The battle of Agincourt was fought in 1415, as part of the Hundred Years' war between England and France. King Henry V's army was exhausted and outnumbered by 6000 to 25,000 men. However, after a bloody battle King Henry’s army was victorious.

Shakespeare’s play Henry V included the battle of Agincourt. This is the speech Shakespeare portrays Henry V making just before the famous battle. He is addressing his troops, trying to raise their fighting spirit and encourage them to victory.

**Before Agincourt**

If we are mark’d to die, we are enow
To do our country loss; and if to live,
The fewer men, the greater share of honour.

God’s will? I pray thee, wish not one man more.
By Jove, I am not covetous for gold,
Nor care I who doth feed upon my cost;
It yearns me not if men my garments wear;
Such outward things dwell not in my desires:
But if it be a sin to covet honour,
I am the most offending soul alive.

No, faith, my coz, wish not a man from England:
God’s peace! I would not lose so great an honour
As one man more, methinks, would share from me,
For the best hope I have. O! Do not wish one more:
Rather proclaim it, Westmoreland, through my host,
That he which hath no stomach to this fight,
Let him depart; his passport shall be made,
And crowns for convoy put into his purse:
We would not die in that man's company
That fears his fellowship to die with us.

This day is call’d the feast of Crispian:
He that outlives this day, and comes safe home
Will stand a tip-toe when this day is nam’d,
And rouse him at the name of Crispian.

He that shall live this day, and see old age,
Will yearly on the vigil feast his neighbours,
And say, ‘To-morrow is Saint Crispian.’
Then will he strip his sleeve and show his scars,
And say, ‘These wounds I had on Crispin’s day’.

Old men forget: yet all shall be forgot,
But he'll remember with advantages
What feats he did that day. Then shall our names,
Familiar in his mouth as household words,
Harry the king, Bedford and Exeter,
Warwick and Talbot, Salisbury and Gloucester,
Be in their flowing cups freshly remember’d.

This story shall the good man teach his son;
And Crispin Crispian shall ne’er go by,
From this day to the ending of the world,
But we in it shall be remembered;
We few, we happy, few, we band of brothers;
For he to-day that sheds his blood with me
Shall be my brother’ be he ne’er so vile
This day shall gentle his condition:
And gentlemen in England, now a-bed,
Shall think themselves accurs’d they were not here,
And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks
That fought with us upon Saint Crispin’s day.

William Shakespeare

Look carefully at the speech. Remind yourself of its intended **audience** and **purpose**.

How would you advise an actor playing Henry V to deliver the lines?

Which lines or phrases would you advise the actor to emphasise? How? Why?

In your opinion, what makes this speech forceful and emotive? Give examples to support your points.