Westminster, Prince of Wales** was young when the war first began. He was the only son of Queen Margaret and Henry VI, making him a clear contender for the crown. Margaret worked to see him on the throne, however the Yorks deeply contested his claim. At the time this committee is set, the battle where he is historically killed in, has not happened.

**Lady Margaret Beaufort, Countess of Richmond** was the one of the few to advocate for her son, Henry Tudor's, right to the throne. Another politically savvy woman, she knew how to navigate the highly charged political environment to secure her son a place on the throne.

**Jasper Tudor, Duke of Bedford & Earl of Pembroke** was the uncle to Henry Tudor. He very badly wanted to see his family's succession of the throne, and was a key player in the rise of Henry Tudor to the throne.

**Henry Holland, 3rd Duke of Exeter** was a passionate supporter of the Lancaster line. When Queen Margaret and King Henry VI were exiled to France, he joined them. He was also a war commander for the Lancastrian army. King Henry VI's return to the throne by the hands of Queen Margaret were very beneficial to him and his family.

**John de Vere, 13th Earl of Oxford** was another Lancastrian commander. He was the leader of several Lancastrian victories, making him a close member of the Lancaster House. He was favored by the Tudors when they came to power.

**Robert Welles, 8th Baron Willoughby de Eresby** rebelled against the rule of Edward IV. He was one of the main players in a planned uprising against Edward IV. His actions may have been influenced or overseen by the Earl of Warwick.

**Thomas Neville** was a member of the highly influential Neville family. He had supported the Yorks until the friction between the Earl of Warwick and King Edward IV began, turning to the Lancasters. He had been a leader during the Hundred Years War and a skilled sailor, directing ships for both sides.<sup>38</sup>

**Edmund Beaufort, 4th Duke of Somerset** commanded Queen Margaret's armies during the War of the Roses. He was faithful to the Lancasters but deeply resented the growing alliance between Queen Margaret and the Earl of Warwick. Since he was upset with the reconciliation between the two, he often made little effort to cooperate.<sup>39</sup>

**John Courtenay, 15th Earl of Devon** was a staunch supporter of the Lancasters. He had family connections to the house of Lancaster through his mother and father and through the marriages of his siblings.

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<sup>38</sup> "Thomas Neville (Died 1471)," Wikipedia (Wikimedia Foundation, September 17, 2020), [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas\\_Neville\\_\(died\\_1471\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Neville_(died_1471)).

<sup>39</sup> "Edmund Beaufort (Died 1471)," Wikipedia (Wikimedia Foundation, March 23, 2021), [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edmund\\_Beaufort\\_\(died\\_1471\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edmund_Beaufort_(died_1471)).

**Henry Clifford, 10th Baron Clifford** was young when his father, John Clifford, was killed. He grew up suffering the wrath of the Yorks as they were punishing him for the deaths of certain Yorks that his father was responsible for.

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